

Holding Hands With Wampum:  
Haudenosaunee Council Fires from the Great Law of Peace  
to Contemporary Relationships with the Canadian State

by

Kathryn V. Muller

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in conformity with the requirements for  
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## Abstract

“Holding Hands With Wampum” weaves a story of disparate peoples who came together to create a new North American World over a period of more than five centuries. The Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora member nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy conceptualized their universe according to the *kaswentha* ethic and above all treasured autonomy on local, national, and confederate scales. “Holding Hands With Wampum” traces the spiritual foundations of this Haudenosaunee worldview and then uses ethical discourse to explain the evolution of Haudenosaunee-European relationships through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to Canadian Confederation and, finally, to the modern age of land reclamations and assertions of Haudenosaunee sovereignty. Unravelling a uniquely Haudenosaunee perspective of the past, “Holding Hands With Wampum” is a cultural form of intellectual history, as it employs Haudenosaunee culture and ethical discourse to understand the place of a diverse community in the very public world of council fires and other political interactions. As an exercise in ethnohistory, “Holding Hands With Wampum” combines the documentary record with wampum belts and oral interviews in an effort to create a balanced historical narrative that situates culture in a constantly changing geo-political reality. The concept of *métissage* also provides a framework for understanding how these dramatically different peoples came together in the eighteenth century and created a new, common diplomatic protocol. Only by shedding light upon Haudenosaunee-European relations over such a long period can we hope to understand contemporary issues of land and treaty rights and, perhaps, learn how to rekindle the *métissage* of a not so distant past.

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## Abbreviations

- AIA*      Wraxall, Peter. *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs Contained in Four Folio Volumes, Transacted in the Colony of New York, from the Year 1678 to the Year 1751*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915.
- APS*      American Philosophical Society Library
- DHNY*      O’Callaghan, E. B., ed. *Documentary History of the State of New York*. 4 Vols. Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1849-51.
- DRCHNY*      O’Callaghan, E. B., ed. *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, Procured in Holland, England and France*. 15 Vols. Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1853-87.
- JR*      *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*. 73 Vols. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed. Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901.  
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/2/19/h19-151-f.html>.
- JTLC*      Jake Thomas Learning Centre, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory.
- LAC*      Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.
- LIR*      Livingston, Robert. *The Livingston Indian Records*. Ed. Lawrence H. Leder. Gettysburg: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956.
- NAA*      National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Suitland, Maryland.
- NL-EP*      Einhorn Papers, Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.
- NL-IIDP*      Iroquois Indian Documentary Project, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.
- PSWJ*      Sullivan, James, et. al., eds. *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*. 14 Vols. Albany: State University of New York, 1921-1963.

## A Note on Spelling

Alternate spellings exist of every Haudenosaunee term in this dissertation, given the differences in the six Haudenosaunee languages and the preferences of individual communities.

The spellings of all characters in the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* are taken from the Onondaga form in Hanni Woodbury, ed. and trans., *Concerning the League: the Iroquois League tradition as dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson*, in collaboration with Reg Henry and Harry Webster, on the basis of A.A. Goldenweiser's manuscript (Winnipeg: Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, 1992).

All spellings of wampum terms are taken from the Mohawk form in Jacob E. Thomas, *Illustrations and Descriptions of Wampum Belts*, #9364 (Ohsweken: Jake Thomas Learning Centre, 1989).

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

On the last day of an unusually warm February in 2006, a small group of indigenous peoples from Six Nations moved onto a construction site situated between their territory and the neighbouring town of Caledonia, outside Hamilton, Ontario. The dozen or so men and women lugged food, water, firewood, and blankets with them, as they were unsure how long their stay would be. They made themselves as comfortable as possible on the rough terrain of sand and rock and glanced about, possibly thinking about the rich soil and lush forests appreciated by their ancestors when they first moved to the Grand River Valley after the American Revolution. Now, a desolate, wind-blown wasteland surrounded the protesters on the construction site, a reminder of the cloned suburban communities that had crept closer and closer to what remained of their territory. A few days later, Henco Industries, the contractor for the construction site, obtained an injunction ordering the Six Nations protesters to leave to allow the building of new homes to continue. The protesters refused. The land was theirs, they insisted, and had been improperly appropriated by the Crown more than a century and a half ago; now, after patiently petitioning the Crown since 1841 and after submitting a now-stagnant land claim before a federal commission, they wanted their land back.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For details about the Haldimand Tract and associated land claims, see Charles M. Johnston, *Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1964); Reg Good, "Crown-directed Colonization of Six Nations and Métis Land Reserves in Canada," PhD Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1994; and Paul Williams and Curtis Nelson, "The Grand River 'Surrender' of 1841" in "Kaswentha," Research Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Seven Generations CD-ROM (Ottawa: Libraxus Inc., 1996), Treaties: Project Area 1: Early Treaty-Making in Canada, January 1995.

The land dispute has now persisted for more than two years and has weathered an explosive raid from the Ontario Provincial Police, various injunctions calling the occupation illegal, and road blockades and standoffs between the Haudenosaunee, or the People of the Longhouse, and their Caledonia neighbours.<sup>2</sup> On one occasion, a non-Native mob swarmed, vandalized, and rocked the car of two anxious elders from Six Nations, while on another occasion, Haudenosaunee protestors chased a photograph-taking elderly couple from nearby Simcoe, Ontario, and confiscated their cameras, along with video footage from two Hamilton television reporters.<sup>3</sup> Tensions remain high on both sides and both Ohsweken, the town on Six Nations Territory, and Caledonian businesses have suffered economically from the dispute. What were once two peaceful communities united by their children's shared love of lacrosse and multiple intermarriages have now become fractured and clouded with bad thoughts and minds. Neither side truly understands the other: the Haudenosaunee demand to be treated as allies, not subjects, of the Crown as their historic relationships require while some non-

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<sup>2</sup> Haudenosaunee shall be used to refer to those people commonly called the "Iroquois" in English and is an anglicised term that originated with ethnologist Lewis Henry Morgan's misspelling of the Seneca word Ho-dé-no-sau-nee. The six different nations that make up the Haudenosaunee Confederacy each have their own term for 'People of the Longhouse,' although a direct translation of "they have built a house" is more accurate in most languages. In 1727, Cadwallader Colden wrote of the "Rodinunchsiouni," likely a phonetic spelling of the Mohawk term, *Rotinonhsiónni*, so the term is certainly ancient. Gordon Day, "Iroquois: An Etymology," Michael K. Foster and William Cowan, eds., *In Search of New England's Native Past: Selected Essays by Gordon M. Day* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998): 109-115; Lewis Henry Morgan, *League of the Ho-dé-no-sau-nee, or, Iroquois* (Rochester: Sage & Brother, 1851); and Cadwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations Depending on the Province of New-York in America* (Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1994 [1727]), 3.

<sup>3</sup> "Tensions Flare as Caledonia Standoff Continues," Global National, 22 May 2006, <http://www.cbc.ca/story/canada/national/2006/05/22/caledonia-blockade.html>, accessed 30 May 2006; "Police Hurt, Swarmed in Caledonia Clash," Global National, 9 June 2006, <http://www.cbc.ca/story/canada/national/2006/06/10/caledonia.html>, accessed 17 June 2006; "News Crew Attacked in Caledonia," Global National, Friday 9 June 2006, <http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=ebf88c41-7f02-4d18-91dd-039109dceca0&k=77894>, accessed 13 June 2006; Hazel Hill, Reclamation Site updates, June 2006, [http://www.firstperspective.ca/fp\\_template.php?path=20060421caledonia](http://www.firstperspective.ca/fp_template.php?path=20060421caledonia), accessed 20 June 2006.

Native residents see only a double standard in the Canadian justice system that has not evicted a band of perceived squatters.

The dispute is a microcosm for misunderstandings between Canadians and *Onkwehonwe*, or “real people,” misunderstandings that stem from the fundamental way we relate to one another.<sup>4</sup> “Holding Hands With Wampum,” tells one story about these misunderstandings from a Haudenosaunee perspective by recounting a history of ethical ideas and their expressions within larger political contexts. The *kaswentha* ethic, the overarching worldview held by the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora member nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, captures the crucial principles of Haudenosaunee morality: autonomy, peaceful alliance, and cooperation with friends and allies.<sup>5</sup> Not only does the term *kaswentha* encapsulate the core values of Haudenosaunee political theory, but it also honours their expression in wampum belts, crucial mnemonic texts of ceremony, history, and diplomacy. Although today the term *kaswentha* is often associated with the Two Row Wampum belt, upon which two purple rows signify the eternal separation of the Haudenosaunee and the Europeans, the term actually refers to wampum belts in general and how their messages flow through time and people.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the values captured by *kaswentha* ethic were neither static nor

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<sup>4</sup> The term *Onkwehonwe* will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to all Aboriginal peoples in general. The ethnologist/linguist J.N.B. Hewitt described the Tuscarora (spelled differently than the above) in an 1888 article: it refers to “all the indigenes or aborigines of America considered as the human race” and the Haudenosaunee did not extend the word to include Europeans upon their arrival on Turtle Island. J.N.B. Hewitt, “The Meaning of Eñ-kwe-heñ’-we in the Iroquoian Language,” *The American Anthropologist*, 1.4 (October 1888): 323-24.

<sup>5</sup> The terms Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora are used because they are the most commonly recognized words for the Haudenosaunee member nations.

<sup>6</sup> Tracking the origin of the term *kaswentha* has proven quite difficult; according to linguistic-anthropologist Michael K. Foster, the Cayuga language has a cognate – *kahswénhta*’ (the ’ designates a glottal stop) – that can designate wampum, as do Seneca and Onondaga, but the Cayuga cognate also refers to the silver pipe sometimes employed in treaty sessions. The three above-mentioned languages and Mohawk also use the root –swenhta- to designate the coals of a fire, however, there does not appear to be a word *kahswénhta*’ in the Mohawk language according to language-speakers at Kahnawake today.

uniformly expressed, but they have gradually shifted to address new circumstances and needs over time.

“Holding Hands With Wampum” traces the origins of the *kaswentha* ethic in the constitutional and ceremonial foundations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, established before Europeans settled on Turtle Island, as the *Onkwehonwe* called North America. It also explores how the Haudenosaunee encountered the newcomers, treated with them, and came to terms with their differences in order to build new friendships and alliances over five centuries of contact. At times, of course, misunderstandings overflowed and resulted in war but the Haudenosaunee sought to resolve such violence quickly for if it endured, they risked annihilation. Ultimately, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the diplomacy created around council fires resulted in an uneasy *métissage*, or cultural convergence, between friends where common metaphors, ceremonies, and tools such as wampum created a shared political protocol. As the nineteenth century sped by, however, the emerging Canadian state became increasingly powerful and the *kaswentha* ethic became almost entirely subordinated. The twentieth century, by contrast, has witnessed a resurgence of the *kaswentha* ethic’s ideals of autonomy with increasingly insistent demands for the recognition of *Onkwehonwe* self-government and the resolution of land claims.

While the scope of this thesis—Haudenosaunee relationships within their Confederacy and with Europeans—and the time period—approximately six hundred years, from before European contact to the present—may seem daunting, tracing the origin and evolution of worldviews over such a period is the only way to understand why

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Michael K. Foster to Kathryn Muller, personal correspondence, 20 June 2005, 4 August 2006; Interview between Kathryn Muller and Cory McComber, Kahnawake, 25 October 2007; and Paul Williams to Kathryn Muller, personal correspondence, 17 January 2005.

people continue to talk at cross-purposes in Caledonia and elsewhere in the country now called Canada. Emphatically, “Holding Hands With Wampum” does not describe political interactions on a day-to-day level; instead, by describing the origins and alterations of ethical discourse over a period of six centuries, a much broader perspective allows for the analysis of grander trends and themes in how the Haudenosaunee relate to one another and to outsiders. Indeed, other scholars have used similar ethical frameworks to explore a resilient worldview that constantly shifts and adapts to new circumstances. James Taylor Carson, for example, has examined the Choctaw’s nine hundred year quest for “the straight bright path” to understand how they adapted and reckoned with constant challenges, both before and after contact with Europeans.<sup>7</sup> Over a similarly long period of time, Russel Lawrence Barsh has used the Mi’kmaq concept of *netukulimk*, an ethical standard for living that elders explain as, “Take only what you need,” which clarifies Mi’kmaq involvement in the fur and fish economies up to the present day.<sup>8</sup>

*Netukulimk*, the bright path, and the *kaswentha* ethic each identify historic continuity in an environment of change, although they do not imply that cultures are static. Indeed, much as the Mi’kmaq interpret ‘taking only what you need’ differently in the twenty-first century’s climate of fishing rights and regulations and as the Choctaw morality of the bright path shifted in the post-Removal era, the *kaswentha* principles found different expressions throughout Haudenosaunee history. The one constant remained the Haudenosaunee desire to create a peaceful relationship where each nation

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<sup>7</sup> James Taylor Carson, *Searching For the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaws From Prehistory to Removal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Russel Lawrence Barsh, “Netukulimk Past and Present: Mikmaw Ethics and the Atlantic Fishery,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 37.1 (2002), 16-17.



could securely and independently run its own affairs. Conceptualizing of worldviews as ethical discourse, as a framework of what is ‘right’ or ‘good’ in a culturally relative manner, thus offers a way to situate culture in constantly changing geo-political realities. Ultimately, then, “Holding Hands With Wampum” is a cultural form of intellectual history, as it employs Haudenosaunee culture and ethical discourse to understand the place of a diverse community in the very public world of council fires and other political interactions.

Although Haudenosaunee peoples are among the most studied *Onkwehonwe* of North America, no scholar has envisioned their history as ethical behaviour that has been constantly rearticulated over such a long period of time.<sup>9</sup> Matthew Dennis is one of a handful of authors who firmly situated his entire book around what he called a “landscape of peace” and used his understanding of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy’s founding epic, the Great Law of Peace, to explain actions and reactions to the Dutch and French newcomers in the early seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup> While suggesting a novel way in which to reinterpret Haudenosaunee history, Dennis’ argument rather romantically asserted that the Haudenosaunee constantly sought peace and overlooked the autonomy of the Confederacy, as well as its member-nations; the Haudenosaunee emphatically did *not* equate the Dutch, the French, and others as members of their Confederacy. Although the Haudenosaunee recreated the foreigners as kin and attempted at times to maintain

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<sup>9</sup> Scholarship that explores the political/military might of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, includes: Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998); and Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984).

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

peaceful alliances, they simultaneously preserved separation from their allies, a fundamental concept enshrined by the *kaswentha* ethic.

Other works by Mary Druke Becker, Michael K. Foster, Gerald R. Alfred, Deborah Doxtator and Louise Johnston have used a variety of Haudenosaunee perspectives—including kinship, language, ceremony, clans, council fires, and covenants—in order to weave stories that come closer and closer to plausibly explaining Haudenosaunee history.<sup>11</sup> While it is admittedly impossible to perfectly reconstruct thoughts and intentions from so long ago, *Onkwehonwe* studies today are tied inexorably to the ethnohistorical method, which combines history, anthropology, archaeology, sociology, geography, and other disciplines to study *Onkwehonwe* peoples according to their own values and perceptions. Such an approach, Gilles Havard has argued, is essential in order to reject colonial paradigms such as “‘civilisation/savagery’, ‘culture/nature’, ‘progress/ static’, ‘Old World/New World’, etc.” and moves all of us closer to understanding the meeting place between cultures instead of the one-sided discovery common among earlier scholars.<sup>12</sup>

The ethnohistorical method calls for the use of an array of sources in order to understand historical interactions from all possible angles. While some scholars now

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<sup>11</sup> Mary A. Druke, “Linking Arms: The Structure of Iroquois Intertribal Diplomacy,” Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell, eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987); Michael K. Foster, “Another Look at the Function of Wampum in Iroquois-White Councils,” Francis Jennings et al. eds., *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985): 99-114; Gerald R. Alfred, *Heeding the Voices of our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Deborah Doxtator, *What Happened to the Iroquois Clans? Study of Clans in Three Nineteenth Century Rotinohsyonni Communities*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, 1996; and Louise Johnston, “The Covenant Chain of Peace: Metaphor and Religious Thought in Seventeenth Century Haudenosaunee Council Oratory,” PhD Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Gilles Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le Pays d’en Haut, 1660-1715* (Sainte Foy: Septentrion, 2003), 22. Translation mine.

combine documentary and oral traditions *or* material culture and documentary sources with relative ease, few authors aim to include all three elements in a story of the past. “Holding Hands With Wampum” originally incorporates many wampum belts and photographs of wampum as valid sources that help track the *kaswentha* ethic from the Haudenosaunee perspective.<sup>13</sup> Using wampum reminds the reader of the eloquence, ceremony, and orality behind seventeenth- and eighteenth-century council proceedings where *Onkwehonwe* women created belts commissioned either by their own communities or by European officials. Many scholars have seriously underestimated material culture as a tool to reconstruct political history but, since it employs “a silent form of writing and discourse,” in Christopher Tilley’s words, it allows for a new understanding of our cultural behaviour.<sup>14</sup> Wampum belts also possess a history, just like a person or even a cultural group, and an object’s role can be traced over time with changes in utility expressing larger trends within the culture on a whole. In this way, Janet Hoskins has argued, objects can reflect the worldview of a people, as a useful “tool of autobiographic self-discovery, a way of knowing oneself through things.”<sup>15</sup>

Numerous *Onkwehonwe* peoples in the northeast adopted wampum, other shell beads, and even elderberry twigs and bird/porcupine quills to aid in a number of social and ceremonial roles, ranging from the redemption of prisoners and marriage celebrations

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<sup>13</sup> The most comprehensive work to this date that combines wampum, orality, and documents is an ongoing project by Richard Hill and Raymond Skye, who aim to publish a CD-ROM that lists every single wampum known to have been exchanged, all dialogue from council proceedings in reference to a particular belt, historical context, and the oral tradition of the belts. Richard Hill and Raymond Skye, *WAMPUM Records – The Six Nations Virtual Archive*, Project in preparation.

<sup>14</sup> Christopher Tilley, “Interpreting Material Culture,” Ian Hodder ed., *The Meaning of Things: Material Culture and Symbolic Expression* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 189; and Roland Fletcher, “The Messages of Material Behaviour: A Preliminary Discussion of Non-Verbal Meaning,” Hodder ed., *Meaning of Things*, 33.

<sup>15</sup> Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process,” Arjun Appadurai ed., *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 66-8; and Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People’s Lives* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 198.

to validating the words spoken by an orator and the appointment of a chief.<sup>16</sup> While numerous *Onkwehonwe* peoples used strings of what archaeologists have called proto-wampum beads, obtained from the Algonkians of the Atlantic coast, complex diplomatic belts only appeared after the Dutch arrived and began mass producing the beads, which they had mistaken for local currency in the seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup> European powers quickly adopted wampum and emulated the *Onkwehonwe* in their creation and ceremonial reading of the belts, and soon councils could not occur without the legitimacy and memory provided by these mnemonic devices. Indeed, even before the orator opened his mouth, the colours of the quahog (purple) and whelk (white) shell beads ‘spoke’ to the audience. White wampum, George Hamell has explained, symbolised “peace, desire for understanding, and sociability,” while purple, dark or black wampum “conveyed a semantic context of death, mourning, and associability.”<sup>18</sup> A wampum belt

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<sup>16</sup> George S. Snyderman, “The Functions of Wampum,” *The Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 98.6 (December 1954); William Beauchamp, “Wampum and Shell Articles Used by the New York Indian,” Frederick J.H. Merrill ed., *Bulletin of the New York State Museum*, 8.41 (Feb 1901); Lynn Ceci, “The Value of Wampum Among the New York Iroquois: A Case Study in Artefact Analysis,” *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 38.2 (Spring 1982); Lorraine E. Williams and Karen A. Flinn, *Trade Wampum: New Jersey to the Plains* (Trenton: New Jersey State Museum, 1990); U. Vincent Wilcox, “The Manufacture and Use of Wampum in the Northeast,” *The Bead Journal*, 3.1 (1976); Laurier Turgeon, “French Beads in France and Northeastern North America During the Sixteenth Century,” *Historical Archaeology*, 35.4 (2001); Arthur C. Parker, “The Iroquois Wampums,” *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association*, 8 (1909); André Vachon, “Colliers et ceintures de porcelaine dans la diplomatie indienne,” *Les cahiers des dix*, 36 (1971); and Jonathan Lainey, *La “monnaie des sauvages”: Les colliers de wampum d’hier à aujourd’hui* (Québec: Septentrion, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Lynn Ceci, “Tracing Wampum’s Origins: Shell Bead Evidence from Archaeological Sites in Western and Coastal New York,” Charles F. Hayes ed., *Proceedings of the 1986 Shell Bead Conference: Selected Papers* (Rochester, New York: Research Division of the Rochester Museum and Science Centre, 1989), 63-74; Fenton, *Great Law*, 227; Williams and Flinn, *Trade Wampum*, 28-33; and John C. Ewers, “Hair Pipes in Plains Indian Adornment: A Study in Indian and White Ingenuity,” *Anthropological Papers*, No. 50, *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, 164 (1957): 42-43 and plate 15. Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohswéken, Six Nations Territory, 1985.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Miller and George R. Hamell, “A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade,” *The Journal of American History*, 73.2 (September 1986): 324; and George R. Hamell, “The Iroquois and the World’s Rim: Speculations on Color, Culture, and Contact,” *American Indian Quarterly*, 16.4 (1992).

coloured red reflected “high emotion and excitement and the ultimate expression of antisociability: war.”<sup>19</sup>

The pictographs woven into the belts also communicated a message across linguistic barriers and sometimes avoided possible miscommunications between peoples.<sup>20</sup> Many belts, for example, depict a line running between two or more squares (representing different fires, or nations) or between two or more people (again, indicating nations) to show an unobstructed path, or a peaceful road of communication between the groups. People holding hands or linking arms again depicted a similar friendship, while a belt with a picture of a hatchet, on the other hand, implied war and, often coated in red ochre, was a symbol and colour understood by many, notwithstanding one’s ethnicity. Despite the belts’ expressive nature, an orator, or someone trained in the preservation and recitation of wampum, needed to release the specific message; equally, every orator needed a wampum belt, string, or another device to attest to the legitimacy and sincerity of his words.

The late Cayuga Chief Jacob E. Thomas was renowned by his own people and other scholars and students for his knowledge of Haudenosaunee wampum, language, ceremony, and history, knowledge that he had gained from his own father, Dawit (David) and other Haudenosaunee knowledge-holders. Thomas believed in the stability of oral tradition, as elders carefully instructed children in the precise memorization of stories and diligently prepared them to become spokespeople of their nations.<sup>21</sup> He explained, “when

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<sup>19</sup> Miller and Hamell, “New Perspective,” 325.

<sup>20</sup> Germaine Warkentin, “In Search of ‘The Word of the Other’: Aboriginal Sign Systems and the History of the Book in Canada,” *Book History*, 2.1 (1999).

<sup>21</sup> José Barreiro and Carol Cornelius, *Knowledge of the Elders: The Haudenosaunee Condolence Cane Tradition* (Ithaca: Northeast Indian Quarterly, Cornell University, 1991), 4.

you pass it on, you don't try to use your own ideas, because if you do, you keep people confused. The thing that I have heard is only what I go by."<sup>22</sup>



Figure 1: Chief Jake Thomas holding replicas of the Two Row Wampum and the Friendship belt at the 1988 repatriation ceremony from the Museum of the American Indian—Heye Foundation  
Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society, Fenton Collection, Series VI, Wampum Transfer MAI-HF

Anthropologist Elizabeth Tonkin has agreed with the importance of oral tradition, convinced that there can still be skilled historians who rely solely upon the spoken word.<sup>23</sup> Although Tonkin has explained that each oral story reflects the narrator's points of view to a certain extent, she has stressed that uncovering different versions "does not necessarily invalidate the account, or the medium through which it is purveyed."<sup>24</sup> Instead, such errors may reveal a great deal about the narrator, the audience and the

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<sup>22</sup> Barreiro and Cornelius, *Knowledge of the Elders*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Tonkin, *Narrating*, 9 and 114.

society as a whole.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, few people remain who are able to recite wampum tradition like Jacob Thomas, which means that the alternative mediums of Haudenosaunee publications, examination of the objects themselves, and, especially, nineteenth and twentieth-century ethnographic materials must be used to glean insight into oral traditions. Eighteen interviews conducted with Haudenosaunee people at Six Nations and Kahnawake also will help illustrate a contemporary understanding of past and present *kaswentha* relationships, both within the Confederacy and with foreigners. Although some interviewees lacked knowledge about wampum discourse—perhaps unsurprising since many belts have been held away from the communities for so long—they consistently expressed an unwavering conviction of the autonomy of their own nations and the strength of the Confederacy on a whole. While past narratives can illuminate the *kaswentha* ethic hidden in wampum discourse, these present stories depict how the *kaswentha* ethic has stayed alive in the historical consciousness and the daily reality of various communities.

The written word, by contrast, has often been relegated to archives and libraries, seldom playing an active part in the life stories of its European descendants. Perhaps because of written testimony's very composition, many people consider it a more 'accurate' source as it was recorded on paper in a western language more or less at the historical moment. However, all sources have shortcomings: some seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents completely ignored *Onkwehonwe* peoples; others judged their cultures as primitive or savage; still others misinterpreted the language, motives, and desires of their *Onkwehonwe* brethren; and many scribes put romantic literary accounts

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<sup>25</sup> Tonkin, *Narrating*, 114 and 38.

on paper to sell to an inquisitive audience in Europe.<sup>26</sup> Some authors even recorded historic accounts without witnessing the event, but rather, after hearing about it second hand, leaving later scholars to question the exaggeration or falsification of the description.<sup>27</sup> That said, many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources contain what appear to be direct transcriptions of *Onkwehonwe* council speeches, a valuable source if one can read them correctly with Haudenosaunee culture and language in mind. The *kaswentha* ethic also provides a lens through which to assess the words and deeds of Haudenosaunee peoples, and, when applied to written documents, helps correct multiple mistranslations/misunderstandings committed by translators and/or scribes who acted with European superiority and *Onkwehonwe* submission in mind. Thus, written documents, while providing rich clues to the European perception of events, only partially describe the intercultural context of North America and must be combined with both wampum belts and oral tradition in order to grasp as best we can the complexities of post-contact diplomacy. Gordon Day's avowed use of "oral tradition as complement," whereby "the traditional statements solved puzzles created by the partial coverage of the documents" is of crucial importance, as documentary, oral, and material data combine to create a *whole* study.<sup>28</sup>

The combination of all three sources also parallels the existence of a political *métissage* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whereby council fires could not be lit without wampum, commence without oratory, or be memorialised without

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<sup>26</sup> See Snyderman, "Functions of Wampum," 470; Foster, "Another Look at the Function of Wampum," 100.

<sup>27</sup> Beauchamp, "Wampum and Shell Articles," 329. Marie de l'Incarnation, for instance, probably based her recording of Kiotseaton's presentation of wampum in 1645, on Fr. Barthélemy Vimont's *Jesuit Relation*. Warkentin, "In Search of 'The Word of the Other'," 2.

<sup>28</sup> Gordon Day, "Oral Tradition as Complement," Foster and Cowan, eds., *In Search of New England's Native Past*, 128.



documentation. Richard White's groundbreaking theory of a middle ground provides a place for the *Onkwehonwe* to come together with the French in the *Pays d'en haut* region surrounding the Great Lakes, where diverse peoples attempt to accommodate their differences through "creative, and often expedient, misunderstandings" and allow new meanings and new practices to arise from these misunderstandings.<sup>29</sup> Gilles Havard, in turn, addressed the acculturation in the *empire du milieu*, where the landscape of contact and interaction between peoples was less restrictive and allowed for a mixture of all cultures that resulted in a *métissage* of cultural traits and mindsets that are simultaneously the same and different.<sup>30</sup> *Métissage*, as scholars like Nathalie Zemon-Davis and Laurier Turgeon have further shown, goes beyond simple accommodation and explores the physical, personal, and cultural frontiers that blend together; each side becomes closer and closer to the other as they participate in multiple worlds.<sup>31</sup> The process does not result in the complete transformation—such an end is assimilation, not *métissage*—but simply allows for the rewriting of one's own self in accordance with different confrontations with the 'other.'<sup>32</sup> Such *métissage*, or hybrid culture in the words of Edward Said, is a necessary result of empire and incorporates a number of 'foreign' cultural elements into one's own way of thinking and doing.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, while the

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<sup>29</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ix, x, 51; and Special edition on the Middle Ground, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, Vol. LXIII, No. 1 (January 2006).

<sup>30</sup> Havard, *Empire et métissages*, 16, 777.

<sup>31</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, "Polarities, Hybridities: What Strategies for Decentring?" Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny eds., *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective, 1500-1700* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 26.

<sup>32</sup> Pierre Ouellet, "Les identités migrantes: La passion de l'autre," *Regards croisés sur le métissage* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2002), 42.

<sup>33</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), xxix and 15.

A parallel discourse to *métissage* is found in creolisation, a theory that originated in the Caribbean and American south but can extend to the world's multiracial societies, placing the emphasis for identity formation on racial and cultural complexities. See Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité/In Praise of Creoleness*, M.B. Taleb-Khyar trans. (Baltimore: The Johns

*kaswentha* ethic of the Haudenosaunee remained drastically different from the European worldview, the parties co-created a hybrid diplomatic culture with wampum, oratory, ceremony, law, and writing.

Many authors concentrate solely on this golden period of diplomacy when Haudenosaunee and Europeans alike met at the council fires of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; few studies have expanded past stories to explain events in the nineteenth, twentieth, or even twenty-first centuries. “Holding Hands With Wampum” while taking on an ambitious time period, strives to use the past to inform the present state of Haudenosaunee-Canadian relations. In so doing, current stories are just as important as past stories and, indeed, as in any historical exercise pertaining to living people, the two influence one another. Accordingly, “Holding Hands With Wampum” uses the upstreaming method—which isolates persistent aspects of a culture that can be traced backwards in time—and the downstreaming method—which helps explain how the past can be unravelled to explain the present.<sup>34</sup>

Along with the upstreaming method comes a need to understand myth and memory as constructs of history, since all societies remember in different ways and mythicize certain aspects of their pasts. Anthropologist Elizabeth Tonkin’s approach has interpreted all history as representation, not as fact because people have different conceptions, or memories, of the past.<sup>35</sup> Culturally unique memory, meanwhile, is a crucial mediator between the individual and society and is necessary for social practices

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Hopkins University Press, 1990), 90, 92; Raymond Relouzat, *Tradition orale et imaginaire créole* (Martinique: IBIS Rouge Editions, 1998), 15; and Édouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Montréal: Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1995), 14 and 16.

<sup>34</sup> Fenton, *The Great Law*, 19; Havard, *Empire et métissages*, 22; White, *Middle Ground*, xiv; and Michael K. Foster, “On Who Spoke First at Iroquois-White Councils: An Exercise in the Method of Upstreaming,” Michael K. Foster, Jack Campisi, and Marianne Mithun eds., *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 197.

<sup>35</sup> Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts*, 9.

to endure and survive.<sup>36</sup> These two notions of memory and history are forever in conflict in western society, as Paul Ricoeur notes: the first strives to evolve, ever changing the multiple “representations of pastness,” while the latter remains subject to rigid judgements of “authentic” or “accurate.”<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, Joanne Rappaport, in her discussion of the Páez of modern Columbia, has stressed the incompatibility of memory and history whereby the Páez impossibly attempt to integrate “their own brand of historical and cosmological thought within Western-style discourse.”<sup>38</sup> Mythic components found in Páez ‘representations of pastness,’ while seen unfavourably by the western notion of history, nevertheless stress the repetitive nature of history, connect the past to the future, and allow us to understand not only where we came from, but also where we are going.<sup>39</sup> Despite often being catalogued as myth, “the creation, elaboration and re-elaboration of written and oral images within a power struggle ... do in fact solve precise practical problems.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, myth does not necessarily represent an invalid account, but it is simply a different way of looking at the past.

Similarly, Rappaport’s discussion of the persistence of moral structures and the reinterpretation of older models to very new and distinct social circumstances, has revealed the historical narrative of a *reinvented* past, instead of Eric Hobsbawm and

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<sup>36</sup> Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts*, 98, 111 and 104.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 82 and 85.

<sup>38</sup> Joanne Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory: Native Historical Interpretation in the Columbian Andes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2.

<sup>39</sup> Rappaport, *Politics of Memory*, 16.

<sup>40</sup> Rappaport, *Politics of Memory*, 188.

Terrance Ranger's idea of purely *invented* traditions.<sup>41</sup> Extending both theories further, "Holding Hands With Wampum" suggests components of a Haudenosaunee past that is neither invented nor reinvented, but simply retooled; that is, the *kaswentha* ethic's principles of autonomy and mutual coexistence have been expressed in different ways throughout time, with the fundamental principles remaining the same. While invention and reinvention imply newness, the *kaswentha* is very old indeed and although its expression constantly shifts, it nevertheless finds consistency in the cultural structure of a people over time.

The true challenge broached by "Holding Hands With Wampum" is to weave disparate "representations of pastness" together to explain how the *kaswentha* ethic was retooled over time, not on a localized political level, but on a broader scale that captures the expression of Haudenosaunee culture and morality in formal, diplomatic contexts. Emphatically, this study is not a political history of Haudenosaunee-European relations; rather, it is a history of an ethical discourse—the *kaswentha*—within Haudenosaunee communities that evolved in response to changing relations with the newcomers. Accordingly, not all of the historical events that one might expect to find in a political history of the Haudenosaunee are included or examined in detail. Instead, each chapter reflects a particular snapshot of Haudenosaunee history that illustrates the expression of the *kaswentha* ethic, as it evolved over a period of four hundred years of contact. Each time period covers a crucial and transformative stage in Haudenosaunee-European relations, chosen for the events they portray as much as for the detailed and eloquent sources that they produced.

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<sup>41</sup> Rappaport, *Politics of Memory*, xii and 187; and Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-2.

Each chapter depicts the internal workings of the *kaswentha* ethic in a particular environment and describes the ceremonial and rhetorical forms through which the concepts of autonomy, mutual coexistence, and peace were expressed. The first chapter begins by exploring the founding of the Confederacy by the Peacemaker and how the *kaswentha* ethic became a crucial component of Haudenosaunee constitutionalism. The independence established on a local level by the Peacemaker, apparent through relationships between clan mothers, chiefs, and warriors, illustrate the foundations of Haudenosaunee culture that would expand and develop to carry the Confederacy through their relationships with the foreigners.

The second chapter jumps forward to the late seventeenth century, after the Haudenosaunee and Europeans had interacted for decades in their co-created New World. Examination of the early years of the Covenant Chain alliance (1677-1700), arguably the most important bilateral and bicultural agreement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, depicts how the Haudenosaunee and the English spoke at cross-purposes before a diplomatic *métissage* had truly formed. Similarly, French-Haudenosaunee relations depict different manifestations of the *kaswentha* ethic in the same period, as the nations alternated between war and peace, and as some Haudenosaunee people moved northwards to Roman Catholic communities within what the newcomers called New France. Involved in a confused dance of expectations, actions, reactions and reassessments of events, the *kaswentha* ethic guided how the Haudenosaunee understood and interacted with the foreigners.

The period surrounding the Seven Years War in the mid-eighteenth century, forms the backdrop for Chapter Three, when wampum diplomacy was at its height and a

*métissage* in the political spectrum became truly possible. Certain individuals, especially Hendrick, Brant Canagaraduncka, Joseph Brant, and Sir William Johnson lived *métissage* in their daily lives with customs, language, dress, and political protocol, such as wampum and oratory, which crossed cultural expectations. Although the *kaswentha* ethic did not blissfully exist with the European newcomers, both parties created a balance that protected their own interests while simultaneously maintaining their own autonomy.

Chapter Four explores the late nineteenth-century evolution of the *kaswentha* ethic. Decades after the military and diplomatic importance of the Haudenosaunee had declined following the War of 1812, Canadian Confederation firmly entrenched the Haudenosaunee as wards of the state—not allies of the Crown—in the eyes of the newcomers. As their special relationship with Britain unilaterally slipped out of their control with the adoption of the 1867 British North America Act, which gave the federal government all powers over “Indians, and the Lands reserved for Indians,” the Haudenosaunee assertively responded to their newly diminutive status in innovative ways by retooling ancient principles.<sup>42</sup> The *kaswentha* ethic shifted towards ideology, as various chiefs and individuals codified the Great Law for a larger, Euro-Canadian audience and began to express the principles of peace, autonomy, and cooperation in the Two Row Wampum, a wampum belt with two parallel purple rows said to represent the eternal separation between the Haudenosaunee and the newcomers.

Finally, the politicization of *Onkwehonwe* rights and the use of the Two Row Wampum in the twentieth century constitutes the last chapter. As Canada continues to ignore the *kaswentha* ethic’s Two Row Wampum, increasingly vocal—and sometimes forceful—displays of Haudenosaunee sovereignty dominate political discourse.

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<sup>42</sup> Canada, *The British North American Act, 1867*.

Numerous scholars, politicians, and activists have adopted the Haudenosaunee call for a Two Row relationship between the Canadian state and all *Onkwehonwe* nations, an attempt at reconciliation that might offer a new form of political *métissage*. Only by exploring the stories behind the *kaswentha* ethic's drastically different and persistent worldview, can we hope to comprehend the anger and discontent expressed at the Caledonian land dispute, for example, and, perhaps, accommodate the Haudenosaunee's distinct "representation of pastness" as part of a founding narrative of the Canadian nation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Origins of the Kaswentha Ethic

Long before Europeans arrived on Turtle Island, numerous storytellers remember how death and disorder raged through the forests and along the rivers of what we now know as New York State and Ontario.<sup>1</sup> Warriors wreaked havoc by burning villages and massacring the young and old alike, and the people feared they would never experience peace again. One woman and her daughter sought refuge from the terror and violence on the northern shores of Lake Ontario, where the daughter gave birth to a son whom she named Tekánawí:ta' (or Deganawidah), who was destined to unite the five warring nations of Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca peoples together in a Confederacy founded upon the principles of peace, power, and good minds.<sup>2</sup>

The boy, who came to be called the Peacemaker, had an extraordinary childhood, according to all accounts. His grandmother, furious that her daughter could not name the

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<sup>1</sup> The Peacemaker's Epic summarized here is drawn from four major works: Mohawk/Onondaga Seth Newhouse's 1885 version; the Six Nations Committee of Chiefs' 1900 version; Onondaga Chief John Arthur Gibson's 1912 version (originally collected from Gibson by ethnologist A.A. Goldenweiser and translated and edited by Hanni Woodbury with the help of Reg Henry and Harry Webster, Onondaga speakers from Six Nations); and Cayuga Chief Jacob E. Thomas' 1991 draft version. These four versions are only a small sample of the many different accounts of the Peacemaker's Epic and have been chosen because they are widely read and widely accepted today. For a detailed point-by-point comparison of these versions and others, see Christopher Vecsey, "The Story and Structure of the Iroquois Confederacy," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 54.1 (1986). Seth Newhouse (Da-yo-de-ka-ne), "The Original Literal Historical Narratives of The Iroquois Confederacy. or the Birch Bark Canoe," APS, Microfilm No. 348, 1885; Committee of Chiefs, "Traditional History of the Confederacy of the Six Nations," Prepared by Duncan C. Scott, *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 5.2 (1912 [recorded in 1900]); Hanni Woodbury, ed. and trans., *Concerning the League: the Iroquois League tradition as dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson*, in collaboration with Reg Henry and Harry Webster, on the basis of A.A. Goldenweiser's manuscript, Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, 1992; and Jacob E. Thomas, "The Legend of the Peacemaker, Part 1," draft version (Ohsweken: JTLC, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> Henceforth, the term 'the Peacemaker' shall be used because many contemporary Longhouse peoples at Six Nations believe that his name should only be spoken if trouble on earth is so severe that they need call on him for help (an idea that does not exist in Kahnawake). His name is not on the Haudenosaunee roster of chiefs since he is not technically dead, like the other first chiefs, but is simply waiting for the right time to return. Haudenosaunee languages have no equivalent to "the Peacemaker," but, as it is the most common way to refer to that individual today, it will be used in this work.



father, tried to kill the infant three times: she sank him in a semi-frozen lake, buried him in the earth, and scorched him in a roaring fire, but each time he reappeared in their longhouse.<sup>3</sup> Finally, a messenger visited the grandmother in a dream and explained that *Shonkwaia'tihson*, the Creator, had sent the child to “reveal the good tidings of Peace and Power from Heaven, and [he] shall rule and govern on earth.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as the child grew into a young man, he began carving a stone canoe so that he could spread the lessons of Good Message, Power, and Peace to unite all humankind.<sup>5</sup> To the astonishment of his mother and grandmother, the Peacemaker’s stone canoe did not sink and, now an adult, he bade his family farewell, and glided eastward, soon disappearing from sight.<sup>6</sup>

Travelling at a superhuman speed, the Peacemaker quickly arrived on the southern shore of what is now Lake Ontario and met a group of hunters who told him of “great strife in our settlement.”<sup>7</sup> The evil sorcerer, Thatótá:ho’ (or Tadodaho), terrorized

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<sup>3</sup> In some versions, the Peacemaker’s mother experienced a miraculous conception while in others she simply refused to name the father. Similarly, in some versions of the Haudenosaunee origin story, Skywoman’s daughter also experienced a miraculous conception, which ultimately killed her. J.N.B. Hewitt (with J.A. Gibson as informant), “Iroquoian Cosmology: Second Part,” *U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology*, 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report 1925/26, 43.5 (Washington, 1928): 449-819; and Elias Johnson, *Legends, Traditions and Laws of the Iroquois, or Six Nations, and History of the Tuscarora Indians* (Lockport: Union Printing, 1881).

<sup>4</sup> Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 198. While the phrase “reveal the good tidings of Peace and Power from Heaven, and [he] shall rule and govern on earth” seems to reflect a Christian influence, it could equally reflect the Haudenosaunee concepts of Sky World or the Holder of the Heavens, *Shonkwaia'tihson* in Kahnawake orthography (“he made our bodies”), who created the world as we know it along with his brother, Flint. Most likely, the Chiefs’ version probably reflected both Haudenosaunee and Christian concepts, since by the late nineteenth century, many Haudenosaunee at Six Nations had either adopted Christianity or followed the *Gaiwi:yo:ho*, or the Code of Handsome Lake, the early nineteenth-century Seneca prophet who was influenced by both Haudenosaunee and Quaker philosophies.

<sup>5</sup> Only the Gibson-Woodbury version referred precisely to the three concepts of “Good Message, Power, and Peace” in Onondaga: *kaihwiyóh*, *ka'tshátstéhsæ'*, and *ské'nu'*. The Chief’s version refers to the “the message of the good news of Peace and Power,” which is very similar (not surprising given that Gibson was on the Committee of Chiefs). Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, xx; and Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 205.

<sup>6</sup> Woodbury has noted that in a Gibson-Hewitt version, the white stone canoe is replaced with a white birch bark canoe. Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, p. xx.

However, birch bark canoes are *not* white, but tan since the white bark forms the interior of the canoe, which is in turn obscured by the hull-enforcing wooden ribs. Nevertheless, the idea of a white canoe probably speaks to purity, much like white wampum signified peace and understanding.

<sup>7</sup> Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 200.

the Haudenosaunee, and warriors ran amok, scalping and murdering anyone unlucky enough to cross their path.<sup>8</sup> The Peacemaker sent the fearful hunters back to their village to announce the coming of his message, and then continued eastwards until he came upon an isolated dwelling where a gruesome cannibal lived. The Peacemaker tricked this evil man—Tadodaho in some versions—by peering down through the smoke hole and causing his handsome face to reflect in the cannibal’s pot of human flesh. Surprised, the cannibal believed that he saw his own reflection and reasoned that such a noble-looking man should not devour humans. After convincing the cannibal to renounce his evil ways and accept the path of righteousness, the Peacemaker continued eastwards.

Next, our hero encountered Tsikúhsáhse’, the Mother of Nations, who fed and sheltered passing warriors in her home. The Peacemaker once more employed his good mind and convinced Tsikúhsáhse’ of the value of Peace and Power, and the harm of war. Tsikúhsáhse’ became the first peace chief and gave women their central political and ceremonial role as clan mothers in the emerging *Kayaneren ’kó:wa*, commonly known as the Great Peace, but more correctly translated as the Great Good or Great Justice.<sup>9</sup>

Eventually, the Peacemaker reached the first Mohawk village, and successfully proved the superhuman greatness of his power and message by surviving a fall from a tall

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<sup>8</sup> The very name Tadodaho refers to being “ensnarled,” as his head was covered with writhing snakes. William N. Fenton, *The Roll Call of the Iroquois Chiefs: A Study of a Mnemonic Cane from the Six Nations Reserve* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1950), 62. Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Deer, “The Iroquois Condolence,” *Ecumenism*, 159.40 (September 2005): 9. Woodbury has discussed how Tsikúhsáhse’ was the first to receive a chiefly title with the root *-yane-* in it, which “is reserved for the chiefs whose titles were conferred by” the Peacemaker. A small role for Tsikúhsáhse’ appears in the Gibson-Woodbury, Thomas, and Chiefs’ versions, but not the Newhouse version, which Barbara H. Mann has argued is a result of earlier ethnographers’ disinterest in female characters in Haudenosaunee history. Barbara H. Mann, “The Lynx in Time: Haudenosaunee Women’s Traditions and History,” *American Indian Quarterly*, 21.3 (Summer, 1997): 423-449; and Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, 93.

tree into a gorge filled by a turbulent river.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the village chief Hayéhwátha' (or Hiawatha), the second to accept the Peacemaker's message, became devastated by the tragic deaths of his daughters and mourned inconsolably: one daughter drowned in a lake's tidal wave; another one perished of a mysterious illness; and finally, lacrosse athletes chasing a bird trampled his third daughter. Overcome by his grief, Hiawatha could not help the Peacemaker because tears clouded his eyes, grief clogged his throat, and pain rang through his ears, so the first condolence ceremony used the healing power of song, reassuring words, and wampum strings, twigs, or quills to ease his suffering and restore his good mind.<sup>11</sup> Only once Hiawatha's broken heart was repaired, could he continue westward to help the Peacemaker spread the Good Message. Outside each village, Hiawatha waited patiently at the Wood's Edge until a village chief approached him bearing elderberry twigs, a precursor to wampum, as an official welcome, which soon would become a necessary element of council protocol.

Finally, after visiting each Haudenosaunee village and after a difficult time convincing the Seneca warriors to lay down their arms, Hiawatha and the Peacemaker arrived at Onondaga—Tadodaho's realm—after a perilous canoe ride through gigantic waves.<sup>12</sup> Tadodaho's hideous form had snakes slithering in his hair and fingers that twisted and contorted grotesquely.<sup>13</sup> With seven crooks in his body and turtle claws for

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<sup>10</sup> The Woodbury-Gibson and Thomas versions mention the Peacemaker's fall into the gorge as a test of his powers and message, while Newhouse and the Chiefs' versions do not. The Peacemaker's tumble parallels Sky Woman's fall from the Sky World onto the back of the turtle.

<sup>11</sup> In some versions, Hiawatha's daughters perished at the hands of the evil Tadodaho or the witch Osinoh.

<sup>12</sup> In the Gibson-Hewitt version, Tadodaho lived isolated in the bush and terrorized those in neighbouring settlements. In other versions, he is the dictator of Onondaga itself. J.N.B. Hewitt and John Arthur Gibson, "The Founding of the League of the Five Nations by Deganawida," NAA, Hewitt Collection, No. 3689, 1899; and J.N.B. Hewitt and John Arthur Gibson, "Deganawida Legend," NAA, Hewitt Collection, No. 3528, 1899.

<sup>13</sup> Chiefs, "Traditional History," 217.

feet, Tadodaho possessed a twisted mind, a cruel demeanour, and “his organ of generation was so long that he had it wound round his neck.”<sup>14</sup>



Figure 2: From David Cusick (Tuscarora), *Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations*, (Tuscarora Village: Lewistown, Niagara Co., 1828), 23.<sup>15</sup>

The Peacemaker, Hiawatha, and Tsikúhsáhse’, the Mother of Nations, tried their best to convince Tadodaho of their righteous path and good minds; finally, he relented and allowed them to comb the snakes from his hair and to rearrange “his body to restore him to humanity.”<sup>16</sup> Tsikúhsáhse’ crowned him with deer antlers of authority, as subsequent clan matrons would do for all future chiefs.<sup>17</sup> Bestowed with the office of firekeeper,

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<sup>14</sup> Both the Thomas and Newhouse versions mention Tadodaho’s penis. Fenton has elaborated on the phallic symbol, suggesting that it may relate to the suspected rape of women by shamans, “in a society where ideally warriors never raped women.” The Chiefs’ version also has a specific section dedicated to rape: “If a Lord [chief] is guilty of rape he shall be deposed without the usual warning by the Lords of the Confederacy.” Rape seems to have been problematic enough in Haudenosaunee society—at least around the turn of the twentieth century when the Chiefs compiled their version—that it warranted an article in the “obligations and positions of the Lords.” Thomas, “Legend of the Peacemaker, Part I,” 15; Newhouse, “Literal Historical Narratives,” 15; William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 79; and Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 231.

<sup>15</sup> Cusick took a few liberties with his sketch as such chairs were not in use and as the Peacemaker and Hiawatha probably would not have paid an armed (see spear, bow, and arrows) visit to Tadodaho as they carried a message of peace.

<sup>16</sup> Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, xxvi.

<sup>17</sup> Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, xxvi, 238. These ‘horns of office’ are deer antlers, although their use may be of relatively recent origin. The Jesuit Lafitau wrote in the early eighteenth century “the chiefs have no mark of distinction and superiority so that, except in a few individual cases, they cannot be distinguished from the crowd.” Today’s *kastoh’weh* (a feathered bonnet to which, in the case of a chief, deer antlers are attached) are not pictured in any known illustrations of the seventeenth or

Tadodaho's conversion brought peace and consensus to all five nations and established the central fire of the Confederacy at Onondaga.<sup>18</sup>

Thus began the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.<sup>19</sup> While no single official version of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* exists, and while even the four versions by four different authors used here differ greatly in some parts, the message of peace, the power of good minds, and the possibility of human restoration remain of foremost importance. As anthropologist Elisabeth Tonkin has argued, variances in oral traditions simply situate the narrator, the audience, and the society as a whole in a particular climate and in no way invalidate the stories told.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, bringing multiple versions together in such a way illustrates the core consistencies, but also the superficial differences created by each of the four authors through his own understanding of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*. The Christian Seth Newhouse wrote from a Mohawk perspective in the late nineteenth century for a political end.<sup>21</sup> The Committee of Confederacy Chiefs rejected the Newhouse version

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eighteenth centuries; a certain number of feathers placed in various positions on a *kastoh'weh* indicate the nation to which the individual belongs. Lewis Henry Morgan, *League of the Ho-dé-no-sau-nee, or, Iroquois* (Rochester: Sage & Brother, 1851), 254-55; Joseph François Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times*, William N. Fenton and Elizabeth L. Moore, eds., vol. 1 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974 [1724]), 293.

<sup>18</sup> Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, xxvi.

<sup>19</sup> Historian Daniel K. Richter has differentiated between the terms "League" and "Confederacy," stating that the former "is undeniably old, relatively unchanging, and very much alive to the present day," while the latter encompassed a constantly changing political entity that evolved with the influx of Europeans and ceased to exist with the American Revolution. James Bradley made the opposite distinction, but in so doing, both scholars have perpetuated an assumption that contact is both the ending point for something authentic and traditional and the starting point for a new European-influenced indigenous culture. For simplicity, this dissertation employs the term "Confederacy" throughout, while recognizing that Haudenosaunee political entities have changed a great deal from pre-contact until the present day. Daniel K. Richter, "Ordeals of the Longhouse: The Five Nations in Early American History," James H. Merrell and Daniel K. Richter eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: Iroquois and their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 186-88; and James W. Bradley, *Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois: Accommodating Change, 1500-1655* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005 [1987]).

<sup>20</sup> Elisabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9, 38, 114.

<sup>21</sup> Newhouse's Christianity meant that he was more interested with the political workings of the Confederacy for sovereign purposes than the ceremonial aspects. See Chapter 4.

and sanctioned their own rendition in 1900, subsequently published by the Deputy-Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott. John Arthur Gibson, a renowned chief and Longhouse speaker among his own people and early ethnologists, grew frustrated with the Chiefs' version and dictated his own understanding in 1912, perhaps the most widely studied rendition of the Peacemaker's epic today. And Jacob E. Thomas, also a chief and ceremonialist, wrote in the late twentieth century as new challenges faced Longhouse peoples at Six Nations and elsewhere. Each of these four versions arose in a unique political climate at Six Nations Reserve in southern Ontario, undoubtedly influenced by other closely linked Haudenosaunee communities in both the United States and Canada.<sup>22</sup> Earlier accounts of the epic by authors such as the missionaries John Christopher Pyrlaeus and John Heckewelder, and the Mohawks Joseph Brant and John Norton, also relayed slightly different stories that reflected a contemporary interpretation of the Peacemaker's journey but, as with many oral traditions, the timeless messages and values depict a common narrative of an historical past.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Haudenosaunee communities in Canada include: Six Nations of the Grand River, Oneida of the Thames, Tyendinaga/Bay of Quinte, Akwesasne/St. Regis, Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, and Wahta. Haudenosaunee communities in the United States include: Akwesasne, Ganienkeh, Kanatsiohareke, Onondaga, Cayuga, Oneida (one community in New York and another in Wisconsin), Allegany, Cattaraugus, Tonawanda, Buffalo Creek, Niagara Falls, Oil Springs, Seneca-Cayuga tribe of Oklahoma, and Tuscarora.

<sup>23</sup> John Christopher Pyrlaeus (original in Dutch) is translated and cited in John Heckewelder, *An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations, Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States*, revised edition, vol. 12 (Philadelphia: Memoirs of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, 1881); Joseph Brant, "Answers to Queries Respecting the Six Nations (1801), Manuscript, Miller Papers I, New York Historical Society, New York, New York; and John Norton, *The Journal of Major John Norton, 1816*, Carl F. Klinck and James J. Talman eds. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1970). Norton maintained that his father was a Cherokee captive among the British although some scholars today consider Norton's *Onkwehonwe* ancestry dubious. Regardless, Norton was a pupil of Joseph Brant's and an adopted Mohawk (named Teyoninhokawawen) and tried to mediate between those at Six Nations Reserve and the British Crown in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth centuries. Fenton, *Great Law*, 59; Norton, *Journal*.

In addition to embarking on an inspirational story of restoration to humanity and human righteousness, the Peacemaker also outlined political protocol in the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* so that disparate, previously hostile peoples could live together, aided by their similar values of independence, peaceful alliance, respect, and consensus. The term, “*kaswentha* ethic” encapsulates these crucial principles of political protocol, and ultimately provides a lens through which to interpret generations of Haudenosaunee relationships. Looking at the *kaswentha* ethic as an overarching Haudenosaunee worldview that relies upon the culturally construed principles of right conduct, also parallels the principles of righteousness or *ka'nikonhri:io* (good mind) found in the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*. Using Haudenosaunee concepts in ethical discourse to explore the Confederacy’s past therefore remains rooted in a distinctly Haudenosaunee cultural tradition.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the three philosophical concepts of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*—“Good Message, Power, and Peace,” or *kaihwiyóh*, *ka'tshátstéhsæ'*, and *ské'nu'*<sup>25</sup>—also exist in the *kaswentha* ethic since it is only through living these concepts that autonomy and mutual cooperation on a larger political level can be achieved.

Wampum expresses the very essence of the *kaswentha* ethic and remains a crucial component in any discussion of Confederacy origins and political protocol. Indeed, the Peacemaker used wampum—or in some renditions, elderberry twigs or bird quills—to restore Hiawatha’s good mind, clouded by grief from his daughters’ deaths, while Hiawatha showed others how to legitimize a message with proto-wampum, an earlier version of the tubular shell beads that emerged shortly after contact.<sup>26</sup> Hiawatha is often

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<sup>24</sup> Brian Deer to Kathryn Muller, personal correspondence, 27 June 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Onondaga spellings from Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, xx.

<sup>26</sup> Beauchamp and Hale have defined the name Hiawatha as “he who seeks the wampum belt,” but others have interpreted the name differently: Morgan claims it means, “He who combs” (referring to combing the

hailed as the founder of wampum. Francis Boots of Akwesasne, for example, has explained how a grief-stricken Hiawatha stumbled upon the beads when “a flock of geese came ... and picked up the water” of a lake to reveal a bottom covered in wampum. Despite Hiawatha’s grief, wampum depicted the continuance of the lifecycle since “the sun will shine tomorrow ... the moon will continue her direction.” The mythological origins of wampum set the stage for centuries of revered Condolence Ceremonies and for establishing peace and kinship relations between peoples.

Not only is wampum of crucial importance for ceremonial reasons, but larger belts also reflect the *kaswentha* ethic found in the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*. Although the Peacemaker and Hiawatha could not have strung the wampum belt pictured below while travelling among the Haudenosaunee—the quantity and quality of beads simply did not exist before the arrival of Europeans—the *Haienhwá:tha'* (Hiawatha) wampum, or the Five Nations Territorial Belt, nevertheless depicts the concepts espoused by these two heroes.<sup>27</sup> The belt’s Tree of Peace centres the Five Nations at Onondaga as a path linking the other four central fires in the Confederacy, uniting both land and people.

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snakes out of Tadodaho’s hair), Hewitt has defined it as “He sifts with a bark sieve,” and Simeon Gibson has translated it as “Early Riser.” Hiawatha’s picture on the Condolence Cane, a mnemonic device for remembering the roll call of chiefs is that of a comb. Fenton, *Roll Call*, 59; Horatio Hale, ed., *The Iroquois Book of Rites* (Philadelphia: D.G. Brinton, 1883), 21. Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 1989, 77; and William M. Beauchamp, “Wampum and Shell Articles Used by the New York Indian,” Frederick J.H. Merrill ed., *Bulletin of the New York State Museum*, 8.41 (February 1901): 341.

<sup>27</sup> Henry B. Carrington, in his history of Haudenosaunee government, claimed that a belt, “representing the Onondagas by a heart, in the center of the league”—most probably the *Haienhwá:tha'* belt described here—is “older than the settlement by the white people, or, as claimed, dating back to Champlain’s invasion in 1608.” Fenton, however, x-rayed the belt when it was held at the New York State Museum and found a bead in the centre of the belt made of lead glass that would, along with more modern wampum drilling techniques, indicate a post-contact origin. While the current *Haienhwá:tha'* belt (now held at Onondaga after being repatriated in 1972), therefore, is of post-contact origin, the symbolism is likely quite ancient. Henry B. Carrington, “The Six Nations of New York,” *The 1892 U.S. Extra Census Bulletin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 33; and William N. Fenton, “The New York State Wampum Collection: The Case for the Integrity of Cultural Treasures,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 115.6 (December 1971): 444-446.



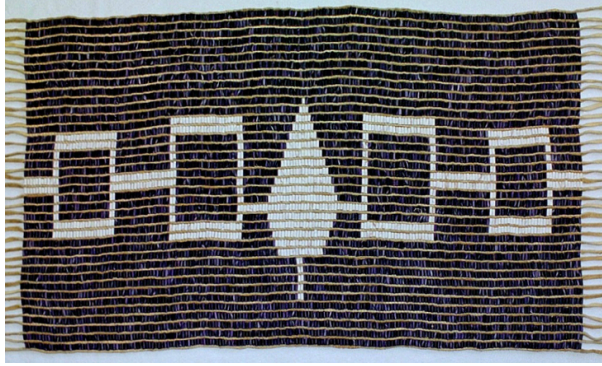


Figure 3: The *Haienhwá:tha'* (Hiawatha) wampum ‘map’ also known as the Five Nations Territorial Belt

Wampum replica made by Darren Bonaparte of Akwesasne using acrylic art clay wampum beads, handmade by Tara Prindle of Waaban Aki Crafting.

Courtesy of Darren Bonaparte, Wampum Chronicles, [www.wampumchronicles.com](http://www.wampumchronicles.com).

Travelling from west to east (left to right), the council fires depicted are the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga (centred at the Great White Pine, the heart of the Confederacy), Oneida, and Mohawk

While each nation shared cultural, social, political and territorial commonalities, as displayed by the *Haienhwá:tha'* map, the fact that different council fires depicted on the belt continued to represent the separate entities speaks to their autonomy, while simultaneously reminding the Haudenosaunee that they live on common land held together by the White Roots of Peace.<sup>28</sup> Each nation within the Confederacy therefore regulated its internal matters separately from the central fire, as the *kaswentha* ethic implied, and depended upon a complex political structure that valued kinship, debate, and consensus building. Held together by the roots of the Great White Pine, which extended in the four cardinal directions, and sheltered from danger by the tree’s branches, the

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<sup>28</sup> Historian Paul Wallace described the White Roots of Peace as stretching “to the four quarters of the earth” and signifying “the extension of the Law, the Peace, to embrace all mankind.” If other nations of “goodwill” saw the roots growing outwards, they would “follow them to their source and take shelter with others under the Tree.” Paul A.W. Wallace, *The White Roots of Peace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946), 35. Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 1998.

Peacemaker taught the Haudenosaunee how to join in one heart, one body and one mind for the preservation of everlasting peace.<sup>29</sup>

Majestic and symbolic trees have always been a central metaphor in Haudenosaunee culture. Sky Woman tumbled through a hole left by the Celestial Tree in Sky World, landed on a Turtle's back, and created the world as we know it.<sup>30</sup> The Central World-Tree extended from the waters of the underworld to pierce the sky with its branches and gave Hadui, the Great Defender of the False Face Society, power when he rubbed his turtle-shell rattle against it.<sup>31</sup> In a political context, the Great White Pine or Tree of Peace perfectly symbolized the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*'s union with its clusters of five needles—characteristic of the genus *Pinus strobus*—which, along with the Peacemaker's pledge to tie together five arrows, depicted the unbreakable strength of the united five founding nations.<sup>32</sup> The planting of the tree—*Skaǰhetsi'kona* in Onondaga (Great Tall Tree Trunk)—emphasized the permanency of the “good tidings of peace and power” as the Peacemaker tossed all weapons of war into a pit under the tree, whereupon a strong current carried them away.<sup>33</sup>

The Tree of Peace also branched out over the “Jo-no-ken-rah-ko-wah,” or “belts of white wampums” described by Newhouse, which lay “under the shade of the spreading

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<sup>29</sup> Jake Swamp, Oral Presentation at the “Rekindling the Fire Conference,” 4 December 2004, Massena, New York. See also Carrington, *Extra Census Bulletin*, 33-34; Noah T. Clarke, “The Wampum Belt Collection of the New York State Museum,” *New York State Museum Bulletin*, 288 (Albany, 1931): 87-89; and Beauchamp, “Wampum and Shell Beads,” 411, 420.

<sup>30</sup> A number of authors have recorded Sky Woman's fall from the Sky World to the World on a Turtle's Back, including David Cusick, *Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations* (Tuscarora Village: Lewistown, Niagara Co., 1828); Hewitt, “Iroquoian Cosmology: Second Part”; and Johnson, *Legends, Traditions and Laws*. See Fenton, *The Great Law*, for a summary of different versions.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur C. Parker, “Appendix E: Certain Iroquois Tree Myths and Symbols,” *The Constitution of the Five Nations or the Iroquois Book of the Great Law* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1916), 154. Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 1991.

<sup>32</sup> Fenton, *Great Law*, 103 and Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 227.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas, “Legend of the Peacemaker,” Part II, 7; Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 226; and Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, 297, 447-448.

branches of this ‘Tree of Peace or shelter.’”<sup>34</sup> This “Great White Mat,” Tuscarora artist and scholar Richard Hill Jr. has explained, is the “foundation upon which the Great Law is built” and is both physically a “‘carpet’ of soft, white, thistle down, but it is also the wampum belt itself.”<sup>35</sup> Chiefs are meant to sit on this mat and carry their titles on their back.<sup>36</sup> Next to Tadodaho, meanwhile, lay a long rod with which to pry away “any creeping thing” which might be harmful to the “great white Wampum Belt,” as well as “a large bird’s wing” used to sweep the White Wampum Belt clean of dust, or “evil of any description.”<sup>37</sup>

The Everlasting Tree or Dust Fan belt, *Skaronhesejó:wa Tsiokterakentjó:wa* (Mohawk), continues the metaphor of the Great White Pine at the centre of the Confederacy. As the widest belt ever known, the Tree “grows high and its top reaches the Spirit World that all nations may see it.”<sup>38</sup> If any clear-minded person or nation wished to join the Haudenosaunee and follow the *Kayaneren’kó:wa*’s law, they needed only to “follow one of the great roots to the tree” and “take shelter beneath the ‘Tree of the Long Leaves’ [a coniferous tree] Needles.”<sup>39</sup> Displayed whenever the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* was recited—with the exception of most of the twentieth century when

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<sup>34</sup> Newhouse, “Literal Historical Narratives,” articles XIX, 24. The Chiefs’ version refers to the great white wampum belt of law as the “Ska-no-dah-ken-rah-ko-wah,” meaning unknown but presumably a Mohawk word (since the chiefs refer to *royaner*, the Mohawk word for chief, elsewhere in the text and since by the late nineteenth century, Mohawk had become the lingua-franca of the Confederacy). Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 224.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Hill, “Draft Guide to the Meaning of the Haudenosaunee Wampum Belts,” March 2002, Haudenosaunee Resource Center, Wampum Files, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario, 4.

<sup>36</sup> Hill, “Draft Guide.” Both Gibson-Woodbury and the Chiefs’ version describe a similar “great white mat upon which the chiefs sit.” Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, xxvii, 298-99 and Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 224.

<sup>37</sup> Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 224 and Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, xxvii, 298-99.

<sup>38</sup> Tehanetorens. *Wampum Belts* (Onchiota: Six Nations Indian Museum, 1972), 15-16. Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 1993.

<sup>39</sup> Jacob E. Thomas, *Illustrations and Descriptions of Wampum Belts*, #9364 (Ohsweken: JTLC, 1989).

the belt was held at the New York State Museum—the belt aimed “to protect the Council and to keep the eyes of the 50 civil leaders free from dust or harmful thoughts.”<sup>40</sup>

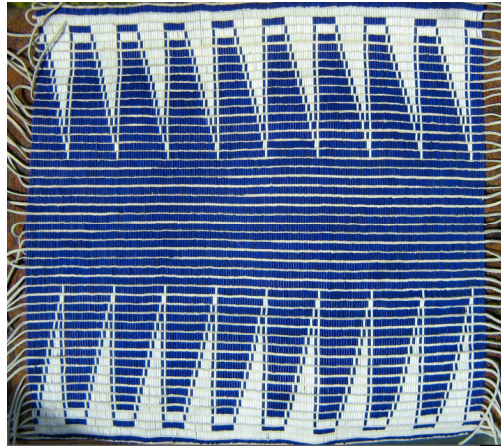


Figure 4: The *Skaronhesejó:wa Tsiokterakentjó:wa* (Everlasting Tree or Dust Fan) wampum Wampum replica made by the late Hanadis Spittal of Six Nations using glass imitation wampum beads from IROQRAFTS, Six Nations Territory. Courtesy of his family.

The Dust Fan belt represents both the Great Pine of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* as well as the chiefs themselves, who adopted the metaphor of a tree to describe how they all stood strong, tall, and, crucially, at equal height, to show that none is more important or powerful than another.<sup>41</sup> An “eagle with sharp eyes” perched on the highest branch, warned the Haudenosaunee of any approaching evil, while friends could follow the “long white roots (Jo-deh-ra-ken-rah-ko-wah)” to the Confederacy’s centre from the four cardinal directions.<sup>42</sup> The wide-spreading white roots of the tree, Akwesasne knowledge-

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<sup>40</sup> Tehanetorens, *Wampum*, 15-16. The belt was one of the many—including the *Haienhwá:tha'* belt—that were repatriated from the New York State Museum after a long legal battle in 1976. See Fenton, “New York State Wampum Collection”; Beauchamp, “Wampum and Shell Beads,” 412, 420; and Clarke, “Wampum Belt Collection,” 98.

<sup>41</sup> Fenton, *Great Law*, 201.

<sup>42</sup> Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, xxvii, 311 and Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 227. In Gibson, the eagle just watches for danger while in the Chiefs’ version, the eagle screams an alarm if any evil approaches the Confederacy.

holder Mike McDonald explained, physically held the land together and symbolically latched onto far away peoples and their lands, bringing them under the tree's protection.<sup>43</sup>

Others describe the central figure on the *Haienhwá:tha'* belt not as a Great White Pine, but instead as a "white heart," which depicts the single loyalty of the Five Nations "to the Great Peace...[which] is lodged in the heart, with the Onondaga people."<sup>44</sup>

Akwesasne elder Ray Fadden continued, describing how a "Path of Peace" stretches outwards from the heart, and even extends beyond the eastern and western doors of the Confederacy, "meaning that others may follow this path, and become part of the Great Peace."<sup>45</sup> In 1898, Daniel and Thomas La Fort at Onondaga, also described the heart of the *Haienhwá:tha'* belt: "if any hurt of any animal would pierce that heart, then they would all feel it—all the Five Nations ... they are a united people."<sup>46</sup> There is no need to see the interpretations of the tree and the heart as contradictory; to the contrary, each serve to centre the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* at the Onondaga council fire and unite the Five Nations in the mutual collaboration of the *kaswentha* ethic, while including any others who wish to be protected under the branches of the tree or profess loyalty to the heart of good mind, peace, and power.

Moving east and west from the central tree, heart, and council fire at Onondaga, the rectangles on the *Haienhwá:tha'* wampum each denote one of the four nations along

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<sup>43</sup> McDonald, "Rekindling the Fire Conference." As will be shown in subsequent chapters, the Haudenosaunee brought other nations 'under their protection' whether the foreigners consented or not!

<sup>44</sup> Ray Fadden, "Migration of the Iroquois," Joseph Bruchac, ed., *New Voices from the Longhouse: An Anthology of Contemporary Iroquois Writing* (New York: The Greenfield Review Press, 1989), 102-03. A Haudenosaunee Resource Centre's publication explains how the "heart" interpretation stems from the Mohawk, although it parallels the tree metaphor since both encompass the central principles of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*. Indeed, the earliest documentary explanation of the belt explains that the nations are "joined together by a line of white wampum, and united to a heart in the centre, implying the union of hand and heart as one." Chief De-hat-ka-tons, quoted in the *History of Onondaga County*, Gen. John S. Clark, quoted in Hill, "Draft Guide to the Meaning," 5-7.

<sup>45</sup> Fadden, "Migration of the Iroquois," 102-03. Fadden, also known as Aren Akweks and Tehanetorens, instigated a large revivalist movement of Haudenosaunee culture at Akwesasne in the 1930s and 1940s.

<sup>46</sup> Beauchamp, "Wampum and Shell Articles," 420.

the path of peace. The word Haudenosaunee itself refers to extending a house—a rectangular longhouse that could be lengthened by adding rafters—that became both a metaphor and a reality of the Confederacy. Individual families or lineages lived in longhouses grouped by clan; multiple clan longhouses made up individual villages; villages united under the structure of nation; and the longhouses of each nation came together on the *Haienhwá:tha'* belt to form the Confederacy. Upon hearing the term *Hotinnonchiendi* in 1654, the Jesuit Simon le Moyne understood that the Haudenosaunee lived together in “‘the completed Cabin,’ as if to express that they constituted but one family.”<sup>47</sup> While only families actually lived in a longhouse, ceremonies and politics also revolved around their structure at the village, national, and confederacy levels, thereby including every Haudenosaunee person as brethren in an extended lodge.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, early writings by Cadwallader Colden described the Confederacy as “joyn’d together by a League or Confederacy, like the United Provinces [of Holland], without any Superiority of any one over the other.” “Each nation,” the author of the first written Haudenosaunee history continued, “is an absolute Republick by its self,” thereby expressing *kaswentha*

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<sup>47</sup> Simon le Moyne, *JR* 41(1654), 85 [http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/relations\\_41.html](http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/relations_41.html). Accessed 4 August 2007.

<sup>48</sup> Although Haudenosaunee people no longer live in longhouses today, the buildings are reserved for ceremonies, political gatherings, and social dances. The physical structure of the Haudenosaunee longhouse emerged around 1000 A.D.; the longest longhouse archaeologist James Tuck found approached four hundred feet and impressed many early observers, such as Schoolcraft who exalted the longhouses as “an air palace, ...having beams and rafters, higher and longer than any pile of regal magnificence yet reared by human hands.” In 1654 Father Simon le Moyne recalled a Mohawk speaker who said: “We, the five Iroquois Nations, compose but one cabin; we maintain but one fire; and we have, from time immemorial, dwelt under one and the same roof.” Simon le Moyne, *JR* 41(1654), 85, [http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/relations\\_41.html](http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/relations_41.html). Accessed 4 August 2007; James A. Tuck, *Onondaga Iroquois Prehistory: A Study in Settlement Archaeology* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 2; and Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Notes on the Iroquois, or, Contributions to the Statistics, Aboriginal History, Antiquities and General Ethnology of Western New York* (New York: Bartlett & Welford, 1846), 48.

principles of autonomy in their own national longhouse, while cooperating in a larger confederate structure.<sup>49</sup>

Other historic and contemporary observers have described the structure of the Confederacy as a devolved form of government, with each nation maintaining the *kaswentha* ethic's independence. Nineteenth-century ethnologist, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, for instance claimed, "so little power was abstracted from each tribe, and conceded to the federative council" that there hardly seemed to be any.<sup>50</sup> Schoolcraft's contemporary, Louis Henry Morgan, one of the earliest ethnographers of the Confederacy's inner workings, romantically described the Five Nations as "a perfect and harmonious union" of independent nations, knit together in order to develop an Amerindian empire that would control surrounding nations to end the perpetual warfare.<sup>51</sup> The Peacemaker's *Kayaneren 'kó:wa* revealed "the perfect independence and individuality of the national sovereignties" in which the Haudenosaunee civil and social systems united "in one common, indissoluble brotherhood."<sup>52</sup> Contemporary authors perhaps write less romantically and deny the existence of a strong central government, but in so doing emphasise the separateness of each nation within the Confederacy.<sup>53</sup>

Given the weakness of the Grand Council in Onondaga and the strength of the individual nations on the *Haienhwá:tha'* wampum, it may seem odd that eighteenth- and

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<sup>49</sup> Cadwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations Depending on the Province of New-York in America* (Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1994 [1727]), xii, xx.

<sup>50</sup> Schoolcraft, *Notes*, 125.

<sup>51</sup> Morgan, *League*, 57-8. 1851.

<sup>52</sup> Morgan, *League*, 60, 77.

<sup>53</sup> See Richard Aquila, *The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 33-34; Francis Jennings, "Iroquois Alliances in American History," Francis Jennings et al., eds., *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 38; and Daniel K. Richter, "Ordeals of the Longhouse: The Five Nations in Early American History," Merrell and Richter eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain*, 15, 25.

early nineteenth-century Moravian missionary John Heckewelder described the Haudenosaunee political structure with imagery of “a *family*, an *united people*, a *family compact*” with the Onondagas as “the head” and with their “brothers and sons.”<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the very idea of an extended longhouse implied kinship in the Confederacy for how could one make peace and conceive of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* without family to trust? While the Confederacy would later adopt other nations or individuals as kin in order to create peace, establish alliances, and replace those who had perished during epidemics, the ability to cooperate as part of the *kaswentha* ethic was only possible by relating to one another as kin. Wampum often memorialised adoptions with diagonal lines woven upon a belt to depict the additional rafters added to a longhouse, as when a portion of the Tuscarora moved northwards to join the Confederacy in the early eighteenth century. Above all, anthropologist Mary Druke has illustrated, the Haudenosaunee desired alliances, which would establish “relationships with everyone in their universe.” Historian Matthew Dennis examined some of these relationships established by means of non-aggression pacts (which were broken many times in the historical record), and the process by which the Haudenosaunee “reconceived themselves as kinspeople,” redefined violence as internecine, and banned aggression—in theory at least, although not in practice—between the united nations.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Heckewelder quoted the Reverend David Zeisberger who asserted, “the Iroquois call themselves *Aquanoschioni*, which means *united people*, having united for the purpose of always reminding each other that their safety and power consist in a mutual and strict adherence to their alliance.” In modern orthography, this term might be rendered as *Akwanonhsion'ni* and might translate as “Our extended house.” John G. Heckewelder *Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations, who once inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States, who once inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States*, William C. Reichel notes and introduction (Bowie: Heritage Books, 1990 [1819]), 97; thanks to Thomas Deer for the Mohawk orthography.

<sup>55</sup> Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 8 and Mary A. Druke, “Linking Arms: The Structure of Iroquois Intertribal Diplomacy,” Merrell and Richter eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain*, 29.



While families obviously existed at the most basic of kinship levels, clans also united multiple lineages since every member of a particular clan presumed to share a common ancestor in a very ancient past.<sup>56</sup> As a matrilineal society, the child adopted the clan of his or her mother; men married a woman of another clan—it was incest to marry within one’s clan or immediate family—and husbands retained their clan of birth. While clans differed among Haudenosaunee nations, they also helped unite diverse people since a Mohawk member of the Bear Clan was related to an Onondaga Bear; no matter how far from home, an individual could always find refuge in the clan longhouse of his/her birth. Indeed, clans transcended nations and grew from the very soil of Turtle Island. Six Nations scholar Deborah Doxtator has explained that in asking an individual which clan they belong to (*oh nisen’taroten*), one is literally asking “What is the outline or contour of your clay?”<sup>57</sup>

The clans arose long ago in part to help families complete the grieving process for dead relatives. As the people travelled alongside a river, they became divided with half on each side, ‘sides’ that would be maintained in the ceremonial and political proceedings of the Longhouse.<sup>58</sup> Two sides in a Mohawk or Oneida village would include the Wolf and Turtle as one side and the Bear as another, while the two sides at the Confederate level would include the three paternal uncles—Onondaga, Mohawk, and Seneca—and

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<sup>56</sup> Merlin Meyers, *Households and Families of the Longhouse Iroquois at Six Nations Reserve* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), xxxi, xxxii, 25, 152 and Annemarie Anrod Shimony, *Conservatism Among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

<sup>57</sup> Deborah Doxtator, “What Happened to the Iroquois Clans? Study of Clans in Three Nineteenth Century Rotinohsyonni Communities,” Ph.D. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, 1996, 6.

<sup>58</sup> Anonymous, “Ancient Clan System,” *Indian Time: A Voice from the Eastern Door*, 18.1 (January 2000), <http://members.aol.com/miketben2/supp3.htm>, accessed 12 May 2008. ‘Sides’ are usually called ‘moieties’ in anthropological literature, but Annemarie Shimony has pointed out that no term for moiety exists in the Cayuga language. Instead, *Thodidjê’hôt* (Cayuga), refers to the ‘two sides.’ Shimony, *Conservatism*, 21.

two nephews—Cayuga, Oneida.<sup>59</sup> Political and ceremonial processes are structured around these two sides, with decisions passing first to the Turtles and Wolves, before progressing to the Bears in the Mohawk nation and with the uncles condoling the loss of a chief on the nephew's side (or vice versa) at a Confederacy Council.<sup>60</sup> Within each clan, anthropologist Merlin Meyers has argued, several family lineages existed with women at their head;<sup>61</sup> certain of these lineages possessed a chiefly title, passed down through the female line and which the clan matron bestowed upon a deserving a male lineage member.

Deborah Doxtator's fascinating look at nineteenth-century Haudenosaunee clans has expanded the notion of 'two sides' between clan groupings to a male 'side' of the forest and a female 'side' of the clearing. The concept of twoness is common in Haudenosaunee society, from the twins Sapling and Flint who created a world in balance to the clear-minded Peacemaker and the twisted Tadodaho. Doxtator has extended the twoness of clan groupings further and explores the *ohwachira* (mother's matrilineage—

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<sup>59</sup> Although most of the literature calls these sides elder and younger brothers, Woodbury has asserted that sides instead consist of "paternal fathers (uncles)" vs. "paternal nephews," according to a linguistic analysis of the terms. Cory McComber of Kahnawake confirms Woodbury's comments since the Cayuga and Oneida call the three brothers (Mohawk, Onondaga, and Seneca) "my father's maternal family," or *akatonnihson* in Mohawk. Fenton, *Great Law*, 25, 54-55 and Interview between Kathryn Muller and Cory McComber, Kahnawake, 25 October 2007.

<sup>60</sup> At Six Nations, a unique structure exists with the Four Brothers (nephews) including the Tuscarora and the Delaware adoptees (along with later adoptees, the Saponi, Tutelo, and Nanticoke). Interestingly, while today Kahnawake is seen as a Mohawk community, historically the community had members from seven clans instead of the typical Bear, Wolf, and Turtle of the Mohawk nation. Other clans include the Deer and Snipe—common to the Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca clans—and Rock, which probably refers to the Oneida, the 'people of the erected stone.' The mission community of Kahnawake, originally called the 'Iroquois (not just Mohawk) of Kahnawake,' therefore, likely had members from throughout the Confederacy. Thomas Deer also pointed out in conversation that Seth Newhouse, a Mohawk from Six Nations, also listed these seven clans in his 1885 version of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*. Shimony, *Conservatism*, 21 and Gerald F. Reid, *Kahnawa:ke: Factionalism, Traditionalism, and Nationalism in a Mohawk Community* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 55.

<sup>61</sup> Meyers maintained that a lineage is a descent group with a common, known ancestor in perpetuity, while a clan comprises several lineages where the common descent is assumed in a long-ago past. The two groups share some similar functions, but other rights and duties remain solely the jurisdiction of either the lineage or the clan. *Households and Families*.

clearing) and the *agadoni* (father's matrilineage—forest) to delineate their mutual reliance for “co-operation, reciprocity and balance” in the economic, political, and ceremonial domains.<sup>62</sup> Each set of relationships further cemented the alliance of mutual cooperation that the Peacemaker and Hiawatha outlined: man cannot function without woman on a longhouse level; the Bear Clan cannot function without the Wolf and Turtle Clans on a national level; and the uncles cannot function without the nephews on a Confederacy level.

On an even more political level Doxtator's *ohwachira* (mother's matrilineage—clearing) and *agadoni* (father's matrilineage—forest) intersected with the appointment of chiefs by the female head of each clan. These men, or trees of equal height, represented the people on a village, national, or confederate level, a duty inscribed once again in wampum. The Circle Wampum depicts the fifty Confederacy chiefs circling around the Great Tree of Peace in a counter-clockwise direction, mimicking their seats in council and the direction of consensus-building discussion, and linking arms so that if an enemy should hack away at the roots, the symbol of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* will never fall.<sup>63</sup> The chiefs not only prepared themselves to support the Great Tree of Peace until the roots once again spread to the surrounding territories, but the *Teiotiokwaonhaston* (“it circles the people”) wampum also formed a protective ring around “the clans, laws, ceremonies, ways and traditions of the confederacy.”<sup>64</sup> If anyone chose to leave the circle—exercising the *kaswentha*'s ethic of individual autonomy—they would, lawyer Darlene

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<sup>62</sup> Doxtator, *What Happened*, 69.

<sup>63</sup> Diamond Jenness, *Three Iroquois Wampum Records*. National Museum of Canada. Annual Report, no. 70, 1931, 26. Fenton has described another mnemonic device, the condolence cane, which also aided in recalling chiefly titles. Fenton, *Roll Call*.

<sup>64</sup> Darlene Johnston, “First Nations and Canadian Citizenship,” William Kaplan, ed., *Belonging: The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 350.

Johnston explained, “stand without a language, without a culture.”<sup>65</sup> Onondaga faithkeeper Oren Lyons further described the *kaswentha* ethic at work in the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*: people “came of their own free will to participate” in the Haudenosaunee political structure, demonstrating that sovereignty “began with the individual, and all people were recognized to be free...[and] to defend freedom.”<sup>66</sup> If a chief chose to leave the circle, anthropologist William N. Fenton has explained that the linked arms of other chiefs would catch the points of his symbolic antlers of office, stripping him of his position: a chief cannot live outside the culture and ceremonies of the Haudenosaunee people.<sup>67</sup>

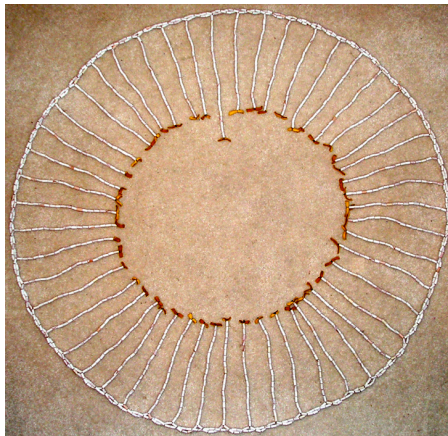


Figure 5: The *Teiotiokwaonhaston* (Circle) wampum  
Wampum replica made by Darren Bonaparte of Akwesasne using acrylic art clay wampum beads,  
handmade by Tara Prindle of Waaban Aki Crafting.  
Courtesy of Darren Bonaparte, Wampum Chronicles, [www.wampumchronicles.com](http://www.wampumchronicles.com).

The *Teiotiokwaonhaston* symbolism also recalls the principles of twoness, as Francis Boots has described the two rows of wampum beads, twisted together to form the outer border of the circle: each string that falls inwards represents one position of both

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<sup>65</sup> Johnston, “First Nations,” 350; McDonald, “Rekindling the Fire Conference”; and Parker, *Constitution*, 45.

<sup>66</sup> Oren Lyons, “Land of the Free, Home of the Brave,” José Barreiro ed., *Indian Roots of American Democracy* (Ithaca: Akwe:kon Press, Cornell University, 1992), 33.

<sup>67</sup> Fenton, *Great Law*, 201.

“*Rotiahneson* and *Iotiahneson*, the Chiefs and Clan Mothers, which is to say the families.”<sup>68</sup> The one longer string represents Tadodaho, the fire keeper whom the Peacemaker cured of crookedness, and marks the place of the council fire at Onondaga; again, while each nation retained their *kaswentha* autonomy, wampum drew them together in an effort to maintain “the peace and unity of the people.”<sup>69</sup> The anthropologist Diamond Jenness collected the Circle Wampum from Six Nations Chief William Loft in 1930 and described it as the “covenant or Magna Charta of the League,” woven at the bequest of the Peacemaker to preserve the organization of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*.<sup>70</sup>

The word ‘chief’ carries a western connotation of hierarchy and authority but the Mohawk word *roya:ner* actually translates as “Nice People” according to Fadden who understands the Circle Wampum as a *rodiyaner* (plural form) promise to maintain the unity of the Confederacy in the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*.<sup>71</sup> The current leader of the traditional Mohawk community of *Kanatsiohareke*, Tom Porter, agrees, describing a *royaner* as

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<sup>68</sup> Boots, “Iroquois Uses of Wampum,” 38.

<sup>69</sup> Boots, “Iroquois Uses of Wampum,” 38. See also Thomas, *Illustrations and Descriptions*; Tehanetorens, *Wampum Belts*, 6-7; and Hill, “Guide to the Meaning,” 4-5.

<sup>70</sup> Jenness, *Three Iroquois*, 25. During the Revolutionary War, Mohawk Chief William Loft told Jenness, the wampum keeper buried this wampum by Osagundaga creek until Joseph Brant reclaimed it to renew the council fire along the Grand River. Prior to its 1989 repatriation, the Canadian Museum of Civilization examined the beads of the Circle Wampum and determined that one bead in its structure may be a glass trade bead (of post-contact origin). New x-rays of the belt showed that the drill holes were “straight, bi-conical and misaligned” therefore indicating that some beads were likely pre-contact (misaligned), while others had likely been made after contact. Like the *Haienhwá:tha'* wampum, just because some beads dates from the post-contact era does not mean that the symbolism of the Circle Wampum is not ancient. Wilf Bokman, Conservator, *Report 128: Notes on Three Examined Wampum Records*, Canadian Museum of Civilization Unpublished Conservation Report, 1990, obtained from the personal collection of Michael K. Foster; Canadian Museum of Civilization, Catalogue Information, Catalogue number III-I-1088, NL-IIDP, Wampum Files, Folder: National Museum of Man. On the repatriation itself, see Michael K. Foster, “The return of three CMC wampums to the Iroquois Confederacy, Phase 1,” 8 January 1991. Uncatalogued Tooker Papers, APS, Box 29: Wampum.

<sup>71</sup> Fadden, “Migration of the Iroquois,” 102. In Kahnawake orthography, *Rodiianer* is the plural form of *Roiá:ner*, but if one were speaking about all the chiefs (either of the Confederacy or of a particular nation), they would say *Rodiianershon* (the *shon* suffix implies a group of something). Thomas Deer to Kathryn Muller, personal correspondence, 4-6 June 2008.

“those men who are of the good” while the late Cayuga Chief Jacob Thomas associated a *royaner* close to *Shonkwaia'tihson*: “they would work for the Creator ... for many generations to come.”<sup>72</sup> Brian Deer of Kahnawake explained *roianer* (the ‘i’ instead of ‘y’ is Kahnawake orthography) as “Just Man.”<sup>73</sup> Indeed, the root of *-yanehr-* refers to being good or just and is also the major root in the term *Kayaneren'kó:wa*.

Charged with upholding the greatest law of all, the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*, the chiefs stood as trees of equal height with both the people or each other.<sup>74</sup> Charlie Patton, longhouse follower and teacher in Kahnawake elucidated the parallel between chiefs and trees of peace: “Every tree is a chief, so that tree, that you see standing in the distance, that beautiful white pine, waving in the wind, majestic pine, that’s supposed to be a chief symbol, and when you see that pine stands out different from all the rest, it’s pretty, it’s beautiful, strong, but that’s the same thing that when you, somebody, leaders, or people, anybody, we’re supposed to all be that tree. That means that we’re supposed to stand out and be different from everything else around us. We’re supposed to, by our behaviour, by our actions, and by the way we conduct ourselves....That means that you function, and you conduct yourself according to the [Great] law [of Peace]. That means you speak in a good way. You think in a good way. You treat people with respect, and you conduct

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<sup>72</sup> Porter has described the root of the word *royaner*: the root word, *ioianere*, means “nice or good” in English; the *ro* refers to the male gender (he is nice/good). Brian Deer, Thomas Deer, and Cory McComber confirm this meaning. In Kahnawake, the term is spelled *roianer* instead. Tom Porter, “Men Who Are of the Good Mind,” Barreiro ed., *Indian Roots*, 12; Thomas Deer to Kathryn Muller, personal correspondence, 4-6 June 2008; and Interview between Muller and McComber.

While it would be better to refer to chiefs in this dissertation as *royaner* since it more accurately represents them as ‘good men’ instead of as part of a political hierarchy, it would be too complicated given that the dissertation deals with Confederacy chiefs from all six nations. It would be false to refer to Cayuga chief Jacob E. Thomas as Royaner Thomas, since the term is a Mohawk one and it would be far too confusing to employ the correct name for chief in each of the six languages.

<sup>73</sup> Deer, “Iroquois Condolence,” 10, footnote 5.

<sup>74</sup> The Chiefs’ version described the chiefs “of equal standing and of equal power” and stand like trees in a circle around the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* so that they may support one another if a tree should fall. Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 227-29.

yourself with respect. You help your people. You treat your people well. You stand up for your people. You set a good example.”<sup>75</sup> All trees remained of the same height; even Tadodaho, having been offered the special place of fire keeper due to his metamorphosis from a twisted mind, “was never in advance of the popular will.”<sup>76</sup> With authority gained, Colden described in the seventeenth century, from their “Wisdom and Integrity,” the chiefs “never execute their Resolutions by Compulsion or Force upon any of their People[:] Honour and Esteem are their Principal Rewards, as Shame & being Despised are their Punishments.”<sup>77</sup> The Jesuit Lafitau observed that in early eighteenth-century Kahnawake the chiefs acted with dignity and commanded, not by absolutism or coercion, but by posing reasonable requests to the members of their clan.<sup>78</sup>

Clan mothers, or *akoianer*, the female form of *roianer*, raised chiefs after having selected and trained them from a young age: Porter’s grandmother insisted, “you must look when the kids are small” for character strengths and flaws and then continue to observe them as young men to see whether they attend ceremonies, belong to the society, and treat others with honesty and respect.<sup>79</sup> Only once a potential chief has married a woman of another clan and has loved his own children, will he know how “to love his country” and people. He can never have killed another human being—although not strictly followed—and he must be wise, accommodating, spiritual, and an excellent speaker, while remaining humble and generous.<sup>80</sup> Lyons further explained how a chief

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with Charlie Patton, 1 November 2007. Lafitau has also discussed chiefs as trees. *Customs*, 1:292.

<sup>76</sup> Schoolcraft, *Notes*, 125.

<sup>77</sup> Colden, *History*, xx.

<sup>78</sup> Lafitau, *Customs*, 1:292-93.

<sup>79</sup> Porter, “Men Who Are,” 17-19 and Deer, “Iroquois Condolence,” 10, footnote 5.

<sup>80</sup> Porter, “Men Who Are,” 17-19. In practice, things are not so simple. One anonymous person at Six Nations told me of two instances where these rules have not been followed: 1) Approximately thirty years ago, a Cayuga man struck a Mohawk man who had been kissing his wife outside a party; the Mohawk fell

must be beyond reproach, possessing compassion and tolerance, while “his skin must be seven spans thick to withstand the accusations, slander, and insults of the people as he goes about his duties.”<sup>81</sup> His only authority is “what the people give him in respect” and he can only lead by example, not by might. In sum, “he now belongs to the people.”<sup>82</sup> Not everyone viewed the structure of the Confederacy as one of balance and consensus. In contrast to the principles of the *Kayaneren’kó:wa*, Schoolcraft, for one, described the political structure as a dictatorship, with power assigned to and concentrated on “one individual, who stood as the federal representative of his canton in its sovereign capacity.”<sup>83</sup> The truth probably lay somewhere in the middle: the Haudenosaunee were not exempt from individuals who sought power selfishly, Tadodaho being one example, yet the societal involvement in governance provided a system of checks and balances that prevented anything even remotely close to a dictatorship.

Those adopted into a Haudenosaunee clan could also become chiefs, providing that their clan mother carried a chiefly title. For example, the Oneida adopted the Jesuit Pierre Millet in 1689 and bestowed him with the first Oneida title in the roster of chiefs, Otasseté, which dated back to one of the original founders.<sup>84</sup> The tradition of adoption

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backwards and died when his head struck a car bumper. The Cayuga man spent time in jail—which shocked some members of the community as they felt the punch was justified and the death just an unfortunate accident—and later became a chief; 2) Approximately forty years ago, a grandmother appointed a 4-5 year old boy as a chief, a decision which many were unhappy about but which reflects a common attempt to keep the chiefly title close to the immediate family (whereas in the past, titles were distributed among an extended longhouse clan family and not a nuclear family). Also, not all current chiefs speak a Haudenosaunee language, although many are learning.

<sup>81</sup> Lyons, “Land of the Free,” 32.

<sup>82</sup> Lyons, “Land of the Free,” 32.

<sup>83</sup> Schoolcraft, *Notes*, 122.

<sup>84</sup> Millet, *JR* 64 (1689), 91 and 93,

<http://www.canadiana.org/ECO/PageView?id=293a4356fec06b04&display=07598+0097>, consulted 5 August 2007. The fact that the Oneida “resurrected” Millet as Otasseté long after the man who held that title passed away, raises some important questions about the period that could elapse before replacing Confederacy Chiefs, not to mention about bestowing upon an outsider one of the most important titles of the Oneida nation. Newhouse claimed that “no individual or foreign nation interested in a case, question or



even extends back to Hiawatha who in some versions was born an Onondaga and was adopted as a Mohawk; his name now appears on the Mohawk roster of chiefs.<sup>85</sup> Despite a few early references, it is often difficult to find the names of chiefs in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century records because, as Fenton has pointed out, the so-called sachems of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents often refer to the “gifted speakers who often served as ambassadors to outside groups” rather than the fifty condolee chiefs.<sup>86</sup>

While chiefs were responsible for debating and deciding issues by consensus, a place also existed for gifted speakers or admired men from non-chiefly lineages. Each chief had a sub-chief, or *haqdanoh* (Cayuga), who supported his efforts, acted as his runner/messenger and sometimes stood in when a chief was absent.<sup>87</sup> Translated as “he stands on the roots,” a sub-chief propped up the metaphoric chiefly tree and ensured that his tree in the forest of chiefs continued to stand tall and equal to the others.<sup>88</sup> Pine-tree chiefs, men from non-hereditary lineages who did not belong to a family with a chiefly title, were also appointed for often political reasons and helped guide the chiefs with their wisdom. Neither pine-tree chiefs nor sub-chiefs, Six Nations Chief Arnold General and Faithkeeper Ken Maracle have explained, were ‘raised up’ in a Condolence Ceremony

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proposition shall have any voice in the Confederate Council,” which seems to indicate that Millet’s adoption would have been complete (ie. he was no longer a foreigner). Another alternative, of course, is that Millet simply misunderstood what was going on! While many early Jesuits claim that they were speakers, Cory McComber of Kahnawake pointed out that their manuscripts tell a different story. The way in which they wrote Mohawk/other Haudenosaunee words indicates that they did not necessarily speak the language fluently (or they would have spelled things differently to capture the correct sounds/intonations). Interview between Muller and McComber and Parker, *Constitution*, article 15, 33.

<sup>85</sup> Wallace says that Hiawatha was an Onondaga by birth, but adopted by the Mohawk. The Chiefs’ version and the Gibson-Woodbury version claim that Hiawatha was a Mohawk, while others, such as Hale, claim he was Onondaga. Wallace, *White Roots*, 33; Chiefs, “Traditional History”; Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*; and Horatio Hale, “Hiawatha and the Iroquois Confederation: A Study in Anthropology,” 1881, reprinted in *The Iroquois Book of Rites and Hale on the Iroquois*, 35.

<sup>86</sup> Fenton, *Great Law*, 198, 204-211.

<sup>87</sup> Meyers, *Households*, 153.

<sup>88</sup> Meyers, *Households*, 153.

performed to ease the grief of a deceased chief.<sup>89</sup>

In the Condolence Ceremony, the two opposing ‘sides’ of the clearminded—who would perform the ceremony—and the mourners—who suffered from the loss of a chief—engage in a complex protocol of procession, chanting, welcoming, singing, eating, and, finally, dancing in order to help heal the bereaved and, with cleared minds, raise a new chief in his stead.<sup>90</sup> To help the mourners heal over the loss of a Cayuga Confederacy chief, for example, the Condolence would begin with any number of paternal uncles—Onondaga, Mohawk, and Seneca—in a procession towards the Longhouse of the bereaved ‘side’ of the Cayuga, where the Oneida would also sit. People also performed an abbreviated Condolence to help the grief-stricken relatives of a non-chiefly individual, but clearly, no chiefly ‘raising’ ceremony would occur.

Of course, a chief could not exist without his clan mother, who brought her chosen candidate before all the people of his clan and before the Grand Council itself to see if anyone objected to his being ‘raised.’ After he was approved, the clan mother continued to “keep him in line” and reminded him of his obligations to the people since, Six Nations elder Huron Miller explained, “once the chief is put on the seat in council,

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<sup>89</sup> Interview between Kathryn Muller and Arnold General, Onondaga Chief, Six Nations, 14 February 2007; Interview between Kathryn Muller and Ken Maracle, Wampum Shop, Six Nations, 11 June 2007.

<sup>90</sup> The intricate condolence ceremony includes the Requicking Address, the Welcome at the Wood’s Edge, the Roll Call of chiefs (the *Hái-hái*), five songs and another song called ‘Over the Forest,’ a rendition of how the Confederacy was formed, and the elevation of the new chief. For more on the Condolence Ceremony, see Horatio Hale, “An Iroquois Condoling Council,” reprinted in *The Iroquois Book of Rites and Hale on the Iroquois*; William M. Beauchamp, “Civil, Religious and Mourning Councils and Ceremonies of Adoption of the New York Indians,” *New York State Museum Bulletin*, 113 (Albany: The University of the State of New York reprint, 1981 [1906]); Deer, “Iroquois Condolence”; Mike Myers, “Frozen Thoughts, Frozen Feelings,” *Gatherings: The En’owkin Journal of First North American Peoples*, vol. 4 (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1993): 35-50; Teyowisonte (Thomas Deer), “Releasing the Burden: Haudenosaunee Concept of Condolence,” *The Eastern Door*, 10.35 (28 September 2001): 14-15; and Fenton, *Great Law*.

the welfare of the people is put on the palm of his hand.”<sup>91</sup> Despite her central role, a clan mother “has no voice in council,”<sup>92</sup> an observation which likely led early observers like Charlevoix to conclude that women possessed little authority, although he nevertheless recorded the consultation process, by which women first deliberated an issue before passing it on to the chiefs, who then passed it to the general council.<sup>93</sup> Lafitau, by contrast, recognized the real power of clan mothers and Haudenosaunee women in general, even if behind the scenes by European standards. He observed how “the real authority” resides with the women, from “the lands, fields and all their harvest belong to them; they are the soul of the councils, the arbiters of peace and war; they hold the taxes and the public treasure; it is to them that the slaves are entrusted; they arrange the marriages; the children are under their authority; and the order of succession is founded on their blood.”<sup>94</sup>

Much like a chief must serve the minds and desires of the people, “a clan-mother is not allowed to be doing as she pleases or using her own mind,” a view which cemented authority as a public process in Haudenosaunee society.<sup>95</sup> Other early observers, like Sir William Johnson in the mid-eighteenth century, recognized the importance of dealing with clan matrons and offered them special gifts like blankets and shirts, which testified to their importance in the community.<sup>96</sup> Historian James Axtell, however, has

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<sup>91</sup> Huron Miller, “The Great Law and the Clan Mother,” (Ohsweken: unpublished document, JTLC, Great Law File, 1987).

<sup>92</sup> Miller, “The Great Law.”

<sup>93</sup> Charlevoix, as cited in James Axtell, ed., *The Indian Peoples of Eastern America: A Documentary History of the Sexes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 152-53.

<sup>94</sup> Lafitau, *Customs*, 1:69. By slaves, Lafitau is probably referring to captives, who the women decided to kill or absorb into Haudenosaunee society to replace lost kin.

<sup>95</sup> Miller, “The Great Law.” Much as all men stood as “towering trees” of the same height, ‘Women Chiefs’ would also be of the same height to one another and to the men. J.N.B. Hewitt, “Women Chief paper,” NAA, Hewitt Collection, No. 3577, 1926, 3.

<sup>96</sup> Sir William Johnson, as quoted in Axtell, *Indian Peoples*, 155.

downplayed their importance, stating that Johnson knew clan matrons could not always prohibit their men from conducting a “rash enterprise” like war, which emphasises the ultimate freedoms inherent in Haudenosaunee society.<sup>97</sup> The *kaswentha* ethic’s autonomy and mutual cooperation prevailed even on the most local level of relationships between clan matrons, chiefs, and warriors.

While a clan mother may not have been able to command chiefs or warriors in an authoritarian sense, she could remove a chief if he did not follow the will of the people by warning him three times that he must return to a good mind. The first time a chief transgressed his duties, a clan mother approached him by herself; the second time, she approached him with a female faithkeeper; the third time she approached him with a male faithkeeper or sub-chief in an effort to show that the entire clan remained displeased with his decisions and/or actions.<sup>98</sup> If he continued in his crooked ways by ignoring the will of the people then he would be dehorned of his symbolic antlers of office and another chief—or tree—raised in his place. The clan matron also dehorned a chief and collected his wampum string of office before he passed away so she could raise a new chief three days after the funeral, which she also organised.<sup>99</sup> Not only do wampum strings denote

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<sup>97</sup> Axtell, *Indian Peoples*, 154.

<sup>98</sup> In Newhouse’s version of the Peacemaker’s Epic, the warriors can kill a chief who does not listen to the people although this point is highly debated and not repeated in the Gibson-Woodbury, the Chiefs’, or the Jake Thomas versions. Similarly, if a clan mother failed to carry out her duties and if “her mind has turned to error and unrighteousness,” a sister will try to set her back on the right path; if she refuses to obey, the war chief will speak to her, then her own chief, and finally, her entire matrilineage will come together to decide on an individual to replace her. Seth Newhouse, “Translation of the Mohawk version of the Constitution,” NAA, Hewitt Collection, No. 3490, 1887 (1937), article 50, 25-27; Hewitt, “Women Chief paper,” 5-6; and John A. Gibson, John Buck Sr., and Abram Charles, “The Law Governing the Behavior of Federal Chiefs,” coll. and trans. by J.N.B. Hewitt, Fenton Papers, APS, Series IIb.

<sup>99</sup> Gibson-Woodbury has noted that if a chief were to die suddenly, his antlers must be placed beside his grave, “to prevent the title’s being buried with the fallen chief.” In contemporary practice, it is rare that a chief be raised three days after the death of the previous titleholder because of a lack of chiefly lineages and people adequately prepared to take on the title and responsibilities of chief. Jacob Thomas, “Funeral Rites: Duties of the Clan Mother and Chief Procedures for Elevating a Chief,” (Ohsweken: JTLC, 1996), [www.tuscaroras.com/jtlc/The\\_Great\\_Law/funeral\\_rites.html](http://www.tuscaroras.com/jtlc/The_Great_Law/funeral_rites.html), accessed 7 August 2007; Unknown author

the offices of the clan matrons and chiefs, but they are also used in every Condolence Ceremony preceding the raising of a new chief.

The Women's Nomination Belt (*Ka'shastensera Kontiha:wa'ne Iotiiianeh:shon* in Mohawk, meaning, "They the clan mothers have strength/power) depicts the roles and responsibilities of the clan mothers of the Confederacy.<sup>100</sup>

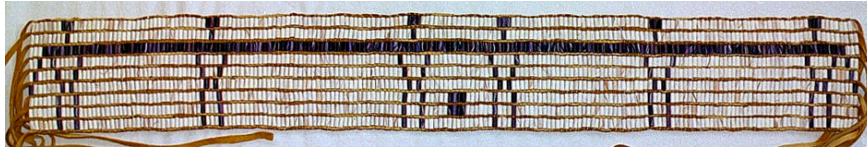


Figure 6: *Ka'shastensera Kontiha:wa'ne Iotiiianeh:shon* (Clan Matron's) wampum Wampum replica made by Darren Bonaparte of Akwesasne using acrylic art clay wampum beads, handmade by Tara Prindle of Waaban Aki Crafting. Courtesy of Darren Bonaparte, Wampum Chronicles, [www.wampumchronicles.com](http://www.wampumchronicles.com).

Each woman represents one of the Six Nations (a portion of the Tuscaroras joined in the early eighteenth century to become the sixth nation) and, much like the *Haienhwá:tha'* belt, the line running between them indicates their connectedness and equality, much like the chiefs all stand at the same height. The white background shows that "the clan mothers are the holders of the Kariwii (Good Message), Kashastensera (Power) and Skennen (Peace)" and the middle square shows the two sides of uncles and nephews.<sup>101</sup>

The belt links the Peacemaker's message to Tsikúhsáhse', the Mother of Nations, whom

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(possibly Frank Speck?), "Onondaga (Iroquois): Chief Matron's Wampum Credentials," Fenton Papers, APS, Series III, Social and Ceremonial Organization of Six Nations, folder 1; Thomas, "Funeral Rites"; Shimony, *Conservatism*; and Woodbury and Gibson, *Concerning the League*, xxxi.

<sup>100</sup> The direct translation of the Mohawk term is: *Ka'shatsténhséra* (strength/power) *Kontihá:wa'ne* (they (feminine) have) *Iotiiianérshon* (all the clan mothers or, more accurately, 'all of them (female) are good'). The spellings here are from Kahnawake and differ from the Jacob Thomas spellings used above. Thomas Deer to Kathryn Muller, personal correspondence, 4-6 June 2008.

<sup>101</sup> Anonymous, "The Haudenosaunee & Wampum," Excerpt of article from the Indian Times Newspaper, [www.peace4turtleisland.org/pages/womensbelt.htm](http://www.peace4turtleisland.org/pages/womensbelt.htm), Accessed 22 September 2007. The website states that the wampum was interpreted by the Mohawk Nation Council, in collaboration with the Circle of Knowledge and Traditional Iroquoian Orator's Society. Tehanetorens also explained how the women have the power of appointing and recalling chiefs on the "Womens [sic] Nominating Belt." He also mentions that "the women of every clan of the Five Nations shall have a Council Fire (voice) which shall ever be burning for the purpose of holding a council of the Women of the clan when in their opinion it is necessary and advantage [sic] of the people and their commonwealth." *Wampum Belts*, 20-21.

he met on the warrior's path and from whom the rights and responsibilities of clan mothers flow. Clan mothers must preserve "the harmony and balance within the clans and nations," guard against the duplication of personal names in their clan, and "prevent competition over the rights of leadership process."<sup>102</sup> As such, the duties of a clan mother extended far beyond raising and dehorning chiefs; she also, renowned Onondaga clan mother Audrey Shenandoah has explained, watched the moon for ceremonial times, guided and comforted the people, and watched over the community, the nation, and the religion.<sup>103</sup> Seth Newhouse also explained that the women "shall be the proprietors as well as the soil."<sup>104</sup>

While women were "entrusted with the power to propose a cessation of arms" as peacemakers,<sup>105</sup> they sometimes called for war, especially to obtain captives to replace children or other kin who had perished from disease, famine, or conflict. Indeed, as Axtell has explained, matrons "could call on their husbands' clansmen (*Athonni*) to seek revenge and to bring them enemy captives" although the requests remained secret, which "suggests that peace was a powerful paradigm and that family honor was less valuable than tribal security."<sup>106</sup> Despite the avowed frustration European officials experienced with the ineffectual authoritarianism of clan mothers, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century records indicate that the chiefs were even less successful in commanding others; it was "only by requesting the clan matrons to call off their warriors or by interrupting their progress with false rumors," Axtell elaborated, "could the elders remain at

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<sup>102</sup> Anonymous, "The Haudenosaunee & Wampum." Guarding against duplication of names is becoming harder and harder given the population levels, which greatly exceed the number during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

<sup>103</sup> Audrey Shenandoah, "Everything Has to Be in Balance," Barreiro ed., *Indian Roots*, 38-40.

<sup>104</sup> Newhouse, "Literal Historical Narratives," article XXX, 28.

<sup>105</sup> Schoolcraft, *Notes*, 135.

<sup>106</sup> Axtell, *Indian Peoples*, 161.

peace.”<sup>107</sup> Indeed, a distinction existed between private and national warfare: private warfare could emanate from a clan mother’s request or the autonomous raids of warriors, while national warfare occurred with the approval of the national or Confederacy councils. In either case, wampum continued to play a crucial role in the war-making process; as Lafitau described, a clan mother used wampum to explain “her intention of engaging him [a warrior] to form a war party.”<sup>108</sup>

The presence of warriors in the Peacemaker’s *Kayaneren’kó:wa* remains controversial since some knowledge-holders—like the late Chief Jacob Thomas—insisted that warfare ceased after the Peacemaker’s visit; on the opposite end of the spectrum, today’s Warrior Societies sometimes act without the sanction of the clan mothers or the chiefs—sometimes even suggesting that they have the right to murder a chief who disagrees with them—as in Akwesasne’s ‘civil war’ of the 1990s.<sup>109</sup> Others have maintained that warriors are an integral part of the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* for they help the clan mothers and chiefs maintain good minds, peace, and power. Thomas Deer, formerly the secretary of the Kahnawake Warrior Society, suggested that the trouble lies with the connotations of the English term ‘warrior.’ If one focuses on the roles and responsibilities of men in Haudenosaunee society (anything from diplomacy to

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<sup>107</sup> Axtell, *Indian Peoples*, 161.

<sup>108</sup> Lafitau, *Customs*, 2: 99.

<sup>109</sup> Jacob Thomas wrote that warfare ceased after the establishment of the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* and so “you can’t have ‘warriors’, you only have men.” Accordingly, Thomas denied the existence of a word for ‘warrior.’ Jacob Thomas, “Introduction: An Interview with Chief Jacob E. Thomas, Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1989,” Interview conducted by Brian Wiles-Heape, *The Constitution of the Confederacy by the Peacemaker*, written by Seth Newhouse in 1897 and revised by Jacob Thomas in 1989 (Ohsweken: JTLC, 1989), i.

Newhouse’s 1897 and 1898 versions of the Constitution both describe “club[bing] the erring Lords to death” if the chiefs did not heed “the warnings of the warriors, urging [him] to return from [his] wrong course of action, and to pursue that of doing right & justice.” Seth Newhouse, “Translation of the Mohawk version of the Constitution,” NAA, Hewitt Collection, No. 1343, 1898; also, Newhouse, 1897 (no. 3490) (3490 is actually the final revised version of 1343, so it is possible that the dates may have been reversed accidentally.)

hunting/providing for families, to ironworking today) and uses the term *rotiskenraké:te'* (Mohawk—meaning braves, young men), the concept is more respectful although, as always, the *rotiskenraké:te'* must remain subordinate to the Longhouse council.<sup>110</sup> Other Mohawk terms for warrior, *Rotiia'kón:ton* or *Oia'kón:ton* translate as ‘Tobacco Warriors’ and their job is to protect the chief from danger.<sup>111</sup>

While in theory the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* meant that the need for fighting no longer existed, in reality, warfare continued both with other *Onkwehonwe* and with Europeans until the early nineteenth century.<sup>112</sup> Morgan emphasised that chiefs could not fight or kill other people—if they did they “laid aside his civil office” to become a warrior—but it is worth remembering that several war leaders listened to the Peacemaker and later became chiefs according to the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*: Skanawadi, an Onondaga chief with a split personality divided between war and peace, and two Seneca war leaders who first rejected the message of good minds but later joined the roster of Seneca chiefs.<sup>113</sup> Authority to conduct war, like much else in Haudenosaunee society, derived from the people and Colden explained that Haudenosaunee “Generals and Captains obtain their Authority likewise by the general Opinion of their Courage and Conduct, and loose [sic] it by a Failure in those Vertues [sic].”<sup>114</sup> Although certain war captains existed, warfare

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<sup>110</sup> Interview between Kathryn Muller, Thomas Deer, and Cory McComber, Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitiókwa Language & Cultural Center, Kahnawake, 10 October 2007.

<sup>111</sup> The definition of *Rotiia'kón:ton* as “Tobacco Warriors” refers to their hanging tobacco in the dark corner of a house; these warriors, therefore, sit in the shadows to protect the chiefs. Thomas Deer to Kathryn Muller, personal correspondence, 4-6 June 2008; Interview between Muller, Deer, and McComber.

<sup>112</sup> While the War of 1812 was the last big war in which the Haudenosaunee fought, individuals from Kahnawake, Akwesasne, and Six Nations also fought in support of the Crown during the Upper and Lower Canadian Rebellions of 1837-38. See Matthieu Sossoyan, “The Kahnawake Iroquois and the Lower-Canadian Rebellions, 1837- 1838,” M.A. Thesis, McGill University, July 1999, [http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk1/tape10/PQDD\\_0021/MQ55008.pdf](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk1/tape10/PQDD_0021/MQ55008.pdf), accessed 12 May 2008.

<sup>113</sup> Fenton, *Great Law*, 203 and Morgan, *League*, 67-70.

<sup>114</sup> Colden, *History*, xx.



ultimately depended on individuals.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, the chiefs usually struggled to restrain the warriors instead of directing their fighting in a particular direction; any warrior could arrange a war party and in so doing, would assert *kaswentha* autonomy.<sup>116</sup>

Charlevoix further elaborated on the mutual cooperation inherent in the *kaswentha* ethic as he watched the warriors “consult together, on what relates to their particular province, but [they] can conclude nothing of importance which concerns the nation or town; all being subject to the examination and controul [sic] of the council of elders.”<sup>117</sup> All groups in Haudenosaunee society had to work together: the clan mothers appointed the chiefs with the will of the people; the warriors heeded the call of the clan mothers for war and restrained themselves when acting on their own; and the chiefs reflected the principles of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* in their daily living and governing. While Schoolcraft attributed a veto to the “armed men” in council and praised the process as “a purer democracy, perhaps, never existed,” it is unlikely that anyone had such supreme authority.<sup>118</sup> Although the warriors could certainly *act* as though they had a veto by simply ignoring and disobeying council policy by going off to war on their own initiative, such an action was difficult because the women would not provision their journey or provide them with moccasins if they disagreed with war. Ultimately, the Haudenosaunee system relied on the participation of all members of society to build consensus among kin that reflected the current needs of the community. It is no wonder that the Confederacy as a whole only came together for reasons of great importance and

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<sup>115</sup> Morgan, *League*, 67-8.

<sup>116</sup> Morgan, *League*, 67-8.

<sup>117</sup> Charlevoix, quoted in Axtell, *Indian Peoples*, 153.

<sup>118</sup> Schoolcraft, *Notes*, 135.

left *kaswentha* autonomy to each individual nation given the time-consuming and elaborate nature of the political process on even a village or national level.

Describing how exactly the clan mothers, chiefs, and warriors interacted in the time of the Peacemaker is almost impossible, as is attributing a specific date to the establishment of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* itself, despite the attempts of many scholars.

Early writers described a union among the Five Nations, whose names a Dutch journalist first recorded in 1635, but neither Lafitau (1724), nor Colden (1727) ever wrote about the Peacemaker himself although Colden at least remained convinced of the Confederacy's antiquity, explaining "this Union has continued so long that the Christians known nothing of the Original of it."<sup>119</sup> The Moravian missionary John Christopher Pylaeus estimated the first date of "the alliance or confederacy of the Five Nations" to be "one age (or the length of a man's life) before the white people (the Dutch) came into the country."<sup>120</sup>

The nineteenth-century Tuscarora writer David Cusick estimated that the first Tadodaho lived one thousand years before Columbus, a theory discounted by many because of his fanciful and unhistorical descriptions of kingships.<sup>121</sup> Ultimately, the dates for the founding of the Confederacy range from Cusick's unlikely 492 C.E. to 1390 (Committee

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<sup>119</sup> Fenton, *Great Law*, 52 and Colden, *History*, xix.

<sup>120</sup> Pylaeus claimed "*Thannawage* was the name of the aged Indian, a Mohawk, who first proposed such an alliance." *Thannawage* reads like a misspelling of Kahnawake; perhaps Pylaeus mistook the early village in what is now New York State from where the man—presumably Hiawatha—originated for his name (although no one really knows which village Hiawatha came from). The names Pylaeus gave for the early chiefs in 1743 who brought the Five Nations together in a Confederacy are: "*Toganawita*, of the Mohawks; *Otatschéchta*, of the Oneidas; *Tatotarho*, of the Onondagas; *Togaháyon*, of the Cayugas; *Ganiatariò* and *Satagarüyes*, from two towns of the Senecas, &c.," and Pylaeus concluded with "All these names are forever to be kept in remembrance, by naming a person in each nation after them." Indeed, the Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca titles appear to be misspellings of the 'first chiefs' of their respective nations but the Mohawk and Cayuga chiefs do not match up (the first Mohawk chief is *Tekarihogen* and the first Cayuga chief is *Deskahé*). "*Toganawita*" of the Mohawk seems like it could be *Dekanawidah*, the Peacemaker, although he explicitly excluded himself from the roster of chiefs because he planned to one day return to his people. Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs*, 56, fn1 and Fenton, *Roll Call*.

<sup>121</sup> Cusick, *Sketches*, 22. Schoolcraft stated that Cusick's dates "are more entitled to the sympathy of the poet, than the attention of the historians." Schoolcraft, *Notes*, 119.

of Chiefs) to 1459 (Horatio Hale) to 1559 (William Beauchamp) or 1570 (J.N.B. Hewitt), although the latest archaeological evidence suggests a date of 1590 to 1605, based upon numerous Mohawk stone pipes found in Seneca sites that suggest the final coalescence of the Confederacy.<sup>122</sup> Archaeologist James W. Bradley also found evidence to support the establishment of some kind of peaceful alliance shortly before contact, found in the reduction in stockades, a change in pottery-making styles due to intermarriages, and a “tendency toward nucleation and the crystallization of tribal identities” in growing villages.<sup>123</sup> Oral tradition supports the archaeological evidence, as John Buck, the wampum keeper at Six Nations in the late nineteenth century, told Hale of a founding date of approximately 1482. The Committee of Chiefs, meanwhile, produced Jubilee celebratory medals in 1899, to commemorate the 1390 founding-date of the Confederacy and half a century later, Ray Fadden—involved in a revitalization movement in Akwesasne—tied confederation to a solar eclipse that he claimed occurred in 1452, prompting the Seneca to join.<sup>124</sup>

Ultimately, it is not important when the Confederacy first began as the centrality of the *kaswentha* ethic in the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* does not hinge on a particular date given

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<sup>122</sup> Fenton, *Great Law*, 68-69; Elisabeth Tooker, “The League of the Iroquois: Its History, Politics, and Ritual,” William C. Sturtevant and Bruce Trigger, eds., *Handbook of North American Indians*, Northeast, vol. 15 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 420; and Robert D. Kuhn and Martha L. Sempowski, “A New Approach to Dating the League of the Iroquois,” *American Antiquity*, 66.2 (April 2001): 301-314.

<sup>123</sup> James W. Bradley, *Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois: Accommodating Change, 1500-1655* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005 [1987]), 43. Bradley has argued that Confederation would have occurred during the late Garoga period, shortly before Europeans arrived.

<sup>124</sup> See the photo of a Jubilee celebratory medal, which the chiefs issued in 1899, found in Wallace, *White Roots*, 55-56. Fenton has observed that no such mention of an eclipse exists at Six Nations Reserve, although that could be due to the presence of few Seneca residents. The only other person who describes an eclipse is Canfield (1902) in his story based upon Blacksnake, a nephew of Cornplanter. Fenton, *Great Law*, 70; Aren Akweks [Ray Fadden] to Francis S. Nipp, personal correspondence, 24 June 1967, Fenton Papers, APS, Series I, Encyclopaedia Britannica; Francis S. Nipp to William N. Fenton, personal correspondence, 2 November 1967, Fenton Papers, APS, Series I, Encyclopaedia Britannica; Fenton to Nipp, personal correspondence, 27 November 1967, Fenton Papers, APS, Series I, Encyclopaedia Britannica.

the timelessness of its themes and principles—only their expression differs with changing circumstances. Whenever the Haudenosaunee found a way to relate to one another, the socio-cultural implications, anthropologist Anthony Wallace has described, speak to a cultural revitalization in a period of instability and crisis. Wallace maintained that Haudenosaunee society was so traumatized by war and destruction prior to Confederation that a very real Onondaga or Mohawk sachem named Hiawatha became distraught over the death of a female relative(s) that he experienced “an episode of agitated depression, wandering along in the woods, suffering from the delusion of being a cannibal monster named Atotarho [Tadodaho], with a crooked body, snakes in his hair, and great and destructive shamanistic powers.”<sup>125</sup> He entered a state of psychosis and had a vision in which the supernatural Peacemaker “appoints Hiawatha to be his messenger.”<sup>126</sup>

After recruiting followers and having more visions, Hiawatha expanded his need for condolence “into a code for a revitalized ethnic confederacy” to end the civil strife.<sup>127</sup> Wallace has argued that a long period of passing down the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* orally must have led to distortions and caused people to believe that Hiawatha and the Peacemaker were separate individuals.<sup>128</sup> While Wallace’s theory is possible given the supernatural aspects to the epic, there is simply no way to fully understand the circumstances surrounding the Confederacy’s founding. Perhaps most importantly, many Haudenosaunee people today believe the Peacemaker and Hiawatha to be two influential

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<sup>125</sup> Anthony F.C. Wallace, “The Dekanawideh Myth Analyzed as the Record of a Revitalization Movement,” *Ethnohistory*, 5.2 (Spring 1958), 123.

<sup>126</sup> Wallace, “The Dekanawideh Myth,” 123.

<sup>127</sup> Wallace, “The Dekanawideh Myth,” 124. Parallels exist in Wallace’s understanding of the Peacemaker’s Epic as a revitalization movement and the life, conversion and preaching of Ganyodaiyo, or Handsome Lake. See Arthur C. Parker, *The Code of Handsome Lake the Seneca Prophet*, New York State Museum Bulletin 163 (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1913). Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 2000; Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).

<sup>128</sup> Wallace, “The Dekanawideh Myth,” 126.

characters in their own history so it does not really matter whether they existed as two persons or one. The crucial lesson remains in the principles of the *kaswentha* ethic and the Peace, Power, and Good Minds of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* that have persisted—in one manner or another—throughout history to the present day.

## CHAPTER THREE

### “When they joined arms”: The Covenant Chain Relationship from 1677-1700

By the second half of the seventeenth century, the Haudenosaunee and European newcomers had experienced almost a century of contact that alternated between violence and confusion and gradually evolved into a tenuous relationship between peoples. The French had not left a favourable impression, as Samuel de Champlain had surprised the Mohawks at the Eastern Door of the Haudenosaunee Longhouse by attacking them with newfound Algonkin and Huron allies in 1609.<sup>1</sup> The Dutch fared better after sailing up the Hudson River and, despite brief hostilities in 1626, established a lasting trading relationship with the Haudenosaunee that would endure even after the English conquest of the Dutch towns in 1664.<sup>2</sup> For the Haudenosaunee, such relationships proved crucial and they reconceptualised the foreigners as kin to protect themselves against a resurgence of the misery and slaughter that existed in the Peacemaker’s time.

In 1694, the Onondaga speaker Sidekanacktie remembered the beginnings of the relationship with the newcomers: “when the *Christians* came first into this River, we made a Covenant with them, first with the Bark of a Tree, afterwards it was renewed with a twisted Withe [a rope made of twisted twigs]; but in process of time, lest that should

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<sup>1</sup> Some have theorized that Champlain’s attack the following century fuelled a Haudenosaunee vendetta against the French, but William Fenton has convincingly argued that members of the Confederacy acted according to their own interests and were not consumed by a desire for revenge. William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 243-44.

<sup>2</sup> In 1626, Daniel van Kreckebeek helped the Mohicans launch a short-lived attack against the Mohawk. See Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 53.

The term ‘English’ is used throughout this chapter since the Kingdom of Great Britain did not exist until the unison of England and Scotland in 1707.

decay and rot, the Covenant was fastened with a Chain of Iron, which ever since has been called the Covenant Chain.”<sup>3</sup> The Covenant Chain, the most important of all Haudenosaunee-newcomer relationships, linked diverse peoples metaphorically with rope, bark, iron, or silver, and literally with kinship ties in order to minimize war and create what historian Matthew Dennis has called a “landscape of peace.” However, while Dennis has argued that the Haudenosaunee sought by alliance to incorporate the newcomers into their *Kayaneren’kó:wa*, he overlooked the contradiction of almost a constant state of war between the Confederacy and certain *Onkwehonwe* and European neighbours.<sup>4</sup> Reconceptualizing Haudenosaunee participation in the Covenant Chain as an expression of the broad-reaching and flexible *kaswentha* ethic, instead of fitting the alliance into the existing structure of the *Kayaneren’kó:wa*, allows for the existence of inconsistencies between ethical discourse and action, which may not match up due to personal agendas or changing contexts. Unlike the Five Haudenosaunee Nations, the French, Dutch, and English could not be incorporated within the Extended Lodge because differences abounded; therefore, a cooperative relationship developed where diversity thrived and similarities united distinct Longhouse and Christian peoples.

Although most often associated with the Dutch and then the English, a Covenant Chain relationship also incorporated a much more tenuous Haudenosaunee-French relationship. In 1656, the Jesuits recalled one chief who eloquently presented French

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<sup>3</sup> An Account of the Treaty Between Fletcher and the Five Nations, 15 August 1694, Fenton Papers, APS, Series IIb, 7.

The date when the Covenant Chain alliance first came into being is contentious. Early trading alliances between the Mohawk and the Dutch certainly existed before Arent van Curler exchanged wampum to solidify the iron chain in 1643. For more details on the questionable 1613, 1617, and 1628 dates see, Kathryn V. Muller, “The Two Row Wampum: Historic Fiction, Modern Reality,” M.A. Thesis, Université Laval, Québec, Québec, 2004; Jennings, *Ambiguous*, 47-57.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

officials in Trois Rivières with a “great collar of Porcelain beads” (a wampum belt) that he described as “an iron chain, larger around than the trees that grow in our forests, which shall bind the Dutch, the French, and the Agnieronnons [Mohawk] together.”<sup>5</sup> Two years later, some Haudenosaunee delegates braved the February cold to tell Onontio, the Haudenosaunee title for all French Governors, how “the Iroquois and the Dutch are united by a chain of iron, and their friendship cannot be broken; this is to make Onontio enter that union.”<sup>6</sup> Although the iron chains that bound the Haudenosaunee and the French together rusted more easily than the Dutch/English chain, the fundamental principles remained the same: mutual collaboration on issues of common importance but autonomy to regulate one’s internal affairs, even if that meant frequently violating and remaking the alliance.

Indeed, the brilliance of the early Covenant Chain relationship was its flexibility, its allowance for each side to retain their beliefs and then to apologise and renew when things went wrong from either perspective. Not only could the parties overcome confusion and infringement of the relationship, but they also overcame diverse understandings of land ownership, as each side asserted their own sovereignty through, among other things, the construction of forts and longhouses. As part of the emerging

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Le Jeune, *JR*, 25 April 1656, 43: 107-09, <http://www.canadiana.org/ECO/PageView?id=58a47ccc7f8ee1ba&display=07577+0111>, accessed 15 February 2008. Louise Johnston has discussed how scholars tend to ignore the Covenant Chain with the French. Louise Johnston, “The Covenant Chain of Peace: Metaphor and Religious Thought in Seventeenth Century Haudenosaunee Council Oratory,” PhD Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, 2004, 244; and Louise Johnston, “Onontio, le grand arbre et la chaîne d’alliance: Le discours du marquis de Beauharnois aux Kanehsata’kehró:on, août 1741,” *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec*, 29.2 (1999).

<sup>6</sup> Jean de Quen, *JR*, 4 February 1658, 44:207, <http://www.canadiana.org/ECO/PageView/07578/0209?id=c85699198641a822>, accessed 15 February 2008. The title of Onontio means “great mountain,” and derived from the Haudenosaunee name for Governor Montmagny, the first Governor of New France. The term Onontio will be used throughout to designate the French governor for a few reasons: first, it gives the governors the same anonymity that Haudenosaunee orators/chiefs often experienced in the council records; second, although individual personalities greatly contributed to the expressions of the Covenant Chain alliance, general themes and trends, not individuals, remain of primary importance in this chapter. See Fenton, *Great Law*, 200.



dialogue between peoples, the *kaswentha* ethic created a new space for negotiation and allowed the Haudenosaunee to assert their independence while recognizing at the same time that the newcomers influenced the Confederacy. While it may seem that both sides were talking at cross-purposes, they had recognized the cultural and linguistic limitations of their friendship and negotiated an alliance that allowed them to honour their respective worldviews: each party simply ignored what did not fit their expectations and used eloquent speeches to convince their allies of what they wanted to believe.

Longhouse and Christian peoples from a variety of backgrounds therefore came together in a relationship that reflected the cultural heritage of each group and created one of the first true manifestations of *métissage*, or cultural convergence. The Covenant Chain combined the European tools of iron and silver with the Haudenosaunee notion of linking arms, or *tsha'theneneshq:té'*, meaning “when they joined arms.”<sup>7</sup> Linking arms at the elbow indeed mimicked the links on a chain in both form and function, as the bond remained steadfast and difficult to break. Europeans even understood and used the imagery of linking arms: in the last few months of King William’s War that pitted New France and the Haudenosaunee against one another, Onontio, the French governor, declared himself to be “wholly inclined to peace” and so desired the Onondagas’ “arm

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<sup>7</sup> In the 1970s, Cayuga Chief and ceremonialist Jacob E. Thomas recorded what a council session would have sounded like in the Cayuga language for study by linguistic-anthropologist Michael K. Foster who has since begun a translation of the impressive material. The translation of “when they joined arms” comes from Foster’s informant Lorna Hill, a fluent Cayuga speaker originally from Six Nations Reserve. Foster says that the term *tsha'te-heñ-atat-ñesh-Qt-é'* is even more reflective because it describes joining together each other’s arms. Although it is somewhat problematic to use a twentieth-century rendition and translation of council proceedings to describe an alliance in the seventeenth century, enough mentions of holding hands or arms exist in the council records to suggest that it was how the Haudenosaunee saw the alliance. Furthermore, while languages continually shift and change over time, it is likely that core concepts retained their meaning (much like the term Covenant Chain is still used to refer to the historic alliance today). Michael K. Foster, “The Fire, the Path, and the Chain,” manuscript in preparation, May 2007, line 1644, 14.

tyed to mine.”<sup>8</sup> Onondaga spokesman Odatsigtha, however, refused the gesture since he suspected that his French father “might lift up your arm against my own people & then my arm would hang to yours,” undoubtedly familiar with the French and English attempts to pit Haudenosaunee brethren against one another.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the linking of arms was not simply a benign metaphor, but had very real and potentially dangerous connotations as they allied friends for both peace and war.

The Haudenosaunee even distinguished between the left and right hands: they held volatile French friendships “by the left hand, which is now wholly broke by shedding the blood of so many of our people” during that same war, while the English Covenant Chain “has always been kept in our right hand fast and firm,” and thus renewed “may be so strong and lasting not to be shaken by any thing whatever.” Indeed, from the Haudenosaunee perspective, multiple covenant chains existed and united various powers, as Richard Haan has argued.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, multiple covenant chains were subject to rusting—or even breaking—as wars pitted former friends and relatives against one another, often as an extension of imperial wars in Europe. Thus, a singular, rigid Covenant Chain simply did not exist. Rather, each party negotiated friendship or declared war within a flexible alliance based on a wide range of situational, social, economic, and cultural factors. While maintaining the friendship of those who linked arms may have been the ideal—for peace brought stability and prosperity to all peoples—in reality many factors could disrupt such a relationship, much as the *kaswentha* ethic, as

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<sup>8</sup> Propositions of Onondaga sachems in Albany, 9 June 1697, *DRCHNY* 4: 280.

<sup>9</sup> Propositions of Onondaga sachems, *DRCHNY* 4: 280.

<sup>10</sup> Answer of the Six Nations to Dongan, 13 February 1688, *DRCHNY* 3: 534; and Richard Haan, “Covenant and Consensus: Iroquois and English, 1676-1760,” James H. Merrell and Daniel K. Richter eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: Iroquois and their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 41-57.

the ideal form of Haudenosaunee moral behaviour, sometimes became subsumed by other more pressing priorities.

While the language of linking arms is reminiscent of the chiefs linking arms around the Great Tree of Peace and is likely Haudenosaunee in origin, the Covenant Chain's use of *KaHnyó'qHsra'*, "the thing of the white man" (iron), also adopted distinctly Haudenosaunee characteristics.<sup>11</sup> Each of the three symbolic links of the chain stood for certain principles, Cayuga Chief Jacob Thomas explained in 1976, which "we will use to bind us together": the first stood for friendship (*'atáo:thra'*), the second for good minds (*ěyōkhni'nikōhiyóhak*), and the third peace (*skě:nō'*).<sup>12</sup> Similar to the central philosophical concepts of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*—"Good Message, Power, and Peace," or *kaihwíyóh, ka'tshátstéhsæ'*, and *ské'nu'*<sup>13</sup>—the *kaswentha* ethic preserved them and carried them forward to the Covenant Chain as well. No relationship could exist without peace, friendship/power, and good minds/message and these crucial components allowed the *kaswentha* ethic's principles of autonomy and mutual cooperation to become a reality. Each component, or link in the chain, was as important as the entire covenant, as some Mohawks told the mayor and aldermen of Albany in 1687: "if any of those Indians newly united in our Covenant should...break a linke of the chaine, wee must goe to the Smith and have it mended."<sup>14</sup> It is no wonder that maintaining a brilliant chain "smooth bright

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<sup>11</sup> Personal conversation between Michael K. Foster and Kathryn Muller, May 2007. Literally, *KaHnyó'qHsra'* translates as "It white man made" and derives from the term for white man, not the other way around. Foster, linguistic notes for "Fire, Path, Chain," 2.600, line 1701.

<sup>12</sup> Cayuga spellings from Foster, "Fire, Path, Chain," lines 1846-1852, 23.

<sup>13</sup> Onondaga spellings from Hanni Woodbury, ed. and trans., *Concerning the League: the Iroquois League Tradition as Dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson*, in collaboration with Reg Henry and Harry Webster, on the basis of A.A. Goldenweiser's manuscript, *Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics*, 1992, xx.

<sup>14</sup> Mohawk propositions to the mayor and aldermen of Albany, 9 September 1687, *DRCHNY* 3: 484.

and shyning like silver or gold,” the Oneida speaker Doganitajendachquo described, also symbolised the prosperity and strength of the relationship.<sup>15</sup>

Aside from the chain itself, the very term ‘covenant’ also reflected both European and Haudenosaunee understandings of relationships. From a European perspective, the term ‘covenant’ suggested religious connotations. Beginning with Yahweh’s covenant with the Israelites “to create and to maintain a pattern of life,” historian Louise Johnston has argued, “peace, justice and right govern[ed] the relationship between two parties.”<sup>16</sup> The spiritual covenant continued with the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and the concept expanded during the Reformation’s theological debates, whereby people sought to reconcile religious and legal relationships.<sup>17</sup> On Turtle Island, English, Swedish, French, Scottish, and German observers all used covenant language when referring to *Onkwehonwe*-European agreements, although they seldom elaborated on its philosophical/theological meaning.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Cadwallader Colden, an eighteenth-century observer and one-time governor of New York used the term covenant to refer to “formal, legal agreements,” the Covenant Chain itself, and “God’s everlasting covenant through Jesus Christ.” The covenant, Johnston has argued, was the most commonly understood framework by which Colden and his contemporaries “established and maintained bonds, be they religious or what we now call ‘secular,’ in nature.” While the Huguenot immigrants undoubtedly knew about these theological debates, most French had rejected the Reformation and therefore did not adhere to a formalized a covenant concept.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Oneida answer to Kendall propositions, 31 October 1679, *DRCHNY* 3: 56.

<sup>16</sup> Johnston, “Covenant Chain of Peace,” 130, citing H.J. Kraus, “God’s Covenant,” 79.

<sup>17</sup> Johnston, “Covenant Chain of Peace,” 130-156.

<sup>18</sup> Johnston, “Covenant Chain of Peace,” 216-221. For religious references to covenant, Johnston quotes Cadwallader Colden, *Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden* (New York: Williams-Barker Co., 1904), 8:59, 69.

<sup>19</sup> Johnston, “Covenant Chain of Peace,” 216-221.

The Haudenosaunee probably had little difficulty with the covenant concept since their culture also cherished spiritual and legal covenants. For instance, the Thanksgiving Address and the Three Sisters of corn, bean, and squash reflect the Haudenosaunee covenant with *Shonkwaia'tihson*, the Creator, while the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*, or Great Law of Peace, reveals a covenant between the Peacemaker, Hiawatha, Tsikúhsáhse', and Tadodaho and indeed every single Haudenosaunee person.<sup>20</sup> Even the Cayuga term for the Covenant Chain, *tsha'theneneshó:té'*, or “when they joined arms,” implies a solemn agreement whereby each side had duties and responsibilities in order to maintain the relationship. Both the Haudenosaunee and the Judeo-Christian covenant concepts are not simply contractual, therefore, but are also personal and in a constant process of spiritual and intellectual renewal.<sup>21</sup> By extension, the Covenant Chain relationship was a living, breathing, intellectually powerful entity that required constant tending.

The Friendship belt, perhaps the most popular symbol of the Covenant Chain relationship, visibly depicted the concept of a Haudenosaunee-European covenant of friendship. The bodies of the Haudenosaunee and the newcomers stood at separate ends of the wampum with a long line, path, or chain that linked them together in friendship. They remained separate but united, as Augusta I. Grant Gilkison, daughter of Grand River Indian Agent Jasper T. Gilkison, remembered Six Nations wampum keeper John Buck explaining in 1887: “the long blue streak between [the figures] is to indicate that the road of communication is to be kept clear and open.” Accordingly, if either side had

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<sup>20</sup> Johnson elaborates on numerous Haudenosaunee covenant examples. Johnston, “Covenant Chain of Peace,” 163-184.

<sup>21</sup> Johnston, “Covenant Chain of Peace,” 231-32.

“any grievance the road is open for them to come and explain it to the other, and have the trouble remedied.”<sup>22</sup>

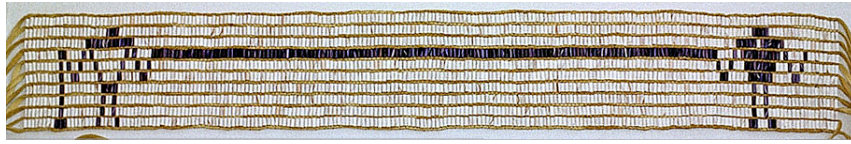


Figure 7: *Ahdaaóhtra' Dewenehtshodáhghoh* (“Friendship holds hands”) wampum<sup>23</sup>  
Wampum replica made by Darren Bonaparte of Akwesasne using acrylic art clay wampum beads,  
handmade by Tara Prindle of Waaban Aki Crafting.  
Courtesy of Darren Bonaparte, Wampum Chronicles, [www.wampumchronicles.com](http://www.wampumchronicles.com).

Numerous mentions of Covenant Chain belts exist in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century records and it is virtually impossible to associate a particular belt to one specific historical encounter.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the symbols and meanings of this particular belt reinforced and legitimized the authority of the Covenant Chain in general, whereby each nation remained autonomous, on their own territory, but united in friendship and communication. Much like the Hiawatha wampum ‘mapped’ out the position of each Haudenosaunee nation and the central Tree of Peace in Onondaga, the Friendship belt mapped the position of each ally on a particular plot of land and showed their relationship to one another.

While wampum belts helped depict the relationship across linguistic barriers, other, older symbols helped link the new Covenant Chain relationship to ancient ways of relating to diverse peoples. The Haudenosaunee replanted one of their most powerful cosmological and political symbols with both the French and the English: the Tree of

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<sup>22</sup> Augusta I. Grant Gilkison, “What is Wampum? Explained by Chief John Buck in 1887”, *Annual Archaeological Report*, 36 (1928), 48.

<sup>23</sup> *Ahdaaóhtra' Dewenehtshodáhghoh* is in the Cayuga language; the Mohawk term *Ateró:tsera Wateriwhi:son* translates as “Friendship Matters.” Jacob E. Thomas, *Illustrations and Descriptions of Wampum Belts*, #9364 (Ohsweken: JTLC, 1989).

<sup>24</sup> A number of Covenant Chain wampum belts are mentioned in Richard Hill, “Draft Guide to the Meaning of the Haudenosaunee Wampum Belts,” March 2002, Haudenosaunee Resource Center, Wampum Files, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario, 16-18.

Peace, while different from the Tree planted by the Peacemaker and the Tree from which Skywoman tumbled, now reflected a new relationship between the Haudenosaunee, the newcomers, and the land. One Haudenosaunee speaker remembered planting a tree as soon as the “Christians” settled in Albany, “whose Roots & Branches have overspread as far as New England, Pensilvania Maryland & Virginia.”<sup>25</sup> Reminiscent of the Peacemaker’s symbol of unity and shelter, the Tree would protect allies who would feel any shaking of the Tree “by the Roots which will move.”<sup>26</sup> Even if an enemy were to “ripp a limb” off the tree, he would not be able to uproot it as only the “Devill” could “Ruine yt tree of Peace.”<sup>27</sup>

The Tree, just like the Covenant Chain, depended on the participation of all allies to keep it “bright and clear, fresh and green, always united, always flourishing.”<sup>28</sup> Just as no dust should collect on the Chain, nor should “weeds grow near” the Tree in order to preserve peace “under itt’s Shadowe.”<sup>29</sup> The leafy branches of the Tree fanned out over the allies—products of both voluntary and forceful friendship—and protected them from any upheaval or threat and much as the chiefs supported the Peacemaker’s Great Tree of Peace if it should fall, the Covenant Chain itself wound around this newly planted Tree. If the chain were “Kept Cleane & bright as Silver,” it would prevent “the great tree” from shattering into “peeces if it should fall.”<sup>30</sup> The Covenant Chain and the Tree of Welfare

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<sup>25</sup> Five Nations reply to Governor Fletcher’s briefly recorded speech, Albany, 5 May 1694, *AIA*, 24. A few months later, Seneca and Mohawk delegates reiterated the same concept: “Our Forefathers in former tyme made this Covenant and have planted here yt great Tree yt now stands soe firm and wch spreades its root to a vast distance.” Seneca and Mohawk propositions in Albany, 4 September 1691, *DRCHNY* 3:807.

<sup>26</sup> Haudenosaunee speech at the examination of three French prisoners, 3 March 1690, *LIR*, 160.

<sup>27</sup> Seneca and Mohawk propositions in Albany, 4 September 1691, *DRCHNY* 3: 807; and Haudenosaunee speech at the examination of three French prisoners, 3 March 1690, *LIR*, 160.

<sup>28</sup> Propositions made by Agent of Virginia, Wiliam Byrd, to the Haudenosaunee, 15 September 1685, *LIR*, 86.

<sup>29</sup> Propositions made by the ‘Sakemaks’ of the Senecas, Albany, 3 August 1685, *LIR*, 79.

<sup>30</sup> Propositions made by the ‘Sakemaks,’ *LIR*, 79.

were thus mutually dependant, the links of the first supported the green canopy of the second, and Haudenosaunee sachems predicted that the Tree would become “firme, and stronge that in the future it may not be in that wavering condition but immoveable.”<sup>31</sup> In extending the roots and branches of the tree, or the links of the Covenant Chain, strangers came together in peace: the Seneca sachem Dackashata described a quiet resting place under the tree in 1696, which “we fill it with new leaves, and wish all that are in the Covenant Chain may have the benefite to sitt down quiett under its shaddow.”<sup>32</sup>

Although the Haudenosaunee used the Tree of Welfare to clearly articulate their budding friendship with the Europeans, other concepts remained more ambiguous between the parties because of their linguistic divide. Not only did European translators often not speak *Onkwehonwe* languages well, but many early Dutch translators were forced to first translate into Dutch and then into English. Complicated and culturally specific concepts combined with a pressure to achieve diplomatic ambitions quickly meant that each side often understood only what they wanted to hear. One of the most blatant inconsistencies between rhetoric and reality existed with the European language of superiority, often condoned by Haudenosuanee council delegates. For instance, in the second Covenant Chain treaty in 1677, Sweryse, an Oneida sachem, claimed his people were “willing and readie to obey the Command off The Great King Charles who Liveth

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<sup>31</sup> Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca answer to Govern Sloughter, 26 May 1691, *DRCHNY* 3:775.

<sup>32</sup> The Haudenosaunee to Governor Fletcher, 2 October 1696, *DRCHNY* 4:238.

Perhaps most famously, the French, their *Onkwehonwe* allies, and the Haudenosaunee planted a tree of peace in Montreal during the Great Peace of 1701. Louise Johnston has also described how the Marquis de Beauharnois’ planted such a tree in Kaneshatake in 1741 and Jon Parmenter has discussed the role of the tree of peace after 1701. See the next chapter for more on the tree of peace within the Covenant Chain. Louise Johnston, “Onontio, the Great Tree and the Covenant Chain”; Jon Parmenter, “*L’Arbre de paix: Eighteenth-Century Franco-Iroquois Relations*,” *French Colonial History*, 4(2003): 63-80; and Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2001).



over the great Laike meaning our Sovereign Lord.”<sup>33</sup> Certainly, any reader—past or present—who lacked knowledge of the *kaswentha* ethic could assume that the Oneida had relinquished their sovereignty and become subjects of the English. However, words such as ‘sovereign,’ ‘obey,’ and ‘king’ had entirely different connotations in a culture that lacked any sort of absolute authority.<sup>34</sup> It is doubtful that Sweryse himself defined such terms in a manner consistent with English notions of dominance and subordination and the words may have been mistranslated or even invented by Gert van Slichtenhat, the Dutch interpreter.

Instead, Sweryse likely interpreted the concepts of ‘subject’ and ‘sovereign’ simply as other elements in the Haudenosaunee kinship structure of political relations and did not concern himself with the English definitions. In fact, Sweryse earlier referred to the English as the Oneida’s fathers, who, in matrilineal Iroquoia, could not control their children in the same sense that European fathers could.<sup>35</sup> Since the children belonged to their mother’s clan and since their father often spent much time in his own clan’s longhouse—sometimes even in a separate village—the maternal uncles existed as more persuasive authority figures to Haudenosaunee children, although they too could not command obedience as did European fathers. Accordingly, the English thought they ruled over the Five Nations as ‘sovereign lords,’ while Sweryse believed the term ‘father’

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<sup>33</sup> Senecas and Cayuga answer Coursy’s propositions – 2<sup>nd</sup> Covenant Chain Alliance, Albany Court House, 22 August 1677, *LIR*, 44. The very first silver Covenant Chain treaty with the English occurred in April and May 1677, but no minutes have been found; instead, evidence of an earlier treaty has been derived from other sources. See Francis Jennings et al., eds., “Descriptive Treaty Calendar,” *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 160.

<sup>34</sup> Even in a contemporary context, Gerald Taiaike Alfred, has argued that sovereignty cannot be seen as an appropriate goal or framework” for indigenous peoples “because it has no relevance to indigenous values” and is strongly rooted in a western legal tradition. *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Senecas and Cayuga answer Coursy’s propositions – 2<sup>nd</sup> Covenant Chain Alliance, Albany Court House, 22 August 1677, *LIR*, 44.

implied a close kinship relation with reciprocal responsibilities, while he retained his own autonomy. Similarly, as scholar Patricia Galloway has argued, the Choctaw who lived alongside the Mississippi River accepted the French as fathers and treated them as “kind, indulgent nonrelatives who had no authority over them,” as their matrilineal society mandated.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, historian Richard White has revealed how the Algonquian understood their French alliance chiefs within their own power structure: the French chiefs had an “obligation to mediate and to give goods to those in need” and had “lost their French attributes of power.”<sup>37</sup> Such miscommunications about the authority imbued in kinship language may have led to confusion but did not compromise friendship since, as long as each side believed they had gotten their way, it did not matter what terms the English used to describe the Haudenosaunee or what assertions of autonomy the Five Nations professed. Each nation continued to subscribe to their own ethic and, locked in a constant tug of war between words and deeds, eventually created a climate of confused *métissage* born of miscommunication but continued because of mutual necessity.

Father-child language continued throughout the early Covenant Chain years, as both Corlaer and Onontio—Haudenosaunee titles for the governors of New York and New France respectively—desired submissive Haudenosaunee allies who fulfilled their every command.<sup>38</sup> Although neither title admitted Haudenosaunee subordination,

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<sup>36</sup> Patricia Galloway, “‘The Chief Who Is Your Father:’ Choctaw and French Views of the Diplomatic Relation,” Peter H. Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley, eds., *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989): 345.

<sup>37</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 39.

<sup>38</sup> The term Corlaer came from the Dutch founder of Schenectady, Arent Van Curler, and will be used throughout to designate the New York governor for a few reasons: first, it gives the governors the same anonymity that Haudenosaunee orators/chiefs often experienced in the council records; second, although individual personalities greatly contributed to the expressions of the Covenant Chain alliance, general themes and trends, not individuals, remain of primary importance in this chapter. See Fenton, *Great Law*, 200.

Corlaer and Onontio had different ideas. Corlaer pledged to be “a good father and not a stepfather” to his “obedient children,” possibly dismissing the Haudenosaunee desire for a less intrusive European stepparent. On a later occasion, however, Corlaer publicly wished that his children might “agree unanimously to Obey his [Corlaer’s] Commands” as any good English child should.<sup>39</sup> Promising to protect the welfare of his Cayuga brethren, Corlaer “Repeated yt you are ye Subjects of ye great king of England; Therefore wee acquaint you of ye great Care yt Corlaer takes of you, Spareing no Trouble nor charge.”<sup>40</sup> Words, however, were cheap and Corlaer often did not live up to his children’s Covenant Chain expectations of protection and/or military assistance. A few years later, in 1694, Corlaer complained that Onontio “makes you his Children, and so you are liable to his correction when he pleaseth.” Sadekanacktie, an Onondaga speaker, replied: “It is only a Name that we have given him, because he calleth us Children, not that we own him as our Father.”<sup>41</sup> A disconnect apparently existed between words and true beliefs; Sadekanacktie could care less what the English or French called his people, so long as their actions spoke to their own understanding of the relationship. Therefore, while the kinship terms spoke to European notions of superiority and inferiority, the Haudenosaunee instead imagined kinship expressions as either validating or invalidating one’s relationship between friends.

The complexity of late seventeenth-century relationships extended beyond language, from the philosophical ideals of the Covenant Chain to the practical reality of the alliance, as the Haudenosaunee, English, and French sought to find a way to coexist.

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<sup>39</sup> Proposals of New York Governor to the sachems of the west, 8 September 1685, *LIR*, 83; Dongan’s answer to Cayuga propositions, 28 June 1687, *LIR*, 122.

<sup>40</sup> Dongan’s answer to Cayuga propositions, 28 June 1687, *LIR*, 122.

<sup>41</sup> An Account of the Treaty Between Fletcher and the Five Nations, beginning the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1694, Printed by William Bradford, Fenton Papers, APS, Series IIb, 22.

Leaving the philosophy and language of the chain behind, three broad categories depict how the *kaswentha* ethic worked in the covenant context of competing imperial powers: adoption/renewal of the relationship, covenant chain transgressions, and competition over land. In very real terms, adoption and renewal allowed other peoples to be incorporated into an ever-growing alliance, while frequent transgressions demonstrated how both sides maintained their autonomy but never truly lived up to the expectations of their newfound friends. Finally, ideas of ownership over land depicted how each side saw their separate relationship through the lens of a longhouse or a fort, although they united over a common need of protection and perseverance.

Adoption and renewal, to begin with, played a crucial role in the making and expanding of the chain itself. At the most basic level, the Haudenosaunee conducted mourning wars to replace lost kin and adopted captives into their longhouse, as they did for much of the decimated Huron and Neutral Confederacies, the Erie, and other nations in the seventeenth century.<sup>42</sup> In 1687, for example, the Onondaga told Corlaer that, united with the Seneca, they “are unanimously ReSolved to Ruine the Twichtwicks if it be Possible,” which likely meant they would adopt as many captives as possible into the most western longhouse of the Confederacy to replace sons, daughters, parents, and grandparents who had perished from disease and/or warfare.<sup>43</sup> The Haudenosaunee also ritualistically tortured and killed those captives whom they could not—for reasons of age and/or physical or mental health—incorporate into their longhouses. The Jesuit Joseph François Lafitau observed the control that the clan matrons wielded over the captives, commenting, “that the wish of the entire village could not save them” if the matrons “are

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<sup>42</sup> On the absorption of other *Onkwehonwe* nations into the Confederacy, see Jennings, *Ambiguous*; Fenton, *Great Law*; Jennings, ed., *History and Culture*; Merrell and Richter eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain*.

<sup>43</sup> Onondaga answer to Governor Dongan’s propositions, 23 May 1687, *LIR*, 115.

desirous of throwing them into the fire nor could they be put to death if these women wish to grant them life.”<sup>44</sup> The English and French, however, preferred to ransom captives so that they might return home, a concept foreign and traumatic to the Haudenosaunee who now saw these former enemies as kin. Dekanifore, an Onondaga sachem, recounted a 1694 meeting with the French in which he admitted to taking “Prisoners from one another; we delivered over ours to the Families that lost their People in the War, according to our Custom.” Probably responding to French demands that the captives be repatriated, Dekanifore claimed that their adopted families “may deliver them [home], if they please,” as he had no jurisdiction whatsoever over them.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, clan matrons had the power to decide which prisoner should be sacrificed, which should be adopted, and which should be returned home, a new option introduced by Europeans who sought to rescue their own kind from a perceived ‘savage’ fate.<sup>46</sup>

Understandably, each nation demanded that its own protocol be followed and the Covenant Chain most certainly did not create a uniform policy for dealing with captives. In 1685, for instance, the Seneca ignored Corlaer’s insistence that prisoners be repatriated since the captives had “killed one of our best sachems.” Instead, they preferred to refer the matter to “the sachems in the country,” instead of ill-trusted English courts.<sup>47</sup> In another case a few years later, the spokesman Kaqueendara simply refused to return any prisoners until the French “send unto us...all the Prisoners you & thee Donondades have,

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<sup>44</sup> Joseph François Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times*, William N. Fenton and Elizabeth L. Moore, eds., 2 Volumes (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974 [1724]), vol. 2, 154.

<sup>45</sup> An Account of the Treaty Between Fletcher and the Five Nations, beginning the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1694, Printed by William Bradford, Fenton Papers, APS, Series IIb, 13.

<sup>46</sup> On European conceptions of captivity among *Onkwehonwe* peoples, see Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002).

<sup>47</sup> Seneca answer to Governor of New York, 8 September 1685, *LIR*, 84.

send them & then wee will tell you w'wee will do.’<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, each side expected that their newfound friends would understand and appreciate their own actions when it came to prisoners. On another occasion in 1687, the Haudenosaunee, “according to our custome,” bestowed one of their own prisoners upon the family of Arnout, the interpreter, who had himself been taken captive by the French. The Haudenosaunee held Arnout in great esteem and hoped to “wash the tears of his wife and children” by replacing their loved one, just as condolence and kin replacement occurred in their own longhouses.<sup>49</sup> By practising and even spreading their own laws of adoption to the outside world, the Haudenosaunee reinforced the *kaswentha* ethic within their French and English relationships and showed that they would not so easily be swayed from their own customs.

While the Europeans may not have so easily understood the adoption of individuals or groups of individuals into Haudenosaunee society, they certainly had no qualms about integrating other *Onkwehonwe* nations into their alliances. Indeed, adding additional links to the Covenant Chain mimicked the basic adoption procedures followed in the longhouses as former enemy nations now became reconciled as kin. After the Silver Covenant Chain relationship was first established in 1677, multiple *Onkwehonwe* nations, including the Susquehannocks, the Delaware, and others in the eighteenth century, became linked in alliance, not only to the Haudenosaunee, but also to the English.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Kaqueendara answer to the Governor of Canada, 4 February 1693, *DRCHNY* 4: 121.

<sup>49</sup> Mohawk propositions to the mayor and aldermen of Albany, 9 September 1687, *DRCHNY* 3: 483.

<sup>50</sup> For a date-by-date examination of the seventeenth-century Covenant Chain, see Jennings, *Ambiguous*; Jennings, ed., *History and Culture*; Fenton, *Great Law*.

While the English usually eagerly accepted the Haudenosaunee efforts to link additional *Onkwehonwe* nations to the chain, they often jealously guarded the relationship from the French, a sentiment that reflected ongoing conflict between the colonial powers. In one 1684 instance, Corlaer admonished the Haudenosaunee to “make no Covenant & Agreement with the French or any other Nation without my knowledge & Approbation,” advice that the Haudenosaunee clearly ignored with numerous trips northwards to speak with Onontio.<sup>51</sup> Two years later, Corlaer extended his demand to not making “warr nor Peace wt any Christians without my approbacon” and insisted that the Haudenosaunee should not “Enter Into any covenant chain wt any Christians French or English as to matters of Trade or Traffique wtout my Consent & approbation.”<sup>52</sup> Such assertions must have been confusing for the Haudenosaunee who saw little value in excluding others from a mutually beneficial relationship. Even more contradictorily, a few years later Corlaer spoke of a “Covenant Chain Between ye king of England & ye king of france” which, rumours held, would be violated by a reputed French attack on the Seneca.<sup>53</sup> After Governor Denonville wreaked destruction through the western door of the Longhouse the following month, Corlaer reassured the Haudenosaunee that “you shall have the benefit of the great chaine of friendshipp that is lately concluded between the Great King of England and the French King.”<sup>54</sup> Pleased at the incorporation of the French into a broader Covenant Chain relationship, especially given the recent hostilities, the Haudenosaunee extended one arm “towards their Father, the governor of the French;

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<sup>51</sup> Governor Dongan to the Haudenosaunee except the Seneca, 31 July 1684, *AIA*, 10.

<sup>52</sup> Governor Thomas Dongan propositions to the Haudenosaunee, 20 May 1686, *LIR*, 99-100.

<sup>53</sup> Dongan propositions to Skachtekook *Onkwehonwe*, 9 July 1687, *LIR*, 130. The rumoured French attack on the Seneca was likely French Governor Denonville’s planned military campaign, which he carried out in 1687.

<sup>54</sup> Governor Dongan’s Propositions to the Haudenosaunee, 5 August 1687, *DRCHNY* 3: 439. The three-way chain would not last, however, since King William’s War was to begin in 1689.

and the other [arm] toward their Brethren the English.” The Haudenosaunee body, however, remained uniquely “on their own territory” and did not assimilate into or become dependent upon either European nation.<sup>55</sup>

Although Corlaer pretended to be able to command the Haudenosaunee with the English assumption of supremacy, in reality the individual members of the Confederacy continued to act according to their own needs. They negotiated separately with English and French officials and came to agreements on their own accords. Roughly half a dozen mostly Mohawk families even abandoned their villages and relatives in the Mohawk Valley to settle with the Jesuits close to Montreal in 1667.<sup>56</sup> The foundation of what would become Kahnawake illustrated that the Haudenosaunee were far from imperial pawns, but instead made their own decisions about what would be best for their people. Of course, such decisions could vary between nations, villages, clans, or even individuals as the *kaswentha* ethic of autonomy and coexistence existed not only on a broad scale, but also on a personal one. The move northwards reflected deep internal discord between certain Haudenosaunee families, but disagreement simply reflected *kaswentha* autonomy on a sub-national level. In order to continue kinship ties, families with alternative views moved away, thus minimizing friction and expressing their own autonomy in a separate village while retaining ties and cooperation with their extended families. Accordingly, the decisions depended on numerous factors and often changed, which meant that constant renewal and renegotiation of relationships was crucial to maintain a healthy

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<sup>55</sup> Anonymous, Memoir respecting the Encroachments of the English on the territories of New France, 1699, *DRCHNY* 9:702.

<sup>56</sup> The community of Kentake quickly grew and over the following decade nearly 500 Oneida, Onondaga, Huron, and Mohawk had settled with the Jesuits in the area. See Gerald F. Reid, *Kahnawa:ke: Factionalism, Traditionalism, and Nationalism in a Mohawk Community* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Gerald R. Alfred, *Heeding the Voices of our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Henri Béchar, *The Original Caughnawaga Indians* (Montreal: International Publishers, 1976).



friendship both within the Confederacy and with its allies. Even in 1694, renewal was “an Antient Custom” and both parties would “Scour [the chain] clean & bright that it may shine like [silver],” while the Haudenosaunee promised that it would be kept “so Strong & Inviolable that the Thunder itself shall not break it.”<sup>57</sup> Renewal also addressed a climate of cultural misunderstanding where loyalties quickly shifted and individuals on all sides may have forgotten or ignored part of their sometimes-obscure Covenant Chain obligations.

While adoption and renewal moved the Covenant Chain forward, various transgressions from all sides hindered its ability to reach all peoples all the time. Warriors often lashed out against allies, which understandably led to anger, reprimands, and threats from the Europeans. In one case, shortly after the chain had first been polished silver in 1677, agents of New England became furious at the Mohawk’s “Last act of Hostilitie at *Maguncog*, where they killed three & carried away Captive Twentie four of our friend Indians” and the English questioned the “Cause & resone of ther thus acting as enemies.”<sup>58</sup> The Mohawk defended and justified their attack on other *Onkwehonwe* people by virtue of heavily fortified “Stockadoes, which frind Indians need not have.”<sup>59</sup> Although the English subordinated their “friend Indians,” calling them “his Ma[jes]ties Subjects,” the Mohawk refused to be controlled by the newcomers and conducted raids when they thought necessary.<sup>60</sup>

Despite both sides proclaiming independence, the New Englanders and the Mohawks could not risk destroying their relationship over such a squabble. The New

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<sup>57</sup> Haudenosaunee speech to Governor Fletcher and representatives from New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, 15 August 1694, *AIA*, 25.

<sup>58</sup> Edward Rawson’s instructions for Samuel Ely and Benjamin Waite. 11 July 1678, *DRCHNY*, 13: 521-23.

<sup>59</sup> The Mohawk answer to Samuel Ely and Benjamin Waite’s propositions, *DRCHNY*, 13: 528-29.

<sup>60</sup> Rawson’s instructions for Ely and Waite, *DRCHNY*, 13:521-23.

Englanders, recognizing their own vulnerability, hoped “that peace and friendship may be preserved & continued betwixt us & them [the Mohawk] as formerly,” while the Mohawk, eager to reach compromise and continue “Peace & friendship on our sides,” asked the governor to “acquaint us ... if our warring against y<sup>e</sup> Indians of y<sup>e</sup> North in Generally doth not Please you.”<sup>61</sup> In the early years of the Covenant Chain, both parties strove to understand each other and ultimately used patience, compromise, and collaboration to create a peaceful relationship among brothers, despite very frequently reminding their allies of the constantly shifting proper behaviour to follow.

While the *kaswentha* ethic allowed warriors to act independently, it also paradoxically encouraged increasing English intrusion into Haudenosaunee affairs as authorities sought to impose English law to control what they saw as reckless behaviour. For instance, in 1679, Virginian Colonel William Kendall condemned the Haudenosaunee for “haveing entred our houses, taken away and destroyed our goods and People, and brought some of our women and Children Captives in your Castles contrary to your faith and Promises.”<sup>62</sup> Onondaga sachems apologised for the actions of their “Indians (meaning there Souldiers)” who, “distracted or [without] there Senses,” committed the acts without “our ordr. and [against] our will.” Clearly unimpressed, the sachems accused the warriors of being “like a Childe who having a Ax in its hand, is not sensible what it does wt it, & cannot discern betwixt good and Evill.”<sup>63</sup> The Onondaga sachems—and by implication, the clan mothers—valued the Covenant Chain with Virginia, but a lack of coercive power in Haudenosaunee communities meant that while they could compel the warriors, they could not command them. Much as the autonomy

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<sup>61</sup> Rawson’s instructions for Ely and Waite, 13: 521-23; Mohawk answer to Ely and Waite, 13: 528-29.

<sup>62</sup> Kendall speech to Haudenosaunee, 30 October 1679, *LIR*, 53.

<sup>63</sup> Onondaga answer to Kendall propositions, 1 November 1679, *LIR*, 60.

of the *kaswentha* ethic allowed a group of Mohawk to move northwards to what became Kahnawake, it also allowed the independent warriors to ignore the bidding of their chiefs and clan mothers. The *kaswentha* ethic did not mean that everyone expressed autonomy in the same way; rather, dissenting individuals—whether warriors or Catholic converts—also expressed independence by striking out on their own.

Kendall, however, would have none of these irresponsible attacks and continued boldly: “Wee have a Law in our Country, that al Indians comeing neer Christians any where, must Stand Still, and lay down there Armes, as a token of there being frinds, otherwise are Looked upon and taken or destroyed as Enemies.”<sup>64</sup> By ‘our Country,’ Kendall may have meant simply the surrounding countryside, but he may have more ominously been referring to a sovereign land or colony, which positioned the English on the inside and the Haudenosaunee on the outside as foreign trespassers. Regardless, English law must be obeyed, Kendall insisted, or else he would unleash “a Violent war against you, which might Engage, all our Confederatt English Neighbours.”<sup>65</sup> The Onondaga, either afraid of Kendall’s threats or simply willing to placate their brethren, “understood, that when our Yong Indians come neer any Christians must lay down there armes as a token of frindship.” If, however, any Onondaga “People shall goe to warr towards your Pairts against any Indians not in frindship wt. you,” the sachems promised to avoid Virginian plantations, a promise which rung hollow in subsequent years as self-interested warriors acted according to *kaswentha* autonomy and did as they pleased.<sup>66</sup> Essentially, the *kaswentha* ethic was forced to compromise to exist. As much as Kendall wanted to wage a “violent war” against those who had attacked Virginian settlements, he

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<sup>64</sup> Kendall speech to Haudenosaunee, 30 October 1679, *LIR*, 53-54.

<sup>65</sup> Colonel William Kendall’s propositions to the Onondagas, 1 November 1679, *LIR*, 59.

<sup>66</sup> Onondaga answer to Kendall propositions, 1 November 1679, *LIR*, 60-61.

knew he could not win and as much as the Onondaga wished to allow their warriors the usual autonomy, the chiefs and clan mothers tried to curtail their actions to respect the wishes of their annoyed allies.

To complete the cycle of Covenant Chain transgression and apology, the allies repolished the chain even more brightly than before and dismissed their troubles as mere inconveniences rather than fatal mistakes. The Oneida speaker Doganitajendachquo buried “that which is Pasd [in Virginia]...in a Pitt of oblivion, yea I say in a Bottomlesse Pitt where a Strong Currant of a River Runns throw, that that wh is now thrown in’t, may never appear more.” Eager to revive good-will, Doganitajendachquo “reared up again” that “stake of unity” between brethren as no violation was too great to repair: both the English colonies and the Haudenosaunee needed one another and depended upon their relationship of mutual reciprocity and understanding as they moved towards an eventual *métissage* in protocol, although the *kaswentha* ethic continued to conflict with European ambitions.<sup>67</sup> Not only could squabbles exist between Haudenosaunee and Virginian brethren, but they also existed between Virginians and New Yorkers, as well as other colonies, on issues of trade, warfare, and settlement that in turn affected the strength of the Covenant Chain.

The Haudenosaunee and the colonies of Maryland and Virginia revisited similar Covenant Chain violations frequently and officials became increasingly adamant about applying English law. A 1664 precedent existed whereby if any Englishman, Dutchman, or *Onkwehonwe* “under the protection of the English” did “any wrong injury or violence” to the Mohawk, Seneca or “their subjects,” a simple complaint to Corlaer or to the “Officer in Chief at Albany” would bring swift justice. Similarly, if any Mohawk or

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<sup>67</sup> Oneida answer to Kendall propositions, 31 October 1679, *LIR*, 55-56.

Seneca committed “any wrong injury or damage to the English, Dutch, or Indians under the protection of the English,” the sachems would punish the offenders.<sup>68</sup> By 1682, however, an expectation of separate jurisdictions no longer existed between the Haudenosaunee and the New Yorkers, nor with the colony of Maryland. One Maryland agent explained that if “any Indian or Indians living amongst you shall . . . murder any Christian or Christians in Maryland or Virginia, wee do expect that you will cause him or them to be delivered up to the Ld Proprietary, to be dealt withall according to the Christian Law.” Furthermore, “in Case any Indian or Indians shall kill any horses, Cattle or Hoggs, or robb or steal anything from us,” the agent demanded “that you cause satisfaction to bee made to us to the full value thereof.”<sup>69</sup>

Despite English posturing of supremacy, however, the Onondaga refused to turn over “the captain or Chief Commander of that Troop” that the English accused of murdering some of their people the previous summer. Instead, the spokesmen maintained that the two commanders had already been killed in battle and offered to make amends

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<sup>68</sup> Articles between Col. Cartwright and the New York Indians, 24 September 1664, *DRCHNY*, 3: 67-68. Although Cartwright simplified matters by assuming the Mohawk and Seneca to be “Indian Princes” while the other Haudenosaunee nations remained “their subjects,” he nevertheless recognized that the Mohawk and Seneca at least were not “under the protection of the English.”

Some authors have asserted that 1664 marks the first exchange of the Two Row Wampum belt with the English. Lawyer Paul Williams, for example, claims that Haudenosaunee tradition affirms the exchange of a white belt with two purple rows: “two boats on the same river, travelling in the same direction, but parallel, so that neither interferes with the course of the other.” While the Two Row Wampum no doubt beautifully encapsulates the Haudenosaunee-British agreement of that late September day in 1664, and while officials notoriously ignored elements of proceedings they deemed dull or insignificant, the Two Row nevertheless seems too tidy to reflect a complex and implicit cultural ethic. Instead, given the obvious independence of the Haudenosaunee in the early contact period and the tenuous existence of the English on the continent, verbalising an implicit understanding of autonomy was simply redundant. Furthermore, although the *kaswentha* principles endured throughout the eighteenth century, a lack of reference to any wampum similar to the Two Row in Covenant Chain alliance records suggests that a deeper reaching, more implicit *kaswentha* ethic guided Haudenosaunee relationships as circumstance permitted. See the evolution of the *kaswentha* ethic into the Two Row Wampum in Chapter Four for more details. Paul Williams, “The Chain,” Master of Laws Thesis, York University, Toronto, Ontario, 1982, 97.

<sup>69</sup> Treaty of Peace between Agent Henry Coursey of Maryland and the Haudenosaunee, 3-4 August 1682, *DRCHNY* 3: 321-325.

with the “payment demanded of us for the plundering.”<sup>70</sup> Whether or not the two commanders had indeed perished, the Onondaga paid reparations and avoided having their war leaders charged under English law. They owned up to the actions of their warriors, as any good ally should do, but they maintained their *kaswentha* autonomy to run their internal affairs, which included disciplining any members of the extended longhouse.

Similar problems continued with Maryland, Virginia, and New England over the next few bloody years and in 1687 the Governor of Virginia complained of the broken chain of friendship, caused by the Haudenosaunee “fall[ing] upon our Indians ye last spring,” killing many Christians, and plundering and stealing “Indians Prisonrs.” Believing Covenant Chain allies to be “all one Kings subjects,” the governor could not comprehend such treasonous acts and again demanded the deliverance of the guilty parties to no avail.<sup>71</sup> By contrast, the Covenant Chain in the colony of New York remained much more secure, likely because the newcomers lived in the Haudenosaunee’s backyard and even, in some cases, encroached on the Mohawk’s Eastern Door of the Confederacy. War and retribution could not be allowed within the homeland of the extended longhouse for fear of a return to the dark days before the Peacemaker’s arrival.<sup>72</sup> Although the Covenant Chain was not perfect with the New Yorkers, it was more secure and in 1691, in the midst of King William’s War, Corlaer praised the Haudenosaunee for being “so hearty & so steady in keeping the Old Covenant, which

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<sup>70</sup> Treaty of Peace between Agent Henry Coursey of Maryland and the Haudenosaunee, 3-4 August 1682, *DRCHNY* 3: 321-325.

<sup>71</sup> Governor of Virginia to the Five Nations, 16 September 1687, 138.

<sup>72</sup> For stories on how people came together in the Mohawk Valley and learned to live with one another, see James W. Paxton, “Kinship, Communities, and Covenant Chains: Mohawks and Palatines in New York and Upper Canada, 1712-1830,” PhD Thesis, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, 2006.

never has nor shall be violat[e]d on our sides.”<sup>73</sup> The Seneca and Mohawk agreed as they reminded the new governor that “Wee hve always from ye beginning been in a firm covenant wth this Govermt” and while “Itts true there have been some yt proved unstable but we revive and illuminate ye same againe as ye sun to ye day.”<sup>74</sup> Allowances existed for minor transgressions although the Haudenosaunee pledged to Corlaer Fletcher three years later, “that whoever should violate or molest that Chain, or any part of it, that parties linked in the Chain should unanimously fall upon such, and distroy them, they should certainly dye the Death.”<sup>75</sup>

Violations of the Covenant Chain relationship certainly did not occur only on the Haudenosaunee side; the English were notoriously abysmal at providing the Confederacy with military support when the need arose. In 1684, the Onondaga and Cayuga remembered protecting the English when “they were but a small People & we a large Nation; & we finding they were good People gave them Land & dealt Civilly by them.” Now that the tables had turned, and “you are grown Numerous & we decresed, you must Protect us from the French, wch if you dont we shall loose all our Hunting & Bevers.”<sup>76</sup> The Haudenosaunee frequently fought the French on their own and in imperial conflicts and expected English involvement with soldiers, munitions, and provisions, to help offset their heavy human costs. In 1686, Rode, a Mohawk sachem, insisted that while they would not “molest the French unless they attack us,” the English would “have to help us, for if we suffer then his Honor will also suffer, for if the body suffers then the head is not

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<sup>73</sup> Governor Sloughter’s answer to the Haudenosaunee, 4 June 1691, *DRCHNY* 3: 778.

<sup>74</sup> Seneca and Mohawk propositions in Albany, 4 September 1691, *DRCHNY* 3: 806.

<sup>75</sup> Treaty Between Fletcher and the Five Nations, 15 August 1694, *APS*, 7.

<sup>76</sup> Onondaga and Cayuga sachems to Governor Dongan, 2 August 1684, *AIA*, 11.

free from danger, or if one member suffers the whole body is in pain.”<sup>77</sup> Emphasising the unity of those Covenant Chain allies, the Haudenosaunee speaker knew that one weak link threatened the integrity of the entire chain. The security of New York and the other English colonies therefore depended upon their Longhouse allies who sat sandwiched between the newcomers’ imperial ambitions.

Despite their pleadings, the help so desperately needed by the Haudenosaunee seldom came. Returning to King William’s consuming eight-year war, the Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, and Cayuga pleaded with Corlaer: “we are but in a poor weak condition in this Country, and no ways able to subdue the French without help from England therefore we earnestly entreat you to...send great shippes with great gunns to take Canada.”<sup>78</sup> The Haudenosaunee speaker Kaqueendara met with the enemy in New France two years later and accused Onontio of breaking the “firme covenant chaine...many times in time of Peace” by murdering and burning “both man & beaste” in Schenectady, one of the most infamous massacre sites of King William’s War.<sup>79</sup> While a less sturdy Covenant Chain with the French existed in peacetime, war caused the chain to be cast aside. By contrast, a Covenant Chain existed continually with the English, although minor skirmishes caused it to be violated and renegotiated over time.

Issues of land ownership caused at least as many problems as violent Covenant Chain transgressions since it depended upon vastly different understandings of ceremonies of possession, or the means by which people articulated and legitimized their

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<sup>77</sup> Rode, Mohawk sachem, response to Governor Thomas Dongan in the name of all Haudenosaunee, 21 May 1686, *LIR*, 99.

<sup>78</sup> Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca answer to Govern Sloughter, 26 May 1691, *DRCHNY* 3:776. Corlaer only provided the badly needed assistance two years later. Answer of the Haudenosaunee to Governor Fletcher, 25 February 1693, *DRCHNY* 4: 23.

<sup>79</sup> Kaqueendara answer to the Governor of Canada, 4 February 1693, *DRCHNY* 4: 121. Haudenosaunee warriors infamously massacred French colonists at La Chine on the island of Montreal at the very beginning of the war (1689-1697), so atrocities were committed on all sides.



existence in a particular landscape.<sup>80</sup> Ceremonies of possession took many shapes and forms; among the Haudenosaunee, they included not only the many trees of Skywoman, Hadui, the Peacemaker, and the new Tree of Welfare, but also the stories that accompanied them and made sense of Haudenosaunee existence on Turtle Island.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, while the strong roots of the Tree of Welfare wove together the destinies of the Haudenosaunee and the newcomers on Turtle Island, Haudenosaunee conception of the landscape did not mean that all parties now commonly owned the land. While multiple metaphors linked the parties in friendship on a particular landscape, they involved only appendages—arms and hands—so the parties remained somewhat distant, firmly grounded on their own lands and in their own customs and language. As Haudenosaunee speakers illustrated, while they would link arms/hold hands, their bodies remained “on their own territory,” territory which, the Haudenosaunee soon learned, the newcomers sought above all else.<sup>82</sup>

A cosmological connection to the land further enabled the Haudenosaunee to assume possession since, as historian James Taylor Carson has argued, “land was more than a physical space, it was a moral space.”<sup>83</sup> The Haudenosaunee divided up their physical space by building stockades, signing and preserving deeds of sale with Europeans, and by seeking external approval of their rights but they preserved their moral space through wampum relationships on particular plots of land that sometimes

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<sup>80</sup> Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World: 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>81</sup> See Chapter Two for an explanation of various trees in Haudenosaunee cosmology.

<sup>82</sup> Anonymous, Memoir respecting the Encroachments of the English on the territories of New France, 1699, *DRCHNY* 9: 702.

<sup>83</sup> James Taylor Carson, “Ethnogeography and the Native American Past,” *Ethnohistory*, 49.4 (2002): 769.

overlapped with the territories of other *Onkwehonwe* peoples.<sup>84</sup> The Friendship Belt, described above, concretely situated peoples in friendship on their own territories while simultaneously serving as an official document of ownership. Certainly, the Friendship Belt did not speak for additional *Onkwehonwe* peoples whose lands the Haudenosaunee and English appropriated, but instead reflected those most powerful in the Covenant Chain alliance. Another wampum belt, the Dish With One Spoon, described the moral arrangement of land use, by depicting a relationship between all *Onkwehonwe* peoples and the natural world that was both male and female in nature: men provided the meat from the land, while the women grew corn, picked berries, and prepared meals. Sharing and eating from the same dish reinforced a friendly, cooperative, and responsible relationship both within the clans and communities allied to the Haudenosaunee.<sup>85</sup> Of course, other *Onkwehonwe* peoples not allied to the Haudenosaunee did not benefit from this cooperative relationship, but rather had their lands often disappropriated and their peoples displaced.

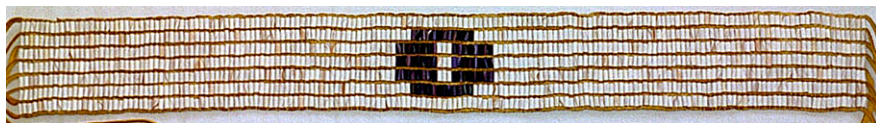


Figure 8: Dish with one spoon wampum  
Wampum replica made by Darren Bonaparte of Akwesasne using acrylic art clay wampum beads,  
handmade by Tara Prindle of Waaban Aki Crafting.  
Courtesy of Darren Bonaparte, Wampum Chronicles, [www.wampumchronicles.com](http://www.wampumchronicles.com).

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<sup>84</sup> In 1677, traveller Wentworth Greenhalgh noticed a plethora of stockades in Haudenosaunee towns on his voyage from Mohawk through Seneca territory. All four Mohawk towns possessed stockades to enclose their homes (ranging from sixteen to thirty longhouses), which closely bordered any one of a number of rivers while corn grew on the surrounding banks. The further west Greenhalgh travelled, the less heavily fortified the towns, which indicated less vulnerability to French attacks and settler incursions. “Observations of Wentworth Greenhalgh,” Journey from 20 May 1677 to 14 July, *DHNY* 1: 11-12-13.

<sup>85</sup> Hill, “Guide to the Meaning,” 21-22. Gilles Havard has described the common bowl of shared hunting territories discussed at the Great Peace of 1701 between the French, their *Onkwehonwe* allies, and the Haudenosaunee. Havard, *Great Peace*, 145-149.

The Haudenosaunee must have been surprised when the Europeans, as their allied brethren, did not share certain resources, since it certainly was a crucial part of their Covenant Chain expectations. They had understood from the original Corlaer that “yr Catle were our Catle we were all one People & there was no Difference.” Sadly, in the midst of the violence and hunger caused by King William’s War, the Haudenosaunee “fynde it is not Soe” and “all those Papers & Transactions wh Passed between him & us buried with him, since we are So Sharpely Reproovd for killing of ye Catle & eateing ye Corn which cannot be helpd in these times.”<sup>86</sup> The Haudenosaunee must have thought it inconceivable not to share crops and animals among friends and watched as their landscape and resources now became divided up in imperial battles and ‘owned’ in stark contrast to the moral emphasis on sharing found in the Dish With One Spoon.

The creation and exchange of wampum is one of the most prolific ceremonies of possession because it situated peoples/nations on a particular territory and depicted their relationship to one another. Much as the Hiawatha wampum in Chapter One outlined the relationship of the five Haudenosaunee nations to the Great Tree of Peace planted by the Peacemaker in Onondaga, wampum belts of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries clearly demonstrated geographic autonomy while participating in a Covenant Chain relationship of friendship, good minds, and peace with the newcomers. Wampum often brought foreign words to life and ensured they were understood. In 1682, for instance, Onontio spoke of a wampum “in form of a Chain” that bound the Haudenosaunee to a hatchet “suspended in the air” in an effort “to prevent the arms of the warriors letting it

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<sup>86</sup> Haudenosaunee to Mayor Schuyler of Schenectady, 15 August 1692, *LIR*, 165.

fall” upon Onontio’s head.<sup>87</sup> The chain not only outlined one’s geographic place and helped others preserve peace, but it also served as a caution and preventative measure against war.

Similarly, as wampum depicted the relationships of peoples and nations to the land, maps drawn by European explorers served to divide land into parcels of ownership and artificially defined the relationship of *Onkwehonwe* peoples to the land they had occupied since the beginning. Samuel de Champlain, a Memoir against English pretensions to “the territories of New France” explained, drew “topographical Maps of the Iroquois Country and circumjacent places, so that since that time, the territory of these Indians is seen in the maps, comprehended, within that of New France.”<sup>88</sup> By using mapping as a ceremony of possession, Europeans appropriated ownership and tamed an unknown wilderness: Onontio suggested in 1685, “it will require considerable expense to render the river navigable; the Map I have caused to be made of it will afford some imperfect idea.”<sup>89</sup> Investing money, time, and intellect in exploring and mapping the land helped convince Europeans of their perceived right of ownership.

The newcomers further attempted to solidify their own language of dominance with symbols that only those comprehending European ‘ceremonies of possession’ would understand.<sup>90</sup> Speaking to the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga and Cayuga, the Governors of New York and Virginia presented “the Great Duke of Yorks Arms to put upon each of

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<sup>87</sup> Conference between Count de Frontenac and a Deputy from the Five Nations, 11-12 September 1682, *DRCHNY* 9: 188.

<sup>88</sup> Anonymous, Memoir respecting the Encroachments of the English on the territories of New France, 1699, *DRCHNY* 9: 702.

<sup>89</sup> Extract from the King’s instructions to the Marquis de Denonville, 10 March 1685, *DHNY* 1:202.

<sup>90</sup> Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500 – c. 1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 83. The Christian monarchs sought to establish colonies in order to appropriate the land, facilitated by, Cronon has argued, “the failure of Indians adequately to subdue the soil as Genesis 1.28 required.” William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 69.

the Castles [towns] as a Sign that you are under this Government,” and not allied with the French.<sup>91</sup> A few days later, the Senecas “thanked the Gov<sup>r</sup> for the Duke of Yorks Arms wch he sent them” and asked “him for his Protection of them against the French, acknowledging him to be the Govr of their Country & themselves under his Command.”<sup>92</sup> Much like planting a flag to declare the sovereignty of the Crown, the Duke of York’s Arms publicly asserted to the French that the English Crown had subjugated the Haudenosaunee, no matter how independently the Haudenosaunee and other *Onkwehonwe* peoples may have acted. While the Haudenosaunee would have rebuffed this assumption of subjecthood, they too used a well-known symbol to assert their own sovereignty over a particular territory. The Tree of Peace’s leafy canopy protected the members of the Confederacy in Longhouse territory while the Tree of Welfare brought all Covenant Chain brethren together in a uniquely Haudenosaunee ceremony of possession that entailed certain obligations and responsibilities of kinship.

While the Duke of York’s Arms and the Tree of Peace/Welfare may have accomplished similar goals by defining one’s relationship to a particular territory, the Haudenosaunee longhouses and the European forts epitomized very different ways of interpreting boundaries and understanding the earth and her resources. Unlike the soldiers who resided inside the forts far away from the newcomer villages in the east, the longhouses comprised of clans and kin and spread out across the Haudenosaunee territories to envelop their brethren in a common dwelling-place. Both the

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<sup>91</sup> Francis Lord Howard, Governor of Virginia, and Thomas Dongan, Gov of New York speaking to the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga and Cayuga, 31 July 1684, *AIA*, 10. The ‘castles’ referred to Haudenosaunee villages, which, surrounded by wooden stockades, probably somewhat resembled European castles.

<sup>92</sup> Francis Lord Howard, Governor of Virginia, and Thomas Dongan, Gov of New York speaking to the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga and Cayuga, 31 July 1684, *AIA*, 13. For more on French ceremonies of possession, see Michael Witgen, “The Rituals of Possession: Native Identity and the Invention of Empire in Seventeenth-Century Western North America,” *Ethnohistory*, 54.4 (2007): 639-668.

Haudenosaunee and the newcomers used the terminology like, in 1682, when Onondaga chief Nirégoentaron pledged to speak for the “Whole House, that is, the Five Iroquois Nations.” He had “run through the Whole House to persuade them not to undertake any thing” against the French, which implied not only the east to west trajectory of the People of the Longhouse, but also the process of oratory, debate, and consensus within the Confederacy.<sup>93</sup> Clearly, Onontio grasped the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* metaphor since he responded that he would “lay before the Whole House more fully next spring,” additional promises for peace and friendship.<sup>94</sup>

Indeed, the Whole House functioned as five distinct partners and came together for a Grand Council Meeting at Onondaga in 1689 and again in 1694.<sup>95</sup> In the latter year, Haudenosaunee sachems chastised Corlaer for “dissolving their Meeting or Assembly of the 5 Nations at Onondagoe & telling them they must not meet there” for his actions were “a violation of their Antient Priviledges.”<sup>96</sup> Since “the beginning there has been a Continual Fire” lit in the centre of the Confederacy, which, spokesmen described a few months later, maintained the “antient Custom among the five Nations to keep their Meeting at *Onnondage*” that the Haudenosaunee were “resolved to continue.”<sup>97</sup> The Covenant Chain did not supersede the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* but nor did the newcomers integrate into the Haudenosaunee Whole House. Instead, the Covenant Chain evolved

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<sup>93</sup> Conference between Count de Frontenac and a Deputy from the Five Nations, 11-12 September 1682, *DRCHNY* 9: 183, 185. Nirégoentaron was formerly known as Tegannisoren.

<sup>94</sup> Conference between Frontenac and a Deputy, *DRCHNY* 9: 187.

<sup>95</sup> Wraxall’s notes mention “a full acct of a Grand Meeting of the 5 Nations at Onondaga,” 3 February 1689, *AIA*, 14. Of course, there may have been other Grand Council meetings that did not make their way into European record books.

<sup>96</sup> Speech of the Haudenosaunee sachems to Governor Fletcher, 4 May 1694, *AIA*, 22.

<sup>97</sup> Five Nations reply to Governor Fletcher’s briefly recorded speech, 5 May 1694, *AIA*, 24; Treaty Between Fletcher and the Five Nations, 15 August 1694, *APS*, 7-8.

parallel to the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* to deal with peoples outside of the Peacemaker's realm of influence.

Accordingly, the Haudenosaunee did not build additional rafters to incorporate either the English or French into their Whole House, as they did for the Huron, Neutral, Delaware and other conquered/allied *Onkwehonwe* peoples. In 1684, they spoke of the links between the Covenant Chain and “this Prefixed house” in Albany where “in ye Presence of your Governr may be firmly kept, and Performed on your Parts, as it always hath been on ours.”<sup>98</sup> The following year, Seneca sachems proclaimed, “Curlers fire is owerr ffire whereby wee warme our Selves in peace” and, much like the council fire in Onondaga, Albany's council fire must be kept “Clene: & neat that no foulenes grow in it.”<sup>99</sup> While the parties shared fires and houses through friendship and good will, their permanent places of residence—and by consequence, their internal governing structures—remained separate. As a result, the Haudenosaunee saw themselves as dealing with other ‘Whole Houses’ that came together in friendship. In 1691, for instance, Seneca and Mohawk delegates explained the teachings of “our Forefathers yt wee sould faithfully maintaine ye covenant which ye whole house and if any might faile or variee wee should give ym a draught of understanding.”<sup>100</sup> One Corlaer even used the term “house” to refer to his meeting place in Albany, a metaphor that might be extended to the colony of New York, or even possibly a number of colonies on the Atlantic coast built upon coastal lands and sheltered under the new Tree of Welfare.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Virginian Governor Howard speech to the Haudenosaunee (minus the Seneca), 30 July 1684, *LIR*, 74.

<sup>99</sup> Seneca propositions, 3 August 1685, *LIR*, 80.

<sup>100</sup> Seneca and Mohawk propositions, 4 September 1691, *DRCHNY* 3: 806.

<sup>101</sup> Governor Dongan's Propositions to the Haudenosaunee, 5 August 1687, *DRCHNY* 3: 438.

While the Haudenosaunee Longhouse defined the position of Haudenosaunee kin on the land and their adherence to the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*, and while the council fires in Albany or Montreal held their relationships with Europeans strong, the true European household of possession existed in their military establishments. Often on the borders of empire, the soldiers and officers residing in forts did not concern themselves with the Strawberry or Harvest festivals introduced by *Shonkwaia'tihson*, the Creator, but instead viewed the land as a commodity, to be conquered, appropriated or bought, and subdued. The newcomers altered the landscape in a majestic manner to show military prowess and their forts demonstrated early attempts to control important waterways, strategic trading corridors, and relationships with far-off *Onkwehonwe* nations.

The existence of these forts often angered the Haudenosaunee and in 1688, for instance, they beseeched Corlaer to help them demolish French forts “for the French can have no title to those places which they possess, nay not to Cadarachqui and Mount Royall nor none of our lands towards the Ottowawas, Dionondades, Twichtwicks.”<sup>102</sup> French forts, the Haudenosaunee feared, would cause a constant siege and deprivation “of our Bever hunting” given “how perfidious and treacherous the French are.” The Haudenosaunee turned to their English allies for help, but paradoxically recognized England’s desire for supremacy by asking for help to restrain the French from any “footing in any of our lands which are the great King of England’s territories.”<sup>103</sup> The Haudenosaunee turned away from one power and towards another to help protect the integrity of the Longhouse but, given the military obligations of the Covenant Chain

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<sup>102</sup> Answer of the Six Nations to Dongan, 13 February 1688, *DRCHNY* 3: 534. The *Onkwehonwe* nations referred to are the Ottawa, Huron, and Miami.

<sup>103</sup> Answer of the Six Nations to Dongan, 13 February 1688, *DRCHNY* 3: 534-535.



relationship, the Haudenosaunee unlikely saw such a plea for help as sacrificing their *kaswentha* ethic of autonomy.

In fact, the Haudenosaunee emphatically defended their territorial rights and in 1693 again told “Onontio your fyre shall’ burn’ no’ more at Cadaracqui it shall never be kindled again” as “You did steale that place from us & wee quenched the fyre with the blood of our children.” The Haudenosaunee blatantly corrected the French assumption of ownership and control: “You thinke yourselves the ancient inhabitants of this countrey & longest in possession yea all the Christian Inhabitant’s of New York & Cayenquiragoé thinke the same of themselves.” However, the Haudenosaunee ““Warriours are the firste & ancient people & the greatest of You all, these part’s and country’s were inhabited and trodd upon by us the warriour’s before any Christian’ (then stamping hard with his foot upon the ground) sayd, Wee shall note suffer Cadaracqui to be inhabited againe.”<sup>104</sup> Words and actions, however, sometimes remained disconnected and the following year Onontio told the Haudenosaunee with wampum of his plans to “erect my Fire again at *Caddracqui*, and plant there a Tree of Peace.”<sup>105</sup>

Although their English allies also opposed a French fort at Cataraqui, both for the protection of their own colonies and because “twill be a breach of the Covenant Chain, and bring a Slavery upon your selves and Posterity,” they also intruded on Haudenosaunee lands.<sup>106</sup> In 1687, Corlaer requested permission from the Haudenosaunee to build at a mutually convenient place “where I may keepe stores and provisions in case of necessity,” to which the Haudenosaunee agreed as they feared “the French would faine

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<sup>104</sup> Kaqueendara answer to the Governor of Canada, 4 February 1693, *DRCHNY* 4: 122.

<sup>105</sup> Treaty Between Fletcher and the Five Nations, 15 August 1694, APS, 14. The Onondaga speaker Dekanisore is actually tattling on the previous French conference to Corlaer (Fletcher).

<sup>106</sup> Treaty Between Fletcher and the Five Nations, 15 August 1694, APS, 20-21.

kill us all and ... carry all the Bever trade to Canida, and the great King of England would loose the land likewise.”<sup>107</sup> Forts provided mutual protection in times of conflict although in 1699, the Haudenosaunee told the English, “there is no need of making forts in time of peace,” as they expressed legitimate concerns about the forts housing land speculators and traders, as well as spies from other *Onkwehonwe* nations. If war with the French broke out again, however, the Haudenosaunee speaker Dekanissore would accept an English fort at his very own castle or village.<sup>108</sup> Extending the Covenant Chain relationship’s obligations of military assistance to include the building of foreign forts on their soil—which could just as easily be turned against them—must have been a difficult decision for the Haudenosaunee. On the one hand, they needed military protection, but on the other, they knew how such protection could easily extend European assumptions of control over their Extended Longhouse.

Forts were not the only threat to Haudenosaunee territory, as swindlers constantly strove to illegally acquire much desired land from *Onkwehonwe* peoples in general. By 1684, Henry and Joseph, two Mohawk Christians, had learned how to deal with the thieves by lodging an official complaint that they and six others had been tricked into alienating the lands upon which their homes stood.<sup>109</sup> The men swore to Corlaer and the attorney general of New York that the devious swindlers pretended that war was upon them and claimed that sale “would be their best and securest way to defend them against the Enemy; that they should appoint or name them (meaning the Purchasers) for their

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<sup>107</sup> Governor Dongan’s Propositions to the Haudenosaunee, 5 August 1687, *DRCHNY* 3: 439; Haudenosaunee response to Dongan’s propositions, 6 August 1687, *DRCHNY* 3: 442.

<sup>108</sup> Answer of the Five Nations to Bellomont, 9 May 1699, *DRCHNY* 4: 564.

<sup>109</sup> Fraudulent Purchase of Land from Mohawk Indians, 31 May 1698, *DRCHNY* 4: 345. It is worth noting that Henry and Joseph could only make the complaint and testify because they were sworn in as Christians, which means that recourse in English courts was almost impossible for Longhouse people (right up until the twentieth century).

Guardians or Trustees.” Henry and Joseph, indignant at having “been so deceiv’d” sought to prevent such “ill Practise for the future.” Having “long ago Surrendered our selves and Lands to the protection of our said great King,” they shrewdly requested “a patent for our said Land” and clearly grasped the necessity of paper deeds for legal protection in the evolving legal system of Turtle Island.<sup>110</sup>

The Haudenosaunee had quickly adapted to European protocol in purchasing land but were not afraid to rebuff individuals, like landholder William Penn in 1687, who sought to acquire more territory. Given their status “a Free People & united our Selves to the English” who could “dispose of our Land to whom we think proper,” the Haudenosaunee adamantly defended their territories and insisted that similar European rules of conquest and ownership applied to them.<sup>111</sup> In 1688, for instance, the Haudenosaunee complained that if the French could claim title in Mohawk and Seneca country by “burn[ing] some bark houses and cut[ing] downe our come [corn]” then the Confederacy “can claim all Canida, for we not only did see, but subdued whole nations of Indians that liv’d there.”<sup>112</sup> The Haudenosaunee, just like the Europeans, extended their territories through conquering and absorbing foreign peoples and emphatically viewed themselves as equal partners in the Covenant Chain. The *kaswentha* ethic held strong, for they did not sacrifice their own autonomy, although they most certainly relied on protection and aid from their ever-stronger allies.

Some French even recognized central tenets of the *kaswentha* ethic in 1699 when a memoir stated that the Haudenosaunee had “no other Master than the Creator of the Universe” and indicated “it was by sufferance” that the Haudenosaunee “allowed

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<sup>110</sup> Fraudulent Purchase of Land from Mohawk Indians, 31 May 1698, *DRCHNY* 4: 346.

<sup>111</sup> Onondaga and Cayuga sachems to Governor Dongan, 2 August 1684, *AIA*, 11.

<sup>112</sup> Answer of the Six Nations to Dongan, 13 February 1688, *DRCHNY* 3: 534.

Europeans to come and settle in their vicinity on lands dependant on them.” While the French admission that the Haudenosaunee “did not acknowledge the Dominion of any power whatsoever,” may have served French imperial goals by denouncing English claims of supremacy, it also reinforced the *kaswentha*’s autonomy as the Haudenosaunee acted and reacted to a new North American environment based on their own cultural understandings and concerns.<sup>113</sup>

Despite the occasional recognition of the *kaswentha* ethic, the Haudenosaunee must have become increasingly frustrated as both the English and the French unceasingly attempted to assert supremacy over the Confederacy. Shortly after King William’s War ended in 1687, the French bragged of their “sovereignty over the Iroquois [which] is very ancient, and reverts as far back as the year 1504” and, having been “founded on an apparently incontestable basis,” far outweighed any English pretensions of “the same sovereignty over those Indians.” Given that fighting between the French and Haudenosaunee continued well after the Treaty of Ryswick, both parties had undoubtedly tired of war. The French Crown pledged to transfer their own assertions of sovereignty to the English “with the stipulation that the King of England will prevent those people [from] making war and disturbing the French and the Indians who are subjects or allies of France.”<sup>114</sup> Onontio must have known that the Haudenosaunee operated independently, especially the following year when a French memoir categorically rejected such pretensions of sovereignty: the Haudenosaunee “publicly maintain that they have no masters, and that they allowed the English to assume that title only in order to enjoy

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<sup>113</sup> Anonymous, Memoir respecting the Encroachments of the English on the territories of New France, 1699, *DRCHNY* 9: 703.

<sup>114</sup> Sovereignty of the King of France over the Iroquois, 1698, *DRCHNY* 9: 689.

trade...but when they will be inclined to make peace, they will negotiate it by themselves, independent of the English.”<sup>115</sup>

The Haudenosaunee took pride in acting as an autonomous Confederacy and in 1684 the Onondaga and Cayuga emphasised their status to Corlaer as “a Free People,” who decided to “unite our Selves to the English.”<sup>116</sup> Not only did the Haudenosaunee link themselves to the English, but they introduced wampum protocol in diplomacy, a custom that maintained the independence of their own traditions and showed the Europeans that their assertions of supremacy could not reign supreme. In 1685, for instance, the English sent a wampum belt to the Seneca in a vain attempt to avoid a Haudenosaunee-French war. The Seneca thanked the English for “your Belt of wampum, & understood your will & Pleasure, & have Consulted a long time about itt, finally we are Resolvd to make no warr upon ye french, nor any Christians.” Thoneregi and Awanasse presented a “Belt off wampum 12 deep” that described how they “have throwne ye axe quite away in a deep water not in a Standing water, but where a great Current runns wh. Carries itt Immediatlly away,” using eloquent metaphors sealed with wampum to make certain that the English would understand their peaceful intentions.<sup>117</sup> Although the Seneca decided to comply with English desires, they consulted independently, weighing their options, before coming to a decision, a decision that would be violated only a few short years later. Emphatically, the Haudenosaunee had not become submissive to the newcomers, but remained autonomous within a context of

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<sup>115</sup> Memoir respecting the Encroachments of the English on the territories of New France, 1699, *DRCHNY* 9: 703.

<sup>116</sup> Onondaga and Cayuga speech to Governor Dongan of New York, 2 August 1684, *AIA*, 12.

<sup>117</sup> Propositions made by two Seneca sachems named Thoneregi and Awanasse, 5 November 1685, *LIR*, 94.

mutual Covenant Chain obligations where they rationalised and resolved their own political decisions.

The rationalisation and resolution of issues did not mean that every Covenant Chain ally had to agree on a decision, nor did it mean that each nation within the Confederacy would be of one mind beyond their common desire to adhere to the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*. During the 1679 troubles, the Onondaga blamed the Oneida for killing four horses belonging to the Virginians in an effort to exonerate themselves, while the Mohawk in 1685 responded to another attack by denouncing all responsibility and fingering the Cayuga and Oneida, who “are slow in hearing.” The Mohawk sang a “covenant song” to admonish the other members of the Confederacy “to follow your duty better.”<sup>118</sup> While the Mohawk did stray from the *kaswentha* principles of non-interference evident in the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*, they sought to brighten the chain of the newest relationship and ensure that the Virginians, although far away from Haudenosaunee homelands, remained friendly with the Confederacy. Non-interference, while still crucial to the *kaswentha* ethic, now focused more on external relationships than internal ones as the Haudenosaunee sought to find a balance between asserting their own ethic without alienating their allies.

As the Haudenosaunee, English, and French came together in the late seventeenth century, they engaged in a tug of war between diverse interpretations of the Covenant Chain alliance. The Haudenosaunee acted and reacted to events following *kaswentha* ethic protocol, while they simultaneously strove for accommodation with fair-weathered allies. Each side, of course, remained victim to their own ethnocentrism, and much as the

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<sup>118</sup> Onondaga answer to Kendall propositions, 1 November 1679, *LIR*, 61; and Answer of the Mohawks to Colonel William Byrd's Propositions of the same day, 15 September 1685, *LIR*, 88-9.

Haudenosaunee could not control the actions of individual warriors, the English and French could not help their own assumptions of supremacy. Nevertheless, the very fact that such diverse people had established relationships with one another meant that they implicitly—even if not overtly—accommodated one another. The English and French, needing friendly Haudenosaunee to act as a buffer between their respective colonies, simply did not possess the military and/or political influence to control the Haudenosaunee as subjects, which forced them to accept Haudenosaunee autonomy. The Haudenosaunee, on the other hand, were surprised by European attempts to intrude in their internal affairs as part of their larger imperial ambitions and constantly found themselves reasserting their independence. Thus, the *kaswentha* ethic found expression despite European assumptions of *Onkwehonwe* subjugation and helped create a new North American reality that gradually set the stage for the true accommodation and *métissage* that would appear by the middle of the next century.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Condolence, Metaphor, and Wampum: *Métissage on the Eve of the Seven Years' War***

In June 1754, a small group of between 150 and 200 *Onkwehonwe* men travelled far from their homes and canoed down the Mohawk River to join their colonial neighbours in Albany.<sup>1</sup> Tensions were high since the New Yorkers had not been particularly good neighbours in recent years; land fraud and liquor trade threatened the Mohawk towns in close proximity while the fur trade had moved increasingly west and cut the Mohawk out of their role as intermediaries who had previously delivered furs to Albany.<sup>2</sup> Most troubling, colonial officials had lapsed in their duty to perform the complex set of rituals required for friendship, including the condolence ceremony and the custom of present-giving, which caused the Mohawk to question the sincerity of their long-standing ally.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, a year previous, a renowned chief of the Mohawk Bear Clan in the town of Canajoharie, Hendrick Peters,<sup>4</sup> had declared the Covenant Chain formally broken for the first time in its seventy-six year existence with the British. It must have been with heavy

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<sup>1</sup> The official meeting minutes cite 150 men as the official number, which they speculate may be so low because of the French influence. Shannon has suggested that the difference between 150 and 200 participants may be due to the presence of the River and Schaghticoke peoples who lived nearby and those from Kahnawake (Caughnawaga in the records), a Catholic mission community close to Montreal comprised mainly of Haudenosaunee peoples. Meeting of Commissioners, 9 July 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 887; Shannon, 128.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy J. Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 47-8.

<sup>3</sup> Shannon, *Indians and Colonists*, 47.

<sup>4</sup> There appear to have been at least two Hendrick Peters that historians have often confused: the first, lived from 1660 until 1735, was a member of the Wolf Clan and visited Queen Anne's court in 1710; the second lived from 1692 to 1755 and was involved in numerous conference proceedings in the 1740s and 1750s. See Shannon, *Indians and Colonists*, 30 for details.



hearts and trepidation that the former brethren convened in the frontier-town of Albany to discuss their future together.<sup>5</sup>

Albany, a village of roughly two-thousand people, combined the flavours of Dutch and English heritage; the former continued their long tradition of trade with the *Onkwehonwe*, spoke the Dutch language and followed the customs of their forefathers while the latter concentrated on defence for British troops and Anglicanism as part of a broader imperial reach.<sup>6</sup> The city leapt to life, with visitor huts constructed on a hill west of town, as traders busied themselves in the streets, as blacksmiths, silversmiths, gunsmiths, and tailors prepared goods for sale and repaired others, and as *Onkwehonwe* women strung together wampum to be used in council.<sup>7</sup> Although only 150-200 *Onkwehonwe* men was an unusually small gathering given the importance of the conference, they would have been joined by their kin of all ages.<sup>8</sup> Children carried in cradleboards on the backs of young mothers would have observed many of the proceedings and rejoiced in the feasting alongside the clan mothers, elders, and chiefs like Hendrick, although the presence of *Onkwehonwe* women and children won slight mention in the journals and official minutes of the colonial observers.

While the *Onkwehonwe* considered the event to be a family affair, several commissioners from the colonies of New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, and Pennsylvania descended upon Albany to consider the recommendations of the Lords of Trade, the administrators of British

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<sup>5</sup> Hendrick declared the Covenant Chain broken in 1753. Hendrick speech to Gov Clinton, 12 June 1753, NYCD, 6: 781-88; Johnson to Clinton WJP 9:104-5; Minutes, 26-27 July 1753, NYCM 23: 114.

<sup>6</sup> Shannon, *Indians and Colonists*, 120-126.

<sup>7</sup> Shannon *Indians and Colonists*, 129.

<sup>8</sup> The small number of participants may have reflected the insecurities and hesitations caused by the broken Chain of Friendship.

imperial policy in London, to restore friendship with the Haudenosaunee.<sup>9</sup> The commissioners also had security in mind and had convened to discuss the potential union of the colonies given the threat of yet another war with New France.<sup>10</sup> Astutely, the Lords of Trade and the commissioners recognized that Haudenosaunee friendship required a return to and even an increase in early council protocol so valued in the seventeenth century. The powerful condolence ceremony united peoples as brethren while both parties tended to the Covenant Chain Tree of Peace, which represented an innovative alliance founded on ancient symbolism. At no other point in history had colonial officials and the Haudenosaunee created such a *métissage* in diplomatic protocol, which allowed for the *kaswentha* ethic to coexist with British and French imperial ambitions.

Setting the tone for future council proceedings, the Lords of Trade in London wrote to colonial officials to praise the “great consequence the friendship and alliance of the six Nations is to all His Majties Colonies and Plantations in America” and pledged, in their quest to renew the Covenant Chain, that “nothing may be wanting to convince the Indians of the sincerity of our intentions.”<sup>11</sup> Even acknowledging the unscrupulous theft of *Onkwehonwe* lands, the Lords demanded that “all proper and legal methods” be used for redress, and warned those present to only purchase land “in His Majty’s name and at

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<sup>9</sup> The Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations or the Board of Trade supervised colonial affairs and legislation, nominated governors and other officials, and maintained imperial trade policies.

<sup>10</sup> Today, the Albany Conference is perhaps most renowned for the Plan of Union, which some argue foreshadowed the American Revolution. Some, most notably historians Bruce E. Johansen and Douglas A. Grinde Jr., have argued in the controversial Iroquois Influence Thesis that Haudenosaunee involvement at the Albany Conference shaped the minds of the founding American fathers. For a good summary of the issues raised and debated in the Iroquois Influence Thesis, see the series of articles in *WMQ* 53 (1996): 587-636.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from the Board of Trade, Whitehall, 18 September 1753, *DRCHNY* 6: 854-56. The complete conference proceedings appear in *DRCHNY* 6: 853-92. Records also appear in *DHNY* 2: 545-617 with more on the plan of proposed union of the colonies.

the publick charge.”<sup>12</sup> In order for peace to reign, Haudenosaunee demands must be met—and vice versa—which allowed for a coming together of peoples who now looked beyond past misunderstandings and towards a future together.

The commissioners on Turtle Island seemed to take the Lords’ concerns seriously enough—after all, those in the colonies would feel the wrath of Haudenosaunee discontent—and they astutely recalled Covenant Chain protocol when composing a draft speech to their Haudenosaunee “Bretheren.” Plans to distribute presents and a wampum belt would demonstrate the sincerity of the commissioners’ intentions and they condoled the deaths of individuals on both sides of the newly rekindled council fire: “We wipe away all tears from your eyes, and take away sorrow from your hearts, that you may speak freely.”<sup>13</sup> Three strings of wampum accompanied these three bare words before the commissioners moved on to “strengthen and brighten the chain of friendship” which “hath remained firm and unbroken from the beginning,” obviously glossing over the recent troubles.<sup>14</sup> Cautioning the Haudenosaunee against the duplicitous French, the commissioners beseeched their brethren to “Open your hearts to us, deal with us as Brethren, [as] we are ready to consult with you, how to scatter these Clouds that hang over us” and obscured their quest for peace.<sup>15</sup>

As proof of his peaceful proclamations, the acting New York Corlaer, or governor, presented “A Chain Belt,” the imagery of which seems unlike any known

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from the Board of Trade, Whitehall, 18 September 1753, *DRCHNY* 6: 854-56.

<sup>13</sup> Draft speech of the Commissioners, Albany, 27 June 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 861-63.

<sup>14</sup> Draft speech of the Commissioners, *DRCHNY* 6: 861-63.

<sup>15</sup> Draft speech of the Commissioners, *DRCHNY* 6: 861-63. Jon Parmenter has argued that in the 1750s, French official policy took a much harder line against the Haudenosaunee. Indeed, he even uses the term *kaswentha* to describe the relationship sought by the Haudenosaunee, although he nevertheless defined it according to Taiaiake Alfred’s understanding of the Two Row Wampum (ie. not as an expansive cultural ethic). Jon Parmenter, “*L’Arbre de Paix: Eighteenth-Century Franco-Iroquois Relations*,” *French Colonial History*, 4 (2003): 63-80; Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), 52.

wampum preserved today: “This represents the King our common Father—this line represents his arms extended, embracing all us the English and all the Six nations—These represents the Colonies which are here present and those who desire to be thought present—These represents the Six Nations, and there is a space left to draw in the other Indians—And there in the middle is the line represented which draws us all in under the King our common Father.”<sup>16</sup> Perhaps DeLancey drew the brethren together under his very own interpretation of the Covenant Chain’s Tree of Peace, one that imagined the British as the tree trunk and branches and the *Onkwehonwe* as those vulnerable children seeking protection. The belt certainly sounded grandiose and expressive, and one can imagine Corlaer commissioning it from skilled *Onkwehonwe* craftswomen in the hopes that the imagery would delight the Haudenosaunee present, convince them of the sincerity of his words, and serve as a mnemonic tool to carry home for those not present at the meeting. Although the below belt was most probably not that given by DeLancey, it nevertheless depicts three nations in a mutual alliance, a common image at a time when wampum designs were becoming increasingly complex.



Figure 9: McCord Wampum Belt M1912, meaning unknown

The Mohawk speakers eventually accepted Corlaer’s overtures but they strongly criticised the British for previous transgressions, especially pertaining to land. Canadagara, speaker of “the lower Castle of the Mohawk” of Fort Hunter “unfold[ed] our minds” to officials and questioned the “writings for all our [Mohawk] lands,” which they

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<sup>16</sup> Draft speech of the Commissioners, *DRCHNY* 6: 861-63.

quite rightly feared would all be sold or stolen “but [for] the very spot we live upon and hardly that.”<sup>17</sup> Canadagara and his elders appealed to an early “condition of the ancient Covenant chain, that if there be any uneasiness on either side, or any request to be made, that they shall be considered with a brotherly regard.”<sup>18</sup> Seemingly referring to the initial legal compact in 1664 whereby the English and Haudenosaunee set up jurisdictional guidelines for living together, Canadagara expected Corlaer to control the expansion and dubious land transactions of his own people, as would be expected in any relationship of co-existence. Accordingly, Corlaer pledged, somewhat superficially given future thefts, to “do you all the Justice in my power” as a testament of his steadfast friendship.<sup>19</sup>

After delaying the commissioners for a few days, likely to allow for private negotiations and possibly to punish the officials for rampant land frauds and the Covenant Chain upheaval, the Mohawk speaker Hendrick who had first called the Covenant Chain broken in 1753 conducted another Condolence Ceremony and then raised the Chain Belt given by Corlaer for all to see. Hendrick described the belt’s “great importance to our united Nations, and all our Allies” and pledged to “take it to Onondaga, where our Council Fire always burns, and keep it so securely that neither Thunder nor Lightning shall break it.”<sup>20</sup> In Onondaga, the central meeting place of the Confederacy, the Mohawk—and presumably the other chiefs of the Confederacy—“will consult over it” and will attempt “to add as many more [links] to it as lyes in our power,” referring to the adoption of some nations like the Tuscaroras and the forceful integration

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<sup>17</sup> Speech of Mohawk orator Canadagara to DeLancey, Johnson and others, Albany, 27 June 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 865-66.

<sup>18</sup> Speech of Canadagara to DeLancey, Johnson and others, *DRCHNY* 6: 865-66.

<sup>19</sup> Speech of Canadagara to DeLancey, Johnson and others, *DRCHNY* 6: 865-66.

<sup>20</sup> Speech of Mohawk chief Hendrick to DeLancey and commissioners, Albany, 2 July 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 868-71. “[links]” appears in the O’Callaghan text and was not added by the present author.

of others such as the Delaware. Believing in strength by numbers, Hendrick asked the British to “bring as many into this Covenant Chain as you possibly can,” to increase Haudenosaunee influence among both the *Onkwehonwe*, the British, and to drive fear into the hearts of the French who by now were fair-weathered friends.<sup>21</sup>

Hendrick still refused to let the British forget past transgressions and blamed the “dispersed manner” of his people on British neglect over the past three years; Hendrick tossed a stick, possibly a broken piece of the Tree of Welfare, over his shoulder to emphasise how “you have thus thrown us behind your back, and disregarded us.” Shrewdly playing on British fears that their allies would follow those Catholic and French-allied Haudenosaunee who had migrated northwards to what was by now Kahnawake, Hendrick cunningly cautioned that the French, “a subtle and vigilant people,” continued to use “their utmost endeavours to seduce and bring our people over to them.”<sup>22</sup> After suggesting that the French would welcome the Haudenosaunee with open arms, Hendrick condemned those English who “have made paths thro’ our Country to Trade and built houses without acquainting us with it” and pointedly accused the governments of both Virginia and Canada of “quarrelling about lands which belong to us.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Speech of Hendrick to DeLancey and commissioners, *DRCHNY* 6: 868-71.

<sup>22</sup> Speech of Hendrick to DeLancey and commissioners, *DRCHNY* 6: 868-71.

One estimate indicates that as many as two-thirds of the Mohawk had settled in various places in New France (at Kahnawake, originally founded as Kentá:ke at the La Prairie Jesuit settlement, Kanehsatake, founded by a land grant to the Seminary of Saint Sulpice in 1717, Akwesasne, founded by migrants from Kahnawake in 1755, and Oswegatchie, now the present-day site of Ogdensburg, New York), so the British certainly had a right to be concerned about the French presence. That said, many of the French-allied Haudenosaunee refused to attack their brethren in what was then the colony of New York. Lois M. Huey and Bonnie Pulis, *Molly Brant: A Legacy of Her Own* (Youngstown: Old Fort Niagara Association, 1997), 15; Robert Surtees, “Iroquois in Canada,” Francis Jennings et al., eds., *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 69.

<sup>23</sup> Speech of Mohawk chief Hendrick to DeLancey and commissioners, Albany, 2 July 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 868-71.

After his stern reprimand, Hendrick produced a belt to clear the broken Covenant Chain clouds so “that we may all live in bright sunshine,” united by friendship so that “nothing can hurt us.” The belt, however, continued to judge the British harshly, for they had shamed and scandalised themselves by burning their own forts at Saratoga during King George’s War the previous decade. Furthermore, Albany being “but one Step from Canada” must remain alert so that the French do not “turn you out of your doors” in the approaching conflict. Annoyed at the hypocrisy of the British, Hendrick renounced the practice of allowing French-allied *Onkwehonwe* to convene in Albany for the sake of the Beaver Trade since the money, “powder, lead and guns” made their way to the French Ohio and subsequently turned against the Haudenosaunee and the British in the seemingly never-ending saga of North American wars. Mincing no words, Hendrick Peters employed gender terms to remark that the French, being men, “are fortifying everywhere—but, we are ashamed to say it, you are all like women bare and open without any fortifications.”<sup>24</sup>

Upon completing the scolding, Hendrick’s brother Abraham rose and argued for the reinstatement of Sir William Johnson to Indian Affairs, who had resigned in 1750 over financial and gift giving squabbles with the New York Assembly. Abraham lay down a belt to remind those present that “we all lived happy... under his management, for we love him, and he us, and he has always been our good, and trusty Friend.”<sup>25</sup> Johnson, Irish immigrant, landholder, soldier, and colonial agent, intimately understood Mohawk culture and diplomacy and, named Warraghiyagey (“one who conducts business”) by his Mohawk brethren, welcomed the *Onkwehonwe* to Fort Johnson and

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<sup>24</sup> Speech of Hendrick to DeLancey and commissioners, *DRCHNY* 6: 868-71..

<sup>25</sup> Speech of Abraham to DeLancey and commissioners, Albany, 2 July 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 868-71.

later to newly constructed (1764) Johnson Hall to dine, gossip, and most importantly, to smoke the calumet and exchange wampum.<sup>26</sup> Warraghiyagey was also a frequent figure in Hendrick and Abraham's town of Canajoharie and often stayed in the home of another chief, Brant Canagaraduncka whose daughter, Molly Brant, would become Warraghiyagey's wife and mother to eight of his children.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the Lords of Trade would listen to Abraham's appeal and bestow Warraghiyagey with the position of sole Agent and Superintendent of the Six Nations and their Affairs in 1755, shortly before he received the official title of baronet.<sup>28</sup> In the meantime, Abraham warned his Mohawk brother and ally that "the French will take more than ordinary pains either to kill him, or to take him prisoner" because of his influence among the *Onkwehonwe* and his role as pine-tree chief within the Confederacy.<sup>29</sup>

The commissioners, eager to satisfy their much needed ally, apologised profusely for "any neglect [that] has been shewn to you...our old and steady friends" and presented wampum to rejoice that the council fire now "burns clear" with the renewal of the Covenant Chain. To address the duplicitous swindling of land, the commissioners declared that "the King our Father" will take "care to preserve it for you," an oft-repeated statement that the Haudenosaunee by this point could not take seriously, but, given their inferiority in numbers, probably had little choice but to accept. The commissioners

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<sup>26</sup> Although the spelling of *Warraghiyagey* does not fit with any contemporary Mohawk word it remains the term for Johnson in colonial documents. A contemporary spelling (with similar pronunciation) would be *Warihyà:ke*, Wm Guy Spittal suggested to me in private conversation, where -rihwa- is the root for business or matters and where -yà:ke- refers to conducts. Paul Williams speculated, also in personal conversation, that -yà:ke- refers to "breaks" instead of "conducts," meaning that Johnson's name would translate as "one who breaks business/matters," which would be surprising in light of Johnson's kinship with the Mohawk. Confirmation has yet to come from fluent Mohawk speakers.

<sup>27</sup> Huey and Pulis, *Molly Brant*, 20-23. .

<sup>28</sup> Milton W. Hamilton, *Sir William Johnson: Colonial American* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1976), 4-7, 195-96.

<sup>29</sup> Rejoinder of the Six Nations response, Albany, 5 July 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 875-77.



declared that “the land is under the King’s Govern’t,” but the Haudenosaunee, the commissioners maintained, nevertheless retained the “power of selling it to any of his Majesty’s, subjects.”<sup>30</sup> The commissioners also thanked the Mohawk for giving “no countenance to the French...[who] are always your and our open or secret Enemies” and denied that they ever exchanged any guns or powder with the French or their allies in the course of the beaver trade.<sup>31</sup> In their response, the Six Nations continued to play upon British fears and reminded the commissioners “of the defenceless state of your Frontiers.”<sup>32</sup> They used rhetoric to emphasise the urgency of the alliance, and tried to panic those present with the assertion that “the French have their hatchet in their hands” and might attack that very night!<sup>33</sup>

As the conference wound to a close, Corlaer cautioned the Haudenosaunee ‘to behave quietly and peaceable to all your brethren and their Castle in your return home.’<sup>34</sup> Reminding his allies of their promises, Hendrick begged that “all take care of the Tree of Friendship and preserve it by our Mutual Attention from any Injuries” so that their relationship “may grow up to great-heighth and then we shall be a powerful People.”<sup>35</sup> Nostalgically, Hendrick craved a return to the Haudenosaunee’s former power and he recalled romantically how “if any of our Enemies rose against us, we had no Occasion to lift up our whole hand against them, for our little Finger was sufficient.” He hoped, “as

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<sup>30</sup> Draft of commissioners’ response to Mohawks, Albany, 3 July 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 871-75.

<sup>31</sup> Draft of commissioners’ response, *DRCHNY* 6: 871-75.

<sup>32</sup> Rejoinder of the Six Nations response, Albany, 5 July 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 875-77.

<sup>33</sup> Rejoinder of the Six Nations, *DRCHNY* 6: 875-77.

<sup>34</sup> Written speech of DeLancey to the Six Nations and Hendrick’s response, Albany, 9 July 1754, *DHNY* 2: 600-604.

<sup>35</sup> Hendrick’s response to the written speech of DeLancey, Albany, 9 July 1754, *DHNY* 2: 600-604. Note that the wording in the *DRCHNY* speech (6: 882-885) is slightly different; most importantly, the *DRCHNY* do not refer to a “Tree of Friendship,” but rather to a “Fire of friendship” next to which a footnote indicates “*Sic.* Tree of friendship. *Johnson Manuscripts* I – ED.” A ‘tree’ makes more sense in the circumstances since both refer to the tree/fire of friendship growing “up to a great height” which is much more of a tree metaphor than that of a fire.

we have now made so strong a Confederacy, if we are truly Earnest therein we may retrieve the Antient Glory, of the Five Nations.”<sup>36</sup> Corlaer expressed a similar desire that “by this present Union we shall grow up to a great heighth, and be as powerfull and Famous as you were of Old.”<sup>37</sup> Little did either of them know their hopes were to be partially realised as the Albany Congress welcomed a new era in Haudenosaunee-British diplomacy. Council protocol reached new heights as increasingly intricate wampum belts—thicker, wider, and with more pictographs than ever before—travelled across council fires, as complex condolence ceremonies cleared the path for negotiations, and as rich metaphors outlined friendly relations within the ever-expanding Covenant Chain.

By the mid-eighteenth century, a *métissage* of diplomatic protocol allowed dramatically different peoples to relate to one another in a political forum where Europeans acknowledged Haudenosaunee *kaswentha* values and their actions as autonomous peoples. A *métissage* evolved when the *Onkwehonwe* and the newcomers employed both wampum belts and written treaties to preserve various agreements, while commonly understood metaphors and ceremonial protocols allowed all peoples to participate in a common diplomatic world. *Métissage*, however, did not mean that everyone agreed on all issues; rather, decisions were made with one’s brethren in mind and as the parties used a commonly developed and respected political protocol to further their own agendas.

Diplomatic *métissage* among the Haudenosaunee, the British, and the French extended far beyond what historian Richard White has called a middle ground in the Great Lakes region. White’s middle ground encompassed a place between cultures,

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<sup>36</sup> Hendrick’s response to the written speech of DeLancey, Albany, 9 July 1754, *DHNY* 2: 600-604..

<sup>37</sup> Written speech of DeLancey to the Six Nations and Hendrick’s response, Albany, 9 July 1754, *DHNY* 2: 600-604.

villages, and empires where diverse peoples attempted to accommodate their differences through “creative, and often expedient, misunderstandings.”<sup>38</sup> Each side simply accommodated the other and absorbed them “into their own conceptual order” whereby the *Onkwehonwe* became “*sauvages*” and the French, according to the Algonquians, became manitous, or supernatural spirits.<sup>39</sup> Both sides acted according to their own culturally-derived interests, but then had to justify those actions “in terms of what they perceived to be their partner’s cultural premises” so that they could “convince people of another culture that some mutual action was fair and legitimate.”<sup>40</sup> While White’s middle ground remained rooted in the experiences in *Onkwehonwe* communities on the fringes of European empires, such an in-between place also thrived on the Albany frontier.

Historian Timothy J. Shannon also described the Albany Congress as a middle ground, which pitted the localized power of the *Onkwehonwe* and colonial villages against the “world of empires in which power became increasingly centralized,” the participants did not completely misunderstand their allies and had not only uncovered a place between cultures in which to coexist.<sup>41</sup> In fact, various peoples and nations actively strove to make and remake their alliances and to push beyond simply coexisting to establish something new, different, and innovative. Scholars such as Gilles Havard have described how community, Confederacy, and Empire intersected in an even more intimate way than the middle ground model suggests and created a *métissage* with a new, vibrant, diplomatic culture based less on accommodation and more on acculturation.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), x.

<sup>39</sup> White, *Middle Ground*, 51.

<sup>40</sup> White, *Middle Ground*, 52.

<sup>41</sup> Shannon, *Indians and Colonists*, 12-13.

<sup>42</sup> See Gilles Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le Pays d'en Haut, 1660-1715*, (Sainte Foy: Septentrion, 2003).

The language and metaphors used at the Albany Congress and at other conferences afterwards depict not a tiresome placating of the other side of the council fire, but instead a new protocol valued by the Haudenosaunee, the British, and the French alike.

Of course, the *métissage* of the mid-eighteenth century could only exist *in* the middle ground; that is, a *métissage* in diplomacy thrived between *Onkwehonwe* and European peoples while together, but when each returned to their own longhouses or towns, the middle ground dissipated and a new sense of belonging—either to Confederacy or Empire—reigned supreme. For example, while the Albany Congress perfectly depicted diplomatic *métissage*, the Plan of Union discussed privately among the commissioners sparked a new sense of nationhood and belonging to Empire. The Plan of Union, Shannon has explained, suggested reforms to the colonial system that would both protect American liberties and “advance Britain’s empire building.”<sup>43</sup> Notwithstanding the common council fire, the Plan of Union also contributed to an increased ‘othering’ of *Onkwehonwe* peoples now excluded from Empire since their towns, farms, and hunting grounds stood in the way of westward expansion.<sup>44</sup> Colonial ambitions reached new heights in the mid-eighteenth century, as Anglo-Americans began to categorize the now racialized “redmen” as separate and lesser peoples in order to justify their struggle to conquer Turtle Island and create an image of their own ‘New World.’<sup>45</sup> Historian Linda Colley has described how this ‘othering’ prevailed during the Seven Years War, when the *Onkwehonwe* began to represent “unalloyed creatures of menace, raw, single-minded

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<sup>43</sup> Shannon, *Indians and Colonists*, 195, 197-98; The Plan of Union, 10 July 1754, *DRCHNY*, 6:889-892.

<sup>44</sup> Shannon, *Indians and Colonists*, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Alden T. Vaughn, “From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian.” *The American Historical Review*, 87.4 (October 1982): 919. And Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians & Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 13.

hunters, utterly beyond civility and sentiment,” in stark contrast to the humane, “impressively merciful, quintessentially civilised” Britons whose Empire ruled the world.<sup>46</sup>

The staunch dichotomies of ‘civilized’ versus ‘savage’ seldom existed around the council fire—indeed how could they when diplomatic *métissage* employed *Onkwehonwe* protocol and speeches—and participants concentrated instead on forging a path between the Confederacy and Empire. The branches that obstructed the attainment of diplomatic *métissage*, such as dubious land sales, the liquor trade, and of course war with the French, ultimately suggest a subtle ‘othering’ of *Onkwehonwe* peoples which in turn the Anglo-Americans justified by citing the perceived waste of land, public drunkenness at the hands of unscrupulous land traders, and apparent savagery in war.<sup>47</sup> The original inhabitants of Turtle Island, on the other hand, did not ‘other’ their Anglo-American or French Canadian kin although they could not understand how these members of their extended family could steal their land, cloud their vision with alcohol, or send their already diminished numbers into yet another colonial war.

The Haudenosaunee at least had an ally in Warraghiyagey, or William Johnson, under whose tenure the council fire burned strongest, the Covenant Chain shone brightest, and diplomatic *métissage* reached its height. Warraghiyagey, despite his Mohawk wife, children, and friends, however, was also a product of Empire and grew increasingly impatient with the Haudenosaunee as their military clout declined in the

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<sup>46</sup> Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 182.

<sup>47</sup> Notwithstanding frequent *Onkwehonwe* othering many colonialists retained their kinship ties and lived in harmony with their neighbours. See James W. Paxton, “Kinship, Communities, and Covenant Chains: Mohawks and Palatines in New York and Upper Canada, 1712-1830,” PhD Thesis, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, 2006.

years following Pontiac's War.<sup>48</sup> Warraghiyagey's tenure was certainly pivotal to *Onkwehonwe*-British relations as were Haudenosaunee personalities such as Hendrick, his brother Abraham, and Kaghswughtioni, an Onondaga sachem also known as Red Head, who helped situate their nations and Confederacy as autonomous allies of both the British and, at times, of the French. Obviously, *métissé* protocol would not exist without *métissé* personalities and each individual contributed to the coming together of their respective peoples although Warraghiyagey has perhaps received the most recognition in this process.

Indeed, diplomatic *métissage* derived from a long history of living together and both the Haudenosaunee and the British used historical memory to legitimize and solidify their alliance for present and future generations. In 1755, 1106 *Onkwehonwe* men, women, and children arrived at Fort Johnson—a far greater number than had convened at the Albany Congress the previous summer—to repolish the Covenant Chain with the newly appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs and to move the council fire from Albany to Warraghiyagey's estate.<sup>49</sup> Warraghiyagey described the founding of the Covenant Chain the previous century when “we shook hands and finding we should be useful to one another, entered into a covenant of Brotherly love and mutual friendship.” Appropriating the early Dutch symbolism, Warraghiyagey described the rope that first tied the people together; fearing it “should grow Rotten and break,” the rope was soon replaced by an iron chain; faced with the potential rust of the iron, a silver chain finally took its place, “the strength and brightness of which would but to eject [be subject to] no

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<sup>48</sup> For instances of Johnson's impatience, see: Journal of Indian Affairs, 21-31 May 1764, *PSWJ*, 11: 209; and An Indian Conference, 24 March – 23 April 1764, *PSWJ*, 11: 153-55.

<sup>49</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 964-89.

decay.” Tying the ends of the silver chain “to the immoveable mountains”—either the central fire at Onondaga (*Onoñda'gega'* translates as ‘At the Hills’) or the Mohawk home in the valley between the Adirondack and Catskill mountains where the English first met their now-brethren—the “Covenant Chain of love and friendship” drew them together “as one body, one blood, and one people.”<sup>50</sup> Recalling the Haudenosaunee explanation of tying “the Great [English] Canoe..., not with a Piece of Bark or Rope to a Tree, but with a Chain to a Great Mountain” as explained in 1694, Warraghiyagey sought to emphasise the historical continuity of friendship and gloss over the more recent disturbances in maintaining the Covenant Chain.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, he ignored the more recent troubles and claimed “We have never spilt in anger one drop of each other’s blood to this day” perhaps in an effort to start the relationship anew.<sup>52</sup>

Starting over was familiar to the Haudenosaunee who used the condolence ceremony to heal past grievances and to comfort those distressed over the deaths of their loved ones; negotiation could not occur if the parties did not possess one mind and the condolence ensured that no participant remained clouded by sorrow or by anger. Indeed, as the Onondaga speaker Kaghswughtioni said to Warraghiyagey in 1756, “We have now opened our minds with Freedom & sincerity and we understand each other clearly let us mutually remember our engagements which we have again so solemnly renewed.”<sup>53</sup> While scribes often recorded the condolence briefly, as they may have seen it as an unnecessary and even a cumbersome delay to achieving their ultimate goals, the process was indispensable to the Haudenosaunee participants. Even today, people speak of the

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<sup>50</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 6: 970.

<sup>51</sup> Albany, 5 May 1694, Five Nations reply to Governor Fletcher’s briefly recorded speech, *AIA*, 24.

<sup>52</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 6: 970.

<sup>53</sup> Conference between Johnson and 586 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 7: 62.

condolence as a powerful spiritual journey that has a capacity to heal and rejuvenate the bereaved; one can easily imagine the similar role it would have played among those grieving for the loss of multitudes from disease, war, and famine.<sup>54</sup>

An extensive condolence ceremony conducted at Fort Stanwix in 1768 must have addressed long-standing grievances as settlers continued to move westward and encroach upon Haudenosaunee, and other *Onkwehonwe*, land, despite the Royal Proclamation of 1763.<sup>55</sup> The Conference at Fort Stanwix sought to establish a new westward boundary with at least 2200 *Onkwehonwe* who had gathered, including the Haudenosaunee, Shawnees, and Delaware, and was a brutal example of real politik whereby the Haudenosaunee ceded other *Onkwehonwe* lands to the British.<sup>56</sup> Notwithstanding the treatment of those *Onkwehonwe* the Haudenosaunee considered inferior, Warraghiyagey conducted a lengthy condolence “agreeable to the antient custom established by our Forefathers,” which illustrated not only the *métissage*, but also the common history of the now-shared council protocol. Warraghiyagey eloquently wiped “away the Tears from your eyes which you are constantly shedding for your late deceased Chiefs, and I clear your sight so you may look cheerfully at your Bretheren, who are come from Several of the Provinces.” Next, Warraghiyagey cleared “the Passage to your Hearts that you may

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<sup>54</sup> Fenton described one smallpox epidemic among the Mohawk in 1633, which decimated 75% of 8,100 people, a devastating number that was not uncommon in the seventeenth century. Based on warrior counts, Fenton has estimated that a total Haudenosaunee population of not over 10,000 persons was sliced in half by 1698. Fenton, *Great Law*, 21.

For contemporary accounts of the condolence, see Mike Meyers, “Frozen Thoughts, Frozen Feelings,” *Gatherings: The En’owkin Journal of First North American Peoples*, 4 (Fall 1995): 35-50; Teyowisonte (Thomas Deer), “Releasing the Burden: Haudenosaunee Concept of Condolence,” *The Eastern Door*, 10.35 (28 September 2001): 14-15.

<sup>55</sup> *The Royal Proclamation*, 7 October 1763, The Avalon Project, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/proc1763.htm>, consulted 3 July 2008; Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and its Peoples, 1724-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); Andrew R.L. Cayton and Fredricka J. Teute, eds., *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

<sup>56</sup> Conference at Fort Stanwix, October 1768, *DRCHNY* 8: 112.



speaking cheerfully and candidly on the several subjects which, during this Congress, will be treated of, as well as to remove all sorrow & uneasiness from you.” Finally, to conclude the three bare words, Warraghiyagey wiped “away the blood of your friends from off your Births, that you may on your return rest with Peace and comfort on them.”<sup>57</sup>

Unlike many other condolence renditions, Warraghiyagey did not stop with the three words, but continued to express concern “for the many losses you have sustained in your several Nations” and dispelled “the darkness which for some time past hath overspread your several Countries.” Warraghiyagey aimed to show his Haudenosaunee brethren “a serene clear sky, so that you may be able to see your Brethren from the Sun rising to the sun setting” and he used “the clearest water...[to] cleanse your inside from all Filth and every thing which has given you concern.” Before adjourning for the day, Warraghiyagey presented a wampum string concealed in a pouch so that the Haudenosaunee could immediately condole the loss of an individual wherever they might be. On the second day, Canaghquieson, an Oneida sachem, repeated Warraghiyagey’s condolence messages held by black wampum belts, thanked him for the condolence, advice, and for “the remembrance of our antient ceremonies” which are “the cement of our union.”<sup>58</sup>

Indeed, this very condolence took two entire days, which indicates the importance both sides placed upon the proper etiquette and the policy of reaching one mind so that negotiations could occur without being clouded by grief.<sup>59</sup> The British officials dedicated much more space to the ceremony than they had in the late seventeenth century, as

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<sup>57</sup> Conference at Fort Stanwix, *DRCHNY* 8: 114.

<sup>58</sup> Conference at Fort Stanwix, *DRCHNY* 8: 114-116.

<sup>59</sup> For other long condolence records, see *DRCHNY* 7: 54-55; *DRCHNY* 7: 134; *DRCHNY* 8: 36. The Cherokee also practiced the ceremony of the condolence. See, for example, Journal of Johnson’s Proceedings, 31 July 1757, *DRCHNY* 7: 324.

meetings around the council fire increasingly shifted towards a *métissage* in language and metaphor and included elements that the British would not have dreamed of using on the other side of the Atlantic. Warraghiyagey and other colonial agents undoubtedly recognized the condolence's importance to the Haudenosaunee and perhaps they too had even come to believe in its healing power. Regardless, the Haudenosaunee delegates certainly appreciated the emphasis on proper protocol and Onondaga speaker Kaghsughtioni even thanked Warraghiyagey "for renewing our ancient forms."<sup>60</sup>

Much as Warraghiyagey stressed historical continuity by relating the Covenant Chain's inception, he strove to maintain consistency in protocol so that all parties would know what was expected of one another. Consequently, in an increasingly volatile situation where the British would battle for their survival on the continent—first in the Seven Years' War and then in Pontiac's War—a ceremonial constant would continue to tie the Haudenosaunee east of the Ohio and the British together as allies and brethren. From a Haudenosaunee perspective, adherence to the Covenant Chain and to the condolence firmly entrenched the British as kin and made Warraghiyagey one of the protectors of the relationship. The condolence, furthermore, attested to their partner's intentions and, in light of duplicitous land transactions, the liquor trade, and war with the French, should have guaranteed brotherly conduct, although this was seldom the case.

New France's colonial agents were less interested in the condolence than the British, which is ironic given the French reputation for adopting *Onkwehonwe* customs.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps the omission reflects the dismissal of Haudenosaunee protocol in general, or

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<sup>60</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Johnson Hall, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 968,

<sup>61</sup> That said, Jesuits captured the very first recorded condolence council in 1645 at Trois Rivières so the French were certainly aware of the protocol from an early age. See JR, 27: 247-53; "The Earliest Recorded Description: The Mohawk Treaty with New France at Three Rivers, 1645," Jennings et al., eds., *History and Culture*, 130.

simply indicates impatient scribes who chose not to record what they considered superfluous. Officials did understand the ceremony, however, and in 1755 the Seneca Chief Gaiachoton condoled the newly appointed Onontio, or governor of New France: “the loss you daily experience of your warriors and children, causes you to shed tears; wherefore, we dry them by these [three wampum] Strings, so that you may regard us with a quiet aspect. We cleanse your throat, in order that your speech may come forth without difficulty when you will address us. We likewise remove the blood spilt over your body by the loss of your warriors, and clean up your mat, so that nothing may sadden you.” Onontio returned the courtesy two days later: “Children. I in like manner dry your tears by these Strings, and cleanse your throat, so that you may be able to speak freely. I also clean your mats, and wish that nothing bad may occur thereon.”<sup>62</sup> To wipe clean a mat, a symbol of the home and domesticity, was yet another metaphor for appeasing “a family’s grief for their loss,” which would infest their homes if not properly condoled.<sup>63</sup> It is easy to picture the spread of a clouded, grief-stricken mind if the sadness were spread upon a household mat to be tracked by extended family members and visitors into other dwellings and thereby hindering frank discussions from taking place.

Once all the parties present had been condoled to reach a common frame of mind, the Haudenosaunee and colonists often employed a familiar metaphor to depict their attachment to one another and the extent of their *métissage* in diplomatic language. As explained in Chapters One and Two, the Great Tree recalled not only how the Peacemaker united diverse nations and buried weapons of war, but also Skywoman’s tumble from the Sky World to Turtle Island and the Evergrowing Tree of *Hadui* whose

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<sup>62</sup> Conference between Vaudreuil and the Seneca, Montreal, 1 October 1755, *DRCHNY* 10: 345-346.

<sup>63</sup> Jennings et al., *History and Culture*, 121.

roots reach deep into the soil and whose leaves piece the clouds above in the Sky World. A new Tree had been planted to shelter the Haudenosaunee, English, and French during the early Covenant Chain alliance and an additional Tree had also grown to encompass the Great Peace of 1701 between the French, their *Onkwehonwe* allies, and the Haudenosaunee.<sup>64</sup> More than fifty years later, the Tree continued to express the relationship between the French and the Haudenosaunee: in 1754, the Jesuit missionaries at Kahnawake sent a message to the Oneida cautioning, among other things, to not “shake the Tree of Peace which our Father, Mr de Callières [Onontio during the Great Peace of 1701], has so firmly planted.”<sup>65</sup> In reply, the Oneidas pledged, “far from shaking the Tree of Peace, we will ward off from it as much as we can, the blows of the hatchet that the evil disposed might direct against it.”<sup>66</sup> The Haudenosaunee pledged to protect the Tree from potential enemies who might even hack away at the roots as the Peacemaker himself had feared.

Two years later, Onondaga Chief Cinoniata explained the Tree to the new French Onontio and said, “Our ancestors, in your Father’s time, pulled up a Pine and made a hole to bury bad business therein; we have renewed that pit, and cast into it all that is past, in order that it be no more mentioned.”<sup>67</sup> Very possibly referring to the Great Peace of 1701 or even earlier agreements, Cinoniata spoke of “renew[ing] the ancient Councils” and “renew[ing] the three roots that sustain” the Tree of Peace, “which shoot out towards the North, the South and West.” The Tree thus attached itself to all of the land surrounding New France—notably omitting the British along the eastern seaboard—and gave the

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<sup>64</sup> On the Great Peace of 1701, see Gilles Havard, *Great Peace*.

<sup>65</sup> Secret conference between the Oneida, Tuscarora, and Cayuga with domiciliated *Onkwehonwe*, Montreal, 23 October 1754, *DRCHNY* 10: 269.

<sup>66</sup> Secret conference, *DRCHNY* 10: 269.

<sup>67</sup> Conference between M. de Vaudreuil and the Indians, Montreal, 13 December 1756, *DRCHNY* 10: 501.

friends a safe place to “retire when any business arises.” When the two parties had difficulty communicating, it was because the leaves of the Tree of Peace were dry—perhaps dying—so Cinoniata presented a wampum belt to “restore the leaves to this Tree, in order that we may talk in the shade on good business.”<sup>68</sup> Cinoniata brought forth an old belt, given to his people by Onontio and described how the wampum “placed roots on the Tree of Peace”; if any evil person should “touch these roots, all the Nations should reunite” to punish them.<sup>69</sup> When Onontio replied, he admitted that the leaves of the Tree of Peace had to be dry for the Haudenosaunee “had neglected it too much; ‘twas time you clothed it with other foliage,” probably referring to the constant adaptation and renewal of the alliance necessary for survival.<sup>70</sup>

The Covenant Chain Tree planted between the Haudenosaunee and the British also stood strong and reflected the extent of their *métissage* as a new, multi-cultural language of relationships was employed by all parties. In 1755, Warraghiyagey declared it “raised and fixed in the earth by so powerful a hand, that its roots will take a firm and deep footing, and its branches be a comfortable and extensive shade for you and all your allies to take shelter under.” Warraghiyagey resurrected the Tree, not in Onondaga as the Peacemaker had done, or at Albany as during the early alliance, but rather at Fort Johnson, where he solidified the British place in what had now become a common metaphor. Tying the tree to the condolence, Warraghiyagey invited the Haudenosaunee and their allies with wampum “to come and sit under this tree where you may freely open your hearts and get all your wounds healed.” Ultimately, Warraghiyagey equated the Tree of Peace to the council fire much like the Peacemaker did in Onondaga and he

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<sup>68</sup> Conference between Vaudreuil and the Indians, *DRCHNY* 10: 502.

<sup>69</sup> Conference between Vaudreuil and the Indians, *DRCHNY* 10: 502.

<sup>70</sup> Conference between Vaudreuil and the Indians, *DRCHNY* 10: 505.

“remove[d] the Embers which remained at Albany and rekindle[d] the Fire of Council and Friendship at” Fort Johnson with the “clearest light and greatest warmth.”<sup>71</sup>



Figure 10: Cartouche of Warraghiyagey and Haudenosaunee allies meetings around a council fire and under a Tree of Peace (first appeared in 1770)  
Courtesy of Johnson Hall State Historic Site, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Kaghsuughtioni, an Onondaga sachem, spoke in 1755 to express the grief and distress felt “whilst the Tree lay down” during the previous year’s breaking of the Covenant Chain.<sup>72</sup> Much as the chiefs would catch the Peacemaker’s Tree if it should fall, the chain was supposed to support the Covenant Chain Tree; the fact that the Tree came tumbling to the ground indicated the seriousness of the break, as well as the reality that it might not be raised up again. Thankfully, this new Tree was replanted and, Kaghsuughtioni hoped, “it will be nourished by refreshing streams, that it may grow up as high as the heavens, and be proof against every envious wind.” Not only would it be tall, but, like the Confederacy Tree, it would also be wide with “branches...large and numerous enough to afford sufficient shelter for us and all our Brethren, to come and

<sup>71</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 965.

<sup>72</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 6: 967. Kaghsuughtioni is also known as Red Head, as was his son, Ononwarogo. See Jennings, *History and Culture*, 249.

consult under it; and that our Children's Children may bless the hand that planted it."<sup>73</sup> As long as the Haudenosaunee and the British respected the Tree's common metaphor and retained a *métissage* in their diplomatic order, future generations, Kaghswughtioni believed, would benefit from the alliance that would continue to grow and mature.

All of the Great Trees of Peace also absolved war and hardship: hatchets or "bad Stories," as Tesanonda described to Warraghiyagey in 1756, should be buried underneath "the Roots of the largest Tree in the woods that they never may come forth again."<sup>74</sup> When some British soldiers killed a Tuscarora man and impaled his head on a stake in 1756, an Onondaga speaker assured Warraghiyagey that "we will pull up a large Pine Tree, and bury under its Roots this unhappy affair."<sup>75</sup> The Tree continued to symbolise friendship and as Tesanonda described, followed the ways of their forefathers to "drive away the Spirit of Anger & discord from our hearts and bury it under a large Pine Tree according to their Custom, in order that we might deliberate maturely upon public matters and not be disturbed by that evil Spirit in our consultations."<sup>76</sup> While the Tree may not have possessed the healing properties of the condolence ceremony, it nevertheless provided a practical way in which to prevent future deaths by war and revenge.<sup>77</sup> Both the Tree and the condolence, therefore, came together in *métissage* to create a new reciprocal relationship founded upon good minds, protection, and friendship, necessary components for any co-living agreement.

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<sup>73</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 6: 967.

<sup>74</sup> Conference between Johnson and various *Onkwehonwe*, Oneida, June 1756, *DRCHNY* 7: 131. Tesanonda was a speaker of either the Oneida, Tuscarora, or Cayuga nations.

<sup>75</sup> Conference between Johnson and *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 7: 177-79.

<sup>76</sup> Conference between Johnson and the *Onkwehonwe*, German Flatts, September 1756, *DRCHNY* 7: 193.

<sup>77</sup> That said, the tree, like all plants, has medicinal properties and are often used in ceremonies, especially the False Face Ceremony, where ash is spread as a curative power. For the power of trees and plants in ceremony, see Simoney.

Not only would the Tree and council fire solidify the alliance at Fort Johnson, but Warraghiyagey also pledged to make the “Council Room clean and free from everything offensive,” hoping that his Haudenosaunee brethren “will take care that no Snake may creep in amongst us or any thing which may obstruct our harmony.”<sup>78</sup> Again borrowing a metaphor from the Peacemaker and inserting it into the chain, Warraghiyagey’s promise is reminiscent of the Tadodaho Belt, which bestowed upon the fourteen Onondaga chiefs, the “Keepers of the Central Council Fire,” Chief Jacob E. Thomas explained, the duty to “guard the Council Fire and keep it clean and bright.”<sup>79</sup> With a bird’s wing, Tadodaho and the fourteen others on the Onondaga roster were to “sweep the dust and dirt away” and if they saw “any crawling creature approaching the Confederate Council Fire,” they should pitch it away with the help of a nearby stick.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 965.

<sup>79</sup> Jacob E. Thomas, *Illustrations and Descriptions of Wampum Belts*, #9364 (Ohsweken: JTLIC, 1989). Some, including William Beauchamp, Francis Jennings, and William Fenton have asserted that the Tadodaho belt is in fact a chain belt, of more recent origin, despite a note attached to the belt in 1886 that read, according to Beauchamp, “The first belt used by the principal chief of the Six Nations. Very old.” The belt certainly does not date to the founding of the confederacy given that the bead drill holes required tools that only arrived with the Europeans, but that does not mean, like the Hiawatha belt, that its symbolism is not as old. Beauchamp discounted the testimony of Daniel and Thomas La Fort at Onondaga in 1898, as he did not think them knowledgeable about the belts. They described the belt as a “carpet for him to sit,” which must be cleaned so that “nothing evil can fall on the carpet.” William Beauchamp, “Wampum and Shell Articles Used by the New York Indian,” Frederick J.H. Merrill ed., *Bulletin of the New York State Museum*, 8.41 (Feb 1901), 412, 420; Jennings, *Ambiguous*, 163; Fenton, *Great Law*, 237-38.

<sup>80</sup> Tehanetorens. *Wampum Belts* (Onchiota, N.Y.: Six Nations Indian Museum, 1972), 54. Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 1993; Committee of Chiefs, “Traditional History of the Confederacy of the Six Nations,” Prepared by Duncan C. Scott, *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 5.2 (1912 [recorded in 1900]), 224; Hanni Woodbury, ed. and trans., *Concerning the League: the Iroquois League tradition as dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson*, in collaboration with Reg Henry and Harry Webster, on the basis of A.A. Goldenweiser’s manuscript, *Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics*, 1992, xxvii, 298-99.





Figure 11: The Thododaho (Tadodaho) wampum  
Wampum replica made by Ken Maracle of The Wampum Shop using glass imitation beads  
Courtesy of The Wampum Shop, [www.wampumshop.com](http://www.wampumshop.com)

Days later at the same conference, the Oneida Sachem Conochquiesie reminded Warraghiyagey of his promise to “keep this fire place clean from all filth and that no snake should come into this Council Room.”<sup>81</sup> Pointing his finger straight at “Colonel Lyddius” who “is a Devil and has stole our Lands” by plying *Onkwehonwe* men with alcohol and forcing deeds upon them, Conochquiesie demanded that Warraghiyagey remove that snake from the proceedings and redress their land complaints.<sup>82</sup> Colonists likewise distrusted John Henry Lydius, a Susquehannah Company agent involved in duplicitous land transactions and the illegal Montreal trade, who fled to England when faced with legal proceedings for his invalid land transactions in the late 1760s, thus ridding the council fire of one “crawling creature.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 984. .

<sup>82</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 6: 984.

<sup>83</sup> Tehanetorens, *Wampum Belts*, 54. See Stefan Bielinski, John Henry Lydius Biography, CAP number 4615, New York State Museum, <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/l/jhlydius4615.html>, consulted 3 January 2008. Clearly, the Haudenosaunee did not like any “crawling creatures” surrounding their council fire, as the Peacemaker, Tsikúhsáhse’, and Hiawatha had shown when they combed the snakes from Tadodaho’s hair.

Wampum discourse continued to be crucial to create diplomatic *métissage* around the council fire and both the colonizers and the Haudenosaunee took the intricate production and presentation of the belts very seriously. At a 1756 meeting at Fort Johnson, Kaghswughtioni called his Irish brother Warraghiyagey's attention to "a Prodigious large Belt" to "remember the solemn and mutual engagements we entered into when you first took upon you the Management of our affairs." Looking at this belt and others as sacred oaths, Kaghswughtioni "repeated the solemn promises" from the Anglo-Americans and presented yet another belt to spark the English memory: "remember the promises made us by this Belt, & exactly perform them, and we promise to do the same, though we have no records but our memories."<sup>84</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century, the Haudenosaunee, who could recite ancient agreements from memory with the aid of their mnemonic tool, must have considered wampum vastly superior to the written word, although the British so often ignored the former.

The belts during the Seven Years' War became ever more elaborate, as wampum production increased and as political *métissage* allowed for the innovation of new designs and symbols.<sup>85</sup> One 1756 belt, proclaimed to be the largest ever given, "was wrought [like] the sun by way of the emblem of Light and some figures representing the Six nations: it was intended to signify that they now saw objects in their proper Light and that they were fully convinced of the truth of every thing proposed."<sup>86</sup> Kaghswughtioni solemnly presented the belt to his brother Warraghiyagey "as a pledge of our inviolable attachment to you, and of our unshaken resolution of joining you in all your measures" and promised to send the belt westward to show the Seneca the "Emblem of happiness

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<sup>84</sup> Conference between Johnson and 586 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, February 1756, *DRCHNY* 7: 56.

<sup>85</sup> Fenton, *Great Law*, 230; Beauchamp, "Wampum and Shell," 350-51.

<sup>86</sup> Conference between Johnson and 586 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 7: 66. .

we enjoy by our union.”<sup>87</sup> Wampum cut across spatial boundaries, both designated by geography and alliance, and swore to the sincerity of the message before the multitudes of people who would recognize its images when paraded about a village. The wampum may have been less important at the official conferences and even more crucial when used to inform those who had stayed behind of the proceeding’s outcomes.

Emphatically, belts were indispensable tools that represented relationships, perhaps even more vividly than words ever could since the wampum utilised multiple mediums to communicate across a language and cultural divide. For example, one belt given to Onontio in 1754 depicted “the two paths laid down” on the belt, which represented paths to the two villages of the Oneida, Cayuga, and Tuscarora. These two paths, “well trodden by you and by us,” led the French to a place where they “will be well received and attentively heard” by their Haudenosaunee friends.<sup>88</sup> The metaphorical road of peace thus became physical and the wampum provided a pledge as well as a map that tied the nations together. Even the very act of wampum exchange delivered a message to each party: the acceptance of a belt meant the acceptance of the message read into it, while a belt rejected or thrown to the ground, signified the dismissal of its words, or even war.

Still other wampum imagery appeared in the eighteenth-century records: when the Onondaga chief Tyaworondo emptied his sachel of French wampum before Warraghiyagey in 1756, he revealed what sounds like a Friendship belt. About six feet in length, Tyaworondo produced “a White Belt wherein a Chain of Friendship was wrought...and a Man worked upon it at each end, signifying the Governor of Canada, and

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<sup>87</sup> Conference between Johnson and 586 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 7: 66.

<sup>88</sup> Secret conference between the Oneida, Tuscarora, and Cayuga with domiciled *Onkwehonwe*, Montreal, 23 October 1754, *DRCHNY* 10: 268. .

the 5 Nations, holding each other by the hand in token of Friendship.”<sup>89</sup> Although scholars have almost uniformly associated the Covenant Chain of Friendship with the British, Chapter Two illustrated how the French also sporadically possessed a link to both the Covenant Chain and a friendship chain with the Haudenosaunee of their own making. Indeed, Onontio elaborated on what may have been this very relationship in a 1756 meeting: “I shall always hold one end of your Belt with both hands,” presumably so that the connected friends would be able to respond quickly if anything should shake their alliance.<sup>90</sup>

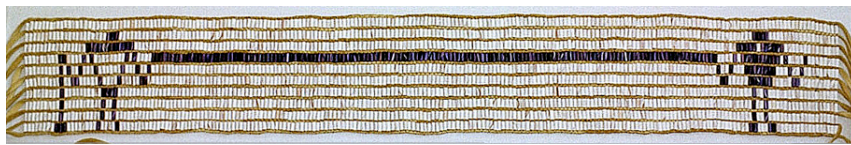


Figure 12: *Ahdaaóhtra’ Dewenehtshodáhghoh* (“Friendship holds hands”) wampum<sup>91</sup>  
Wampum replica made by Darren Bonaparte of Akwesasne using acrylic art clay wampum beads,  
handmade by Tara Prindle of Waaban Aki Crafting.  
Courtesy of Darren Bonaparte, Wampum Chronicles, [www.wampumchronicles.com](http://www.wampumchronicles.com).

While only a few belts suggest a Chain of Friendship with the French, multiple wampums expressed the Haudenosaunee alliance with the British. Both sides, however, emphatically stressed that friendship could only exist with one colonial power, a concept which the Haudenosaunee likely found difficult to accept given their flexible nature of agreements and friendship; indeed, much as the Haudenosaunee negotiated with both the British and the French, they also used *kaswentha* autonomy to maintain their relationships with both colonial powers. In 1755, for instance, Warraghiyagey presented

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<sup>89</sup> Conference between Johnson and various *Onkwehonwe*, Oneida, June 1756, *DRCHNY* 7: 137.

<sup>90</sup> Conference between M. de Vaudreuil and the Five Nations (although only the Onondaga and Oneida attended), Montreal, July-August 1756, *DRCHNY* 10: 450.

<sup>91</sup> *Ahdaaóhtra’ Dewenehtshodáhghoh* is in the Cayuga language; the Mohawk term *Ateró:tsera Wateriwhí:son* translates as “Friendship Matters.” Thomas, *Illustrations and Descriptions*, 1989.

a “Union Belt” contingent on whether his Haudenosaunee brethren “continue to be dutiful & faithful children to the great King of England your Father, if you will be true Brothers to the English, and neither enter into any underhand engagements with the French,” which clearly did not occur. Notwithstanding, “in the Great King Your Father’s Name,” Warraghiyagey pledged “to renew, to make more strong and bright than ever the Covenant Chain of love and friendship.”<sup>92</sup> Another similar “Covenant Chain Belt” presented by Warraghiyagey in 1756, recalled the relationship with “your faithful wise and brave forefathers” and preserved “your fidelity to the Great King of England your father...& lasting as the great lights of Heaven and the immovable Mountains.”<sup>93</sup> The Haudenosaunee must have been pleased to see their ancestors praised and their metaphors employed by Warraghiyagey and others; truly a unique diplomatic protocol had now evolved, which combined elements of the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* with European law and practice.

Wampum discourse was not the only *métissé* language that united the Haudenosaunee with the British and/or the French. In 1755, Warraghiyagey used a bundle of sticks to epitomize the Haudenosaunee strength in numbers much like the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* described five arrows wrapped together.<sup>94</sup> Tying a bundle of sticks together was a common metaphor on both sides of the ocean, so it must not have been difficult to extend to the Covenant Chain alliance as yet another *métissage* of protocol. Warraghiyagey begged his brethren to unite since “Brothers joined together with love and confidence are like a great Bundle of sticks which can not be broke whilst they are bound together, but when separated from each other, a Child may breake them.” Passing on an

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<sup>92</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 972.

<sup>93</sup> Conference between Johnson and various *Onkwehonwe*, Oneida, June 1756, *DRCHNY* 7: 139.

<sup>94</sup> Committee of Chiefs, “Traditional History,” 227.

actual bundle of sticks for emphasis, the Haudenosaunee speaker “with a very lively action and in an animated manner exemplified the Metaphor” and a “universal Shout of applause” erupted from the Haudenosaunee side when the sachem took hold of the prop.<sup>95</sup> The Onondaga spokesman Kaghswughtioni thanked Warraghiyagey “for conveying your good advice...in so expressive a manner as you did by this bundle of sticks” and promised “to support that strickt union which rendered our Forefathers formidable and happy.”<sup>96</sup> Days later, Kaghswughtioni proudly stated that the “Union, friendship and Brotherly love” incarnated by Warraghiyagey’s bundle of sticks “has already taken effect, for the Senecas are gathering together, and the Onondagas are retrieving their people from Sweegachie.”<sup>97</sup> The following year, Warraghiyagey continued to make use of the stick metaphor, recommending “a strict Union among you all, and cast away all jealousies from amongst you, then you will be like the Bundle of Sticks I gave you last year which while together could not be broken, but if separated, has little strength.”<sup>98</sup>

The idea that Haudenosaunee strength lived through numbers also existed independently of the bundle of stick metaphor; indeed, at the Albany Congress in 1754, the commissioners, fearful for their own security given the “dispersed and confused” state of the Mohawk nation, recommended that the Mohawk “live in one Castle only” instead of the two major ones: the “upper castle” of Canajoharie (renamed Fort Hendrick after the renowned speaker in 1755) and the “lower castle” of Fort Hunter (built in 1712,

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<sup>95</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 965-66.

<sup>96</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 6: 968.

<sup>97</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, *DRCHNY* 6: 979. Sweegachie, or Oswegatchie, is the site of present-day Ogdensburg, New York and existed as a French Sulpician mission village.

<sup>98</sup> Conference between Johnson and various *Onkwehonwe*, Oneida, June 1756, *DRCHNY* 7: 146.

40 miles from Albany on the east side of Schoharie Creek).<sup>99</sup> Later that same conference, the commissioners extended the request to all Haudenosaunee “to collect yourselves together, and dwell in your National Castles” since “a brave people separated from each other may easily fall a sacrifice, whereas united they may live secure and uninjured.” Indeed, the commissioners encouraged a united and therefore secure Confederacy by praising “the Ancient and prudent customs of your Forefathers,” but they misunderstood the structure, imploring “the Onondaga Indians in particular to direct and exhort [the Mohawk] to live together in one Castle.”<sup>100</sup> Not only did the Onondaga, despite being the central seat of the Confederacy, not have the authority to “direct” the Mohawk, but their ancient custom entailed living in different towns on the basis of clan membership.<sup>101</sup>

Living together in “National Castles” simply had little historical resonance for the Haudenosaunee; the archaeological evidence speaks of multiple villages for the Onondaga and one can assume a similar case for the Mohawk since multiple villages provided a way in which to deal with diverse opinions in a non-coercive society.

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<sup>99</sup> Meeting of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, Albany, 15 June 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 856-57.

<sup>100</sup> Draft speech of the Commissioners, Albany, 27 June 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 861-63..

<sup>101</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century, three principle Mohawk villages existed, each divided by clan membership: Tionnontoguen/Tionontoguen (Wolf Clan), Kanagaro/Kantakaron (Bear Clan), and Ossernenon/Oshernenon (Turtle Clan). In 1642, the Jesuit Isaac Jogues mentioned three villages that appear the same: Ossernenon, Andagaron, and Tionontoguen. Johannes Megapolensis, a Dutch preacher who spent time in Fort Orange (Albany) from 1642-49, helped Jogues escape from Mohawk captivity and described three “tribes” among the Mohawk: *Ochkari* (Bear), *Anaware* (Tortoise), and *Oknaho* (Wolf). The Tortoise was “the greatest and most prominent” in the 1640s, and members descended from the “pregnant woman [who] fell down from heaven” and sat on the back of the tortoise, and who lived in the castle of *Asserué*. The Bear lived close by in the castle of *Banagiuro*, while the Wolf was descended from the previous two and lived in *Thenondiogo*. The differences in spelling may be accounted for by Megapolensis’ Dutch ear, but seem similar enough to be the three villages listed above. While references to clan-based villages seem to disappear by the eighteenth century, it is possible that villages at one time revolved around clan membership with men intermarrying from other clans/villages and the resulting children retaining the clan of their mother/village. Presumably, since Haudenosaunee men had responsibilities both to their wife’s family and their mother’s family, men would return to their own villages to become chiefs later on. Later travels of both men and, especially, women must be responsible for the diversification of clan-based villages. Dean R. Snow, Charles T. Gehring, and William Starna, eds., *In Mohawk Country: Early Narratives About a Native People* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), xx; Johannes Megapolensis, Jr., “An Account of the Mohawk Indians,” 1644, published in Gehring and Starna, eds., *In Mohawk Country*, 45-46.

*Kaswentha* autonomy on a local level meant that if an individual disagreed with the ‘one mind’ reached through the majority’s compromise and consensus, they either had to adapt their own view or move to a new location, thus removing dissenting opinions and/or difficult individuals from a village. To combine the entire Mohawk nation in one singular location would have removed the capacity to deal with disagreement and would have contradicted the *kaswentha* ethic by forcing others to stifle their possibly unorthodox ideas. From the commissioners’ perspective, however, Haudenosaunee ‘national castles’ would provide the security the colonists so desperately needed, while simultaneously allowing them to observe and control their allies. Indeed, the commissioners demanded that “no Frenchman...should be suffered to reside or Trade among the Six Nations,” while the Six Nations should “send those Frenchmen away who now Trade or reside among them.”<sup>102</sup>

The French also strove to regulate Haudenosaunee settlements and friends; in 1754, Onontio tried to solidify friendship and entice additional Mohawk families to settle near Montreal to, self-servingly, “form a barrier which will protect the government of Montreal against all incursions.”<sup>103</sup> Later, in 1756, the Onondagas and Oneidas responded to Onontio’s request to move nearby, saying it would be “impossible for us to change a village which has been, since so long a time, inhabited by the Five Nations [since] the bones of our ancestors repose there and we cannot abandon them.” Onontio, perhaps realising the impracticality of his request, gave three strings for the Onondaga and Oneida to “remain quiet on your mats [since] your village is that of your ancestors; you could not have a better asylum; their bones repose there, and I am delighted that you

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<sup>102</sup> Meeting of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, Albany, 15 June 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 856-57.

<sup>103</sup> M. Duquesne to M. de Machault, 31 October 1754, *DRCHNY* 10: 265-67.



would not abandon them.”<sup>104</sup> When Onontio realised that his request would not be fulfilled, he back-peddled, probably fearing that if he overtly challenged Haudenosaunee independence they would abandon him for the British. *Kaswentha* autonomy therefore meant that the colonizers could certainly make requests, but no guarantee existed that the Haudenosaunee would fulfil their demands, nor could the European powers enforce the matter. Both Onontio and Warraghiyagey remained aware of their limits of manipulation and sought above all else to maintain a *métissage* of friendship, even it meant that certain colonial ambitions could not be fully enforced.

Family relationships also helped maintain the *kaswentha* ethic within a united confederacy and, in turn, guided both religious and council protocol. Hendrick, the Mohawk chief, addressed his own people in 1755 to remind them of appropriate etiquette: “The Mohawks, the Onondagas, and the Senecas being the Elder Brothers of the confederacy, the Speaker at all public times, was chosen out of one or other of those Nations, nor was any preference given to either of the three.”<sup>105</sup> Reflecting the consensus-driven nature of decisions, Hendrick stressed the importance of one mind when speaking with one voice as the Confederacy. Conversely, however, at the Albany Congress the previous year, Hendrick had claimed “that we the Mohawks are the head of all the other Nations” and indeed, only the Mohawk spoke at that conference although that may have reflected those in attendance.<sup>106</sup> Again, in 1756, the Onondaga speaker, Kaghsuughtioni described “the Mohawks [as] the head of our confederacy” and consequently commanded them to control their duplicitous nephews, the Delawares and

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<sup>104</sup> Conference between M. de Vaudreuil and the Five Nations (although only the Onondaga and Oneida attended), Montreal, July-August 1756, *DRCHNY* 10: 445-46.

<sup>105</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 966.

<sup>106</sup> Speech of Mohawk chief Hendrick to DeLancey, Johnson, and others, Albany, 28 June 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 866-68.

the Shawnees, who had attacked the British.<sup>107</sup> The *kaswentha* autonomy to run one's own affairs only seemed to work for the original Confederacy members while other *Onkwehonwe* nations adopted into the Covenant Chain alliance were not afforded the same autonomy.

The question of who spoke for whom was of primary importance when negotiating alliances in a time of war. Neither the French nor the English, however, seemed too concerned by the questionable authority of some individuals to speak on behalf of the entire Confederacy so long as they came bearing wampum. While the French held numerous conferences with the Haudenosaunee, the Mohawk, or the "head" of the Confederacy as Hendrick would have us believe, seldom made an appearance. In 1756, for instance, the Onondaga and Oneida visited Onontio in Montreal and admitted "we are but two nations here, yet we shall answer you in the name of the Five Nations" despite most Mohawk remaining loyal to the English, notwithstanding those now settled in Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, and Akwesasne.<sup>108</sup> While colonial officials may have become frustrated when the rest of the Confederacy did not act according to promises made by one or two nations, the Haudenosaunee knew that *kaswentha* autonomy within the Confederacy meant that they could speak for others but could not compel obedience from any member. Colonial officials either misunderstood, or certain Haudenosaunee delegates simply told them what they wanted to hear.

Family relationships and unity continued to be reflected in the longhouse structure, even though by the middle of the eighteenth century some Haudenosaunee had

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<sup>107</sup> Conference between Johnson and 586 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, February, 1756, *DRCHNY* 7: 65.

<sup>108</sup> Conference between M. de Vaudreuil and the Five Nations (although only the Onondaga and Oneida attended), Montreal, July-August 1756, *DRCHNY* 10: 449.

begun to move into nuclear family, European-style housing.<sup>109</sup> The longhouse consequently moved from being a place of residence to the focal point for ceremonial life among the Haudenosaunee; not only did songs and dances bring the ceremonies to life within, but Confederacy councils increasingly used its structure to confirm the roles of the uncles and nephews sitting on opposite sides of the council fire. Despite *kaswentha* autonomy within the Confederacy and with foreigners, the Haudenosaunee continued to express a desire to become one people with both the British and the French.

Kaghsuwghtioni, an Onondaga spokesman in 1755, went further and welcomed Sir William Johnson “as our own flesh and Blood,” as he undoubtedly recognized Warraghiyagey’s marriage to Molly Brant and adoption as a pine-tree chief.<sup>110</sup> In the spring of 1762, the Mohawk speaker Abraham reminded Warraghiyagey of their common responsibilities to promote “Peace, Friendship & Alliance, between the English & all Indians, So that they might become One People.”<sup>111</sup> Given their cultural imperatives, the British likely interpreted “One People” as a subordination of *Onkwehonwe* nations to the “civilized” British ideal, while the Haudenosaunee probably assumed that the British operated according to their own *kaswentha* principles. Each culture remained ethnocentric, despite having learned how to accommodate and cooperate with their foreign friends. In metaphorically linking arms around a new agreement, the Haudenosaunee proved how their extended longhouse could not only incorporate their own people in the *Kayaneren’kó:wa*, but could expand to unite with a foreign longhouse

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<sup>109</sup> For the evolution of Seneca longhouses into western homes, see Nancy Shoemaker, “From Longhouse to Loghouse: Household Structure among the Senecas in 1900,” *American Indian Quarterly*, 15.3 (Summer 1991): 329-338.

<sup>110</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 967.

<sup>111</sup> Johnson meeting with Six Nations, Johnson Hall, 21-28 April 1762, *SirWJ Papers*, 3: 704.

in an innovative agreement that did not see foreigners as *part* of the Confederacy but allied to it.

Warraghiyagey used kinship allegories to cement Haudenosaunee ties with the British, much as Corlaer had done with his 1754 chain belt that drew the English colonies and the Haudenosaunee “under the King our common Father.”<sup>112</sup> When the Haudenosaunee pondered whether to ally with the French, Warraghiyagey responded: “Are you those Sachems and Warriors of the Five Confederate nations, whom the Great King of England, the best and most upright Prince in the world, loves and honours as his Wise, his Warlike and dutiful Children?” Deserting the British, furthermore, would displease Haudenosaunee ancestors, preached Warraghiyagey: “you will not act like the Children of those Brave & honest men, whom you call your Forefathers, but like French men in the shape of the Five Nations.” Kaghsuwghtioni, the Onondaga sachem, responded, thanking Warraghiyagey for reminding them of their ancestors, while he claimed to be “but weak children in comparison with them, and we hope you will be a kind and tender Father to us.”<sup>113</sup>

Adopting European kinship terms did not necessarily imply acculturation or subordination; rather, it provided *kaswentha* autonomy with a place within a broader imperial project, which could only view *Onkwehonwe* peoples as children. By adopting such terminology, the Haudenosaunee and British were cemented as brethren, but each side took what they wanted from the relationship. For the British, the Haudenosaunee were children, in need of a reigning father; by contrast, the Haudenosaunee thought of the British as a kindly fatherly figure who could aid their mutual coexistence by resolving

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<sup>112</sup> Draft speech of the Commissioners, Albany, 27 June 1754, *DRCHNY* 6: 861-63.

<sup>113</sup> Conference between Johnson and 1106 *Onkwehonwe*, Fort Johnson, June-July 1755, *DRCHNY* 6: 971, 978.

land disputes, but who remained a part of the Covenant Chain alliance, not the head of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*. The kinship terminology became yet another aspect of diplomatic *métissage*, since Europeans would not have used such terms to describe relationships on their own soil and since the Haudenosaunee would not have accepted the status of children if it had not been for British and French insistence. The language, therefore, created a new *métissé* relationship informed by both the Haudenosaunee and the British; although both sides clung to their own interpretations of either autonomy or superiority, by the mid-eighteenth century the Haudenosaunee and British now understood their allies more fully. Although the British attempted to assert control over their brethren, they knew the Haudenosaunee cherished their autonomy; kinship language therefore had moved beyond seventeenth-century confusion to a context where each worldview was acknowledged, although not necessarily accepted, by the extended family.

As all parties came together in a middle ground and established a *métissé* diplomatic culture that valued ceremony, metaphor, and wampum, they created a common council fire where friends united with 'one mind' in protocol while Haudenosaunee goals and aspirations retained the flavour of the *kaswentha* ethic. With the French defeat at the end of the Seven Years' War, however, much of the *métissé* diplomatic culture began to decrease as the Haudenosaunee lost their valuable place in between empires and as their destinies became increasingly tied to British and, soon, American, actions. During the American Revolution, the Haudenosaunee chiefs covered the Confederacy council fire at Onondaga; although some in each nation remained neutral, many Mohawk, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca fought with the British, their Covenant Chain allies, while many Oneida and Tuscarora joined the American

colonists.<sup>114</sup> In the absence of ‘one mind’, each Haudenosaunee nation made its own decision and thereby preserved the autonomy and individualism of the *kaswentha* ethic. After the Revolution, some Haudenosaunee followed the brilliance of the Covenant Chain north to Tyendinaga Territory on the Bay of Quinte, where the Peacemaker was born, or to Six Nations of the Grand River, also in contemporary Ontario, where they could retain their ties to British brethren now on the other side of an international boundary not of their choosing.

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<sup>114</sup> For Haudenosaunee participation in the American Revolution, see Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **‘Your children were to paddle their birch canoe’: The Evolution of the Two Row Wampum in Post-Confederation Canada**

Three years after the 1867 British North America Act formed the Dominion of Canada, anger and discontent flooded Six Nations Territory along the Grand River, where the Haudenosaunee protested the recent Indian Act’s intrusion on their internal affairs.<sup>1</sup> At a general council of *Onkwehonwe* nations, John Smoke Johnson, eloquent Mohawk speaker of the Six Nations Confederacy Council whose father was a namesake of Sir William, described a Friendship belt similar to those used in proceedings one hundred years before. The belt, Johnson explained, described “the first meeting or treaty with the British government”: one man stood at each end “on their own rules, which they laid down.”

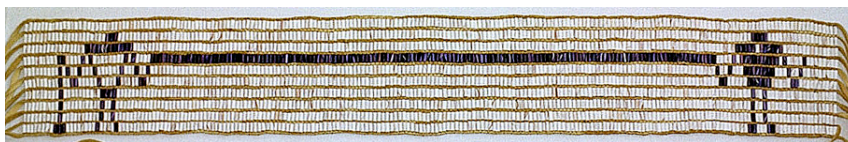


Figure 13: *Ahdaaóhtra’ Dewenehtshodáhghoh* (“Friendship holds hands”) wampum<sup>2</sup>  
Wampum replica made by Darren Bonaparte of Akwesasne using acrylic art clay wampum beads,  
handmade by Tara Prindle of Waaban Aki Crafting.  
Courtesy of Darren Bonaparte, Wampum Chronicles, [www.wampumchronicles.com](http://www.wampumchronicles.com).

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<sup>1</sup> As compensation for homelands lost during the American Revolution, Govenor Gernal of Quebec, Frederick Haldimand, granted “the Mohawk Nation and such others of the Six Nation Indians” land along the Grand River in what is now Southern Ontario in 1784. Charles M. Johnston, *Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1964); Sally Weaver, “The Iroquois: The Consolidation of the Grand River Reserve in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, 1847-1875,” Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith, eds., *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994); Charles M. Johnston, “The Six Nations in the Grand River Valley, 1784-1847,” Rogers and Smith, eds., *Aboriginal Ontario*; and Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> *Ahdaaóhtra’ Dewenehtshodáhghoh* is in the Cayuga language; the Mohawk term *Ateró:tsera Wateriwhi:son* translates as “Friendship Matters.” Thomas, *Illustrations and Descriptions*, 1989.

Consistent with the Covenant Chain itself, Johnson remembered how the Friendship belt also extended to other *Onkwehonwe* nations and linked them all together as allies of the Crown. The British responded, Johnson explained, with “a check Wampum” and promised that each nation would “have their own way; not hurting their customs or rules or regulations. If the Indian had his barkcanoe, let him have it, let the British have his large vessels.”<sup>3</sup> With his speech, Johnson eloquently introduced canoe-ship discourse as a nineteenth-century expression of the *kaswentha* ethic’s principle of autonomy.

Extending first from the Peacemaker’s Epic and then from the Covenant Chain alliance, the *kaswentha* ethic continued to be rearticulated to emphasise Haudenosaunee autonomy in light of the ever-encroaching legislation of the newly formed Canadian state.

Two years later, Cayuga chief William Jacobs, also of Six Nations, expanded upon the early canoe-ship discourse by describing to the Canadian secretary of state a familiar first meeting of peoples: “the English Came Sailing up to indians Bark Canoe and he says let us be Brothers and Shake hands with sillerver and that will never...get rust.” For Jacobs, the silver Covenant Chain welded together Haudenosaunee and British friendship, although he needed to elaborate his message given the poor memory of Canadian authorities in recent years: “You sail Your own Boat and will paddle our own canoe Side by Side I was not to Enter Your Craft and You was not to Enter in my Canoe.” The autonomous canoe and ship were guided “so as long the sun rises and sets” by protocols of behaviour whereby neither side could leap into the other vessel for

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<sup>3</sup> Chief J. Smoke Johnson, *The General Council of the Six Nations and Delegates from different Bands in Western and Eastern Canada June 10, 1870*, The Spectator Office, Hamilton, Ontario, [www.canadiana.org](http://www.canadiana.org) CIHM 05766, 9. Thanks to historian Jean-Pierre Sawaya for alerting me to the reference in 2003 personal correspondence.



fear of capsizing the “laws the Grate Spirit gave us.”<sup>4</sup> Much like Johnson’s general council address, Jacobs also stressed the unity of the British and Haudenosaunee in a treaty of friendship whereby each retained autonomy. Newly implemented Canadian legislation, however, continued to abrogate the previous understanding and caused the separate vessels to become omnipresent symbols that the Haudenosaunee used to remind controlling allies of previous rights and responsibilities.

British policy had changed dramatically in the last century as *Onkwehonwe* peoples went from dining at the tables of Sir William Johnson to being pushed aside as refugees and/or conquered peoples after the American Revolution. After the Confederacy had covered their council fire at Onondaga for the duration of the Revolution, the survivors rekindled it, while the refugees now settled on the British side of the new international boundary lit a new council fire at Six Nations. The Confederacy remained divided and, after the War of 1812, British-American relations stabilized so that the Haudenosaunee who had sided with the British during the Revolution lost their place as indispensable military allies courted by both Euro-American powers. The communities of Six Nations and Tyendinaga, founded by those Haudenosaunee who sided with the British during the American Revolution, as well as the communities of Kahnawake and Akwesasne, founded during the French Regime, acutely felt their loss of military sway as loyalists and immigrants began to surround their reserve lands and eagerly eyed its fertile soil.<sup>5</sup> While individuals from Kahnawake, Akwesasne, and Six Nations also fought in support of the Crown during the Upper and Lower Canadian Rebellions of 1837-38, the British now saw them as dispensable allies and transferred the

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<sup>4</sup> Chief William Jacobs, Letter to Joseph Howe, 11 May 1872, NAC, RG 10, vol. 1862, file 239.

<sup>5</sup> See James W. Paxton, “Kinship, Communities, and Covenant Chains: Mohawks and Palatines in New York and Upper Canada, 1712-1830,” PhD Thesis, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, 2006.

Indian Department from military to civil authorities in 1830, which quickly reduced the gifts bestowed as part of political and kinship responsibilities.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, the era of *métissage* that had grown increasingly tenuous after the death of Sir William Johnson in 1774 abruptly ended with legislation passed first by the Province of Canada (the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857) and then by the post-Confederation Dominion governments (the Enfranchisement and Indian Acts of 1869 and 1876 respectively). The various rules and conditions regarding membership, rights and entitlements, and enfranchisement of *Onkwehonwe* peoples caused the *kaswentha* ethic to be reformulated as an ideology to combat the prevailing government policy. Ancient and well-established forms of alliance thus became retooled as powerful symbols of nationhood as the *kaswentha* ethic formed the basis for political theory and policy in dealing with the Canadian state. Speaking to the very identity of a national community, ideology not only structures social relations through the symbolic value of canoe and ship metaphors of nationhood, but it also encourages certain norms for ideals and behaviour.<sup>7</sup> Such ideology, however, rests upon what historian Raphael Samuel describes as a grouping of ‘national fictions,’ which contribute to political debate.<sup>8</sup> National myths, Samuel continues, originate from “fictions which, by dint of their popularity, become

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<sup>6</sup> Historian Carl Benn described how some people from Kahnawake supported the rebels in Lower Canada in the 1837-8 rebellions and that the warrior-like demeanour among the Haudenosaunee had greatly changed from the War of 1812. Carl Benn, *The Iroquois in the War of 1812* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 190; See also Matthieu Sossyoyan, “The Kahnawake Iroquois and the Lower-Canadian Rebellions, 1837-1838,” M.A. Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, 1999, [http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk1/tape10/PQDD\\_0021/MQ55008.pdf](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk1/tape10/PQDD_0021/MQ55008.pdf), accessed 12 May 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis D. Wurgaft, “Identity in World History: A Postmodern Perspective”, *History and Theory*, Theme Issue: World Historians and Their Critics 34.2 (May 1995): 1, 11, 78, 307.

<sup>8</sup> Raphael Samuel, ed. *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, vol. 3. (London: Routledge, 1989), xix.

realities in their own right” when “the idea of nation ... belongs to the realm of the imaginary rather than the real.”<sup>9</sup>

While ideologies may originate from fictitious ideas of nationhood, they remain firmly rooted not in historian Eric Hobsbawm’s notion of invented traditions, but in what anthropologist Joanne Rappaport has described as *reinventions* of the past whereby “the same images are consistently rearticulated, generation after generation.” It is the *same* tradition that is rearticulated in light of changing circumstances, not a new one, a theory that applies to the *kaswentha* ethic that, despite being retooled as an ideology in light of late nineteenth-century circumstances, retained its ethical foundations from earlier eras.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the *kaswentha* ethic became more forcefully expressed with the discourse of an autonomous canoe and ship in countless correspondence to the Crown that emanated mostly from Six Nations, Tyendinaga, Akwesasne, and Kahnawake. Certainly, the other Haudenosaunee communities of Oneida, Gibson, and Kanehsatake also petitioned the Crown for a myriad of reasons in the late nineteenth century, but the similar movements to replace the traditional government with the Indian Act’s elected system in the first four communities provides a window through which to view the *kaswentha* ethic in a place of discord. *Métissage* had vanished and in its stead arose a paper battle that pitted Indian Act legislation against Haudenosaunee letters and petitions as the Canadian government struggled to suppress the *Onkwehonwe* while the Haudenosaunee fought to guard their age-old autonomy.

The Canadian Indian Act certainly reflected assumptions of supremacy over *Onkwehonwe* peoples that could not have been enforced in earlier centuries. Bureaucrats

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<sup>9</sup> Samuel, *Patriotism*, vol. 3, xxvii; vol. 1, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Joanne Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory: Native Historical Interpretation in the Columbian Andes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 187.

attempted to define Euro-Canadians apart from the once allied *Onkwehonwe* nations, now considered wards of the state desperately in need of help to achieve the ‘civilized’ values of liberty and democratic governance. The government’s three goals of protection, civilisation, and assimilation reflected Euro-Canadian fear of the *Onkwehonwe* that had arisen during the Seven Years’ War and continued with the Victorian dread that pagan or other ‘uncivilized’ beliefs such as the potlatch, historians Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange have argued, “allegedly encouraged profligacy, poverty, and prostitution.”<sup>11</sup> Simultaneously, the Victorian “protective ethic,” anthropologist Sally Weaver has explained, sought to shelter *Onkwehonwe* peoples both from themselves and from “becoming whites” before authorities had completed the civilizing process.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately, initiatives like farming incentives and the 1884 banning of the potlatch, historian Deborah Doxtator has described, served to “de-tribalize” *Onkwehonwe* people, confine individuals to their own small parcels of land, and “minimize the group connections.”<sup>13</sup> In short, government policies attempted to separate and then assimilate *Onkwehonwe* peoples into mainstream Canadian society, an ambition that clearly contradicted the *kaswentha* ethic and the Haudenosaunee system of governance.

Shortly after Canadian Confederation, the Dominion government passed the Department of the Secretary of State Act of 1868, which reaffirmed the role of a Superintendent General of Indian Affairs who controlled *Onkwehonwe* territories that the

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<sup>11</sup> Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo, *Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 45-6; John L. Tobias, “Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada’s Indian Policy.” *The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology*. 6.2 (1976): 13-30.

<sup>12</sup> Sally M. Weaver, “Iroquois Politics: 1847-1940,” manuscript draft, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Sally M. Weaver Papers, 1975, 111. .

<sup>13</sup> Deborah Doxtator, “What Happened to the Iroquois Clans? Study of Clans in Three Nineteenth Century Rotinohsyonni Communities,” Ph.D. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, 1996, 198.

Crown had carved up into reserves.<sup>14</sup> The following year, the Gradual Enfranchisement Act further undermined traditional forms of *Onkwehonwe* governance by granting the Superintendent General the power to enforce an electoral system on *Onkwehonwe* communities and to depose traditional chiefs for “dishonesty, intemperance, or immorality.”<sup>15</sup> Abolishing self-government, according to historian John Milloy, was the only way the Dominion could “produce the civilized Indian amenable to enfranchisement” as it ensured a new level of bureaucratic control that tightly curtailed the authority of any disobliging individuals.<sup>16</sup> Subsequently, the 1876 Indian Act, which still forms the basis of *Onkwehonwe* policy today, consolidated the previous legislation and ensured “that Indians would lose control of every aspect of their corporate existence.” The Department could “institute all the systems of development it cherished” in their never-ending quest for their three simultaneous goals of protection, civilization and, ultimately, assimilation.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the partnership of earlier relationships was wholly abolished. Not only were *Onkwehonwe* peoples considered an inconsequential element of Canadian Confederation, but the established system of wardship and colonization denied the existence of a distinct *Onkwehonwe* culture in order to prepare him/her to accept, as Superintendent General Laird declared, “the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship.”<sup>18</sup>

The 1869 Gradual Enfranchisement Act caused special concern among the Haudenosaunee since it directly threatened their system of government established by the

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<sup>14</sup> Canada, *Department of the Secretary of State Act*, 1868, Articles 5 and 6.

<sup>15</sup> Canada, *Gradual Enfranchisement Act*, 1869, Article 10.

<sup>16</sup> John S. Milloy, “The Early Indian Acts: Developmental Strategy and Constitutional Change,” *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, eds. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 61-62.

<sup>17</sup> Milloy, “Early Indian Acts,” 61-62.

<sup>18</sup> Milloy, “Early Indian Acts,” 63.

Peacemaker and endangered the political role of clan matrons, chiefs, pine-tree chiefs, and ordinary individuals who formed the backbone of the consensus-driven political system. Indeed, the chiefs at Six Nations along the Grand River if not elsewhere held lengthy discussions about the Enfranchisement Act according to Sally Weaver, one of the few academics who had access to the Six Nation Council Minutes.<sup>19</sup> Some supported the imposition of an elected system—finally established by force in 1924—because they disagreed with certain decisions, especially land cessions, made by the traditional chiefs. Furthermore, while the Peacemaker’s government ideally should have been truly representative of the people, some felt disenfranchised due to a lost clan affiliation resulting from intermarriage and/or because clan matrons often now passed down chiefly titles, not to the most qualified male of the extended family, but to their sons, regardless of their suitability.

That said, the most unwavering pleas for a change in government policy and a return to the *kaswentha* ethic came from the Confederacy chiefs. Chiefs from the Cayuga, Onondaga and Seneca nations, for instance, wrote to “Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria” and her son, “Head Chief” and His Royal Highness Prince Arthur, in late June 1872 and implored Prince Arthur to “lend us a helping hand to help your red brethren” in protesting the license now needed to cut timber on Six Nations Territory.<sup>20</sup> In a separate letter, the chiefs “humbly” petitioned the Queen for protection, as they stressed the historic guarantee made to “your Red children the right to enjoy their

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<sup>19</sup> An additional copy of the Six Nations Council Minutes are held by the Band Council (in addition to those at the LAC, RG10 collection), but are seldom available for research. I have been told that these minutes are written from the perspective of the chiefs, instead of the Indian Agent, but microfilm copies of “Six Nations Band Council Minutes” held at the Woodland Cultural Centre appear to be simply an additional copy of those at the LAC.

<sup>20</sup> Petitions from some of the Chiefs to the Queen and Prince Arthur complaining of grievances, 23 June 1872, Six Nations Territory, LAC, RG10, vol. 1869, file. 598 ½.

religion and the customs of their fathers without molestation of your subjects in Canada.”

The chiefs explained their understanding of the Haudenosaunee-British relationship:

“your children was to ‘paddle their birch canoe’ so long as the ‘sun shines’, the ‘grass grows and water runs’ alongside with your white subjects who sail in great ships.”<sup>21</sup>

The Cayuga, Onondaga and Seneca chiefs who lamented the change in their relationship with the Crown, did not only converse with *kaswentha* autonomy in mind, but they also highlighted crucial aspects of Haudenosaunee kinship and diplomacy.<sup>22</sup> In failing to understand how they had become “subjects to another power,” the chiefs worried that the Queen could no longer hear “the voice of your children when they cry to you...because of the local Indian Agents by which they are surrounded.”<sup>23</sup> Kinship ties with the British monarch remained crucial in salvaging Haudenosaunee nationhood; in accepting Queen Victoria as ‘mother,’ and in making Prince Arthur an adopted chief in 1869, the chiefs incorporated the Royal Family into their extended Longhouse and bestowed upon them a responsibility to act in the best interests of their Haudenosaunee kin. Emphatically, the Haudenosaunee remained sovereign allies yet they had united from the beginning in a patron-client relationship with the Crown, which, Sally Weaver has explained, “would or should always protect the interests of the people.”<sup>24</sup> Much as the Haudenosaunee expected their Covenant Chain allies to aid them in times of war during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they now expected their extended family

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<sup>21</sup> Petition to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. vol. 1869, file. 598 ½ .

<sup>22</sup> Divisions also existed between the nations settled along the Grand River as the chiefs were equally annoyed with “the Mohawk tribe of Indians [who] want to oppress us.” They asked the Queen “to instruct the Governor General of Canada to appoint our share of the Indian moneys of this Province,” so that they would not remain reliant on the Mohawk, some of whom asserted a greater right to the Grand River settlement than the other nations. Petition to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. vol. 1869, file. 598 ½ .

<sup>23</sup> Petition to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Letter from the Earl of Dufferin to Downing St. National Archives of Canada, RG10, vol. 1869, file. 598 ½ .

<sup>24</sup> Weaver, “Iroquois Politics,” 3.

living in Buckingham Palace, especially pine-tree chief Prince Arthur, “to act for us in any capacity his great wisdom may deem fit for him to do.” Dismissive of the Canadian government, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and local Indian Agents, the chiefs emphatically desired their affairs to “be conducted by Your Majestys Minister in England.”<sup>25</sup>

According to the Haudenosaunee Constitution, pine-tree chiefs, although not hereditary offices, played the integral role of supporting the chiefs “if he proves himself wise, honest and worthy of confidence.”<sup>26</sup> Prince Arthur’s role, therefore, like Sir William Johnson before him, not only reinforced a feeling of kinship and obligation between nations, but also practically aligned Haudenosaunee needs with a potentially powerful ally. While adopting outsider authority figures remained a longstanding tradition, appointing foreigners as pine-tree chiefs may have adapted an internal governing structure to external pressures, much in the same way the clan structure itself adjusted in favour of a national identity in the nineteenth century. While external pressures altered the clan structure in the post-contact years, those at Six Nations, Doxtator has argued, adapted their clans in order to reflect the newly localized nature of their community; while clans did not vanish, the idea of a national identity on Six Nations territory “came to subsume many of the functions of clans.”<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately for the Six Nations chiefs, however, the Dominion government considered Indian Affairs autonomous from royal influence, and while the Governor General passed on the petition

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<sup>25</sup> Petition to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. LAC, vol. 1869, file. 598 ½ .

<sup>26</sup> Arthur C. Parker, *The Constitution of the Five Nations or the Iroquois Book of the Great Law* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1916). Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 1991.

<sup>27</sup> Doxtator, “Iroquois Clans,” 2-3..



to the Colonial Office, there is no record that the Prince or Queen received it.<sup>28</sup>

Seemingly put off by the chiefs' questioning of the Crown relationship, Governor General Dufferin, the Queen's representative in Canada, insisted that the Haudenosaunee continued to be the Queen's subjects because "Her Majesty has always taken and continues to take a lively interest in their welfare."<sup>29</sup>

Clearly, the majority of Six Nations chiefs could have done without this "lively interest" on the part of Dominion officials who imposed foreign laws. Indeed, as Six Nations Superintendent Jasper T. Gilkison noted in May 1873, those at Six Nations "prefer acting in accordance with their own ancient laws."<sup>30</sup> Gilkison found William Jacobs, author of the 1872 petition, to be particularly troublesome as he was "an increasing obstacle to business in Council, and continues his active opposition & encouraging others, against the Measures to protect their woods," a contentious issue continued from the petitions to Queen Victoria and Prince Arthur, which Jacobs also signed.<sup>31</sup> Jacobs and others resented the regulation of timber cultivation on their territory and demanded they be accorded the same rights as non—*Onkwehonwe* loggers in cutting and selling the wood for profit. Not only did they deem it unfair that non-*Onkwehonwe* often sneaked onto the territory to steal timber, but the community also needed the wood to build houses, barns, and bridges notwithstanding the outside regulations.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Newly appointed Governor General Dufferin dutifully forwarded the petitions to Downing Street and requested their careful consideration by the Colonial Office. No response from the Colonial Office, or from Queen Victoria/Prince Arthur, has been found in neither the records of the Colonial Office, nor the Royal Windsor Archives. J. Snelling to K. Muller, Personal Correspondence from the Royal Archives, 3 May 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Dufferin, Letter to Downing St., LAC, RG10, vol. 1869, file. 598 ½.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Jasper T. Gilkison to Superintendent General, 21 May 1873, LAC, RG10, vol. 1897, file 1872.

<sup>31</sup> Letter from Gilkison to Superintendent General, LAC, RG10, vol. 1897, file 1872.

<sup>32</sup> The debate over the harvesting of wood continued into the 1890s. Canada, *Indian Act*, 1976, Articles 45-57; Letter from Gilkison to Superintendent General, LAC, RG10, vol. 1897, file 1872; Letter from the

Gilkison's frustration with Jacobs may have also been linked to a petition the previous month in which Jacobs and others from Six Nations stressed to Alexander Campbell, the Dominion's secretary of state the importance of retaining the traditional Confederacy government. The authors patiently gave Campbell a history lesson and explained that the Six Nations first shook hands with iron to become the French King's children; upon meeting the British, however, they shook hands with silver and pledged to be brothers "as long as the Sun rises and the Water runs and the Grass grows and the Bush grows." Although memories of the Dutch seem to have faded, the petitioners remembered that the British brotherhood rested upon a pledge to spill blood if anyone ever threatened their kin, as well as the promise that each set of laws should rest within a large boat or a "small birch Canoe." The British swore that their "Laws will be side by side always" while the "seven paddles" of the birch canoe kept the smaller vessel swift and steady for either the seven future generations or for the seven nations resident on Six Nations territory (six Haudenosaunee nations plus the jointly represented Tutelo, Delaware, and Nanticoke). The brothers buried the war hatchet but Jacobs astutely feared that the big boat of Euro-Canadians might "upset towards me," causing the Haudenosaunee to spill their own blood.<sup>33</sup>

The petitioners emphatically swore they had "never agreed to enter your big boat for because I might die for I don't understand your laws," a concern that reflected the constant intrusiveness of Canadian *Onkwehonwe* policy and the unceasing efforts to have *kaswentha* autonomy respected. Similarly, Euro-Canadians might succumb to a similar

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Brantford Indian Office to Lawrence Vankoughnet, 7 March 1892, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 57, 169-1; John A. Noon, *Law and Government of the Grand River Iroquois* (New York: Viking Fund, 1949), 44, 55-59.

<sup>33</sup> Petition to Alexander Campbell, 20 April 1873, LAC, RG10, vol. 862.

fate for entering the bark canoe, a caution which displayed a dramatic difference from the previous era of *métissage*.<sup>34</sup> No longer could the Haudenosaunee and Europeans live together in brotherhood and friendship since the Canadian government attempted to erode the *kaswentha* ethic with assimilation and turn Haudenosaunee political values from consensus building toward majority rule. Haudenosaunee nationhood was directly under threat and necessitated an increasing polarization between peoples into separate canoes and ships in order to maintain autonomy.

Six Nations was not the only community to petition against the Indian Act. One 1873 petition, signed by four members of the “St Regis Seven nation Tribe” of Akwesasne—a reference to the Seven Fires of Canada, an alliance of Christian *Onkwehonwe* peoples allied first to the French and then to the British—concluded “that you will never force any law upon us that we do not like.”<sup>35</sup> Neither shall we do anything to hurt you or give you trouble.”<sup>36</sup> Attached was another Mohawk language petition affixed with 96 names, along with an excerpt of the 1754 Albany conference draft minutes, in which the British commissioners condoled losses with wampum and sought to “strengthen and brighten the Chain of friendship” between multiple *Onkwehonwe* nations and “the Great King our father.”<sup>37</sup> A few months later, Mitchel Solomon, the

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<sup>34</sup> Petition to Campbell, LAC, RG10, vol. 862.

<sup>35</sup> The Seven Fires of Canada included nations originally allied with New France, but the Confederacy continued after the British conquest and into the nineteenth century. Interestingly, a different clan system arose at least at Kahnawake, Akwesasne, and Kanehsatake and reflected this new confederacy comprised of diverse peoples. Kahnawake was the central fire of this loose confederacy and it also included Kanehsatake, Akwesasne, Oswegatchie, Lorette, Wolinak, Odanak. See Jean-Pierre Sawaya, *La Fédération des Sept Feux de la vallée du Saint-Laurent: XVIIe au XIXe siècle* (Sillery, Québec: Septentrion, 1998); Jean-Pierre Sawaya and Denys Delâge, *Les traités des sept-feux avec les Britanniques: droits et pièges d'un héritage colonial au Québec* (Montréal: Septentrion, 2001); and David Blanchard, “The Seven Nations of Canada: An Alliance and Treaty,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 7.2 (1983): 3-23.

<sup>36</sup> Petition from Akwesasne individuals, 20 September 1873, LAC, RG10, vol. 1928, file 3257.

<sup>37</sup> Akwesasne correspondence concerning treaties with New York, 27 October 1873, LAC, RG10, vol. 1928, file 3257.

“chief negotiator of all the tribes,” reminded the secretary of state for the interior about the petition and, in light of the 1754 treaty, demanded “the repeal of all Acts which are Contrary to the spirit of the treaty referred to.”<sup>38</sup> The Haudenosaunee sought to hold the British accountable to their own historical narrative and employed both written and wampum media to recall their previous relationship. Indeed, another letter in the same package, this time from Six Nations Territory, described a recently convened General Council where the Haudenosaunee compared the written “manuscripts of Sir William Johnson with Wampum of the Six Nation [and] found it to Correspond in every respect.”<sup>39</sup> Evidently, the Haudenosaunee still respected Johnson’s records which paralleled their own and likely could not understand how the current Dominion government so blatantly ignored not only wampum records but also the writings of the early Department of Indian Affairs (DIA).

The Haudenosaunee continued to search for paper copies of their wampum relationships and in 1881, some Cayuga chiefs at Six Nations wrote Superintendent General and Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald to request a treaty written on parchment between the Cayuga and the state of New York. The chiefs William Hill, Joseph Monture, John Heinharishe (spelling unclear), and Jacob Jamieson believed they had left a paper copy of the treaty at the Indian Department in 1859 and desired its return since “we believe we can now enforce [it].”<sup>40</sup> An internal memo addressed to Macdonald the following day admitted the existence of the document and claimed that it might be

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<sup>38</sup> Letter from Mitchell Solomon to the secretary of state for the interior, 21 April 1874, LAC, RG10, vol. 1928, file 3257.

<sup>39</sup> Petition from Akwesasne individuals, 20 September 1873, LAC, RG10, vol. 1928, file 3257. It is not known whether the Grand Council was held in Akwesasne, Six Nations, or elsewhere.

<sup>40</sup> Petition to Sir John A. Macdonald from Cayuga chiefs for a treaty made with New York State, 14 December 1881, LAC, RG10, Vol 2165, file 34,578.

returned to the Cayugas through Superintendent Gilkison if they wished to pursue the claim against New York State.<sup>41</sup> Paradoxically, the Dominion's attempt to trump traditional governments and laws did not extend to a monetary claim between the Cayuga and the State of New York, which could only serve to enrich the Indian Office's coffers. Indeed, in the early twentieth century, the Canadian government went to court to recoup the five hundred dollars in silver on behalf of the Cayuga by challenging New York State to live up to their treaty promises.<sup>42</sup>

The Haudenosaunee persisted in their quest for a paper trail to prove the existence of their *kaswentha* autonomy with the Crown, especially in light of the forgetfulness, ignorance and/or different understanding of the Dominion government when it came to previous relationships. In 1885, Mohawk chief William Smith wrote the secretary of state for the colonies, concerned that the community's deed and the Indian Act and amendments were "contrary to the Treaties existing between the British Crown and those Indians." Smith requested that they might "send a Deputation to England with the necessary documents to lay the matter before Her Majesty's Council." The DIA predictably ignored the protest and expressed frustration that the Six Nations "always opposed the enfranchisement of any members." The DIA official proudly exhorted the virtues of the newest Indian Act, which now allowed the enfranchisement of individuals even without the support of their band. Further treating Smith and his peers as children, the official described how "Indians are as a rule notoriously fond of jaunt" with their trips

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<sup>41</sup> Memo from Wm Aser (sp?) to Sir John A. Macdonald, 15 December 1881, LAC, RG10, Vol 2165, file 34,578.

<sup>42</sup> See the *Arbitration of Outstanding Pecuniary Claims Between Great Britain and the United States of America*, The Cayuga Indians, Vols 1-4 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1912-1925). There continues to be a minimal cash payout on a yearly basis for those members of the Cayuga nation at Six Nations. Letter to Geronimo Henry from Diane Levola, Sudbury Business Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, April 2003, from the personal collection of William Guy Spittal.

to Ottawa and England and had “in view the pleasure of the trip” rather than any true desire to amend the laws. The Brantford Superintendent, in his mind, “could better convey their wishes” than a deputation, a conclusion that effectively removed any voice from the Queen’s children for redress in person and dealt a final blow to diplomatic *métissage* and the once necessary face-to-face political protocol between brethren.<sup>43</sup>

The Mohawk community of Tyendinaga also petitioned the government with their concerns and in 1889-90, Joseph I. Brant collected written records and wampum belts to prove historical relationships. Brant cited the Royal Proclamation, which ensured the Mohawks and other *Onkwehonwe* nations “should not be molested or disturbed,” nor should any official “grant warrants on survey or pass any patents for lands beyond the bounds of their respective Governments.”<sup>44</sup> The new Indian Act legislation simply did not fit with Brant’s view of a brotherly relationship of non-interference, nor did it coincide with the historical record. Although those at Tyendinaga had voluntarily replaced their hybrid clan-based and elected system that had emerged in the 1840s with an elected band council in 1870, they now demanded a return to the Peacemaker’s form of government. Tyendinaga Superintendent George Dewdney however, refused to comply with their demands and a decision of the Privy Council in Ottawa found “that it would be inexpedient to make the proposed change and the correspondence on the subject should not be further prolonged.” Ironically, the superintendent pledged to “observe all stipulations entered into a covenant made with the Indians until the Indians

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<sup>43</sup> Letter to the Governor General from an unknown Department of Indian Affairs official, 23 January 1885, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 57, 169-1.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from Joseph I. Brant to Superintendent General, n.d. but inserted after the 19 August 1889 letter and before a 19 April 1890 letter, LAC, RG10, vol. 2320, file 63,812-2.

themselves and the Govt who were parties thereto consent to a change.”<sup>45</sup> DIA officials simply assumed the perpetual submission of *Onkwehonwe* people. To them, respecting covenants and enforcing the Indian Acts did not seem contradictory since they had negotiated earlier agreements throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by simply assuming British supremacy.<sup>46</sup>

Not to be dissuaded, Brant again wrote the superintendent a few weeks later and referenced a 1771 “memorial” that recognized the “five Confederate nations” as steadfast allies, integral in the defeat of the French. Brant kindly suggested that the Dominion government must have “forgot the Services done by the Six Nations... or Else they would not pass laws to abolish our noble Confederacy.” In anticipation of an upcoming Haudenosaunee Grand Council, Brant invited Dewdney to see the wampum belts, which would “show you that we are right – Concerning our freedom according to the treaty.” Snidely, Brant continued: “of Course I am aware that you are well posted because I think the wampums could be found in the Indian department, So you must have some knowledge of our wampum treaties.”<sup>47</sup> A newspaper article elaborated on the August Grand Council, which the Six Nations, Oneida of Muncy Town, the Seven Nations (presumably those from Akwesasne and possibly Kahnawake and Kanehsatake) and the Onondagas of New York state planned to attend. The Grand River chiefs brought “all the wampum belts relative to the treaties and the great silver pipe of peace ... to show the public that the Indians are a free nation according to the solemn treaties made with the

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<sup>45</sup> Two draft memos from the Superintendent to the Privy Council, 19 April 1890, LAC, RG10, vol. 2320, file 63,812-2.

<sup>46</sup> See Chapters Two and Three.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Brant to “the Honourable G. Dewdney,” 14 May 1890, LAC, RG10, vol. 2320, file 63,812-2.

home Government.”<sup>48</sup> Clearly, *kaswentha* autonomy was never an issue for the Haudenosaunee as they continued to remain convinced of their status as allies with the Crown; the issue remained with stubborn and historically ignorant officials who no longer cared about Haudenosaunee loyalty since the fate of Turtle Island had already been resolved.

Following the August 1890 Grand Council, several elders from Tyendinaga wrote the governor general with almost identical claims as Brant’s.<sup>49</sup> They reiterated their alliance with Sir William Johnson against the French and lamented how “the Covenant chain became full of filth and rust.” Having formed a confederacy “long before the white man ever thought to set his foot on this Continent,” the elders explained their belief “that all men are created Equal, that we are Endowed by our Creator with inalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that to Secure these rights.”<sup>50</sup> Although a claim to ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness’ certainly recalls the American Declaration of Independence, it is easy to see how such principles coincided not only with the *Kayaneren’kó:wa*, but also with the *kaswentha* ethic of non-interference. If the Haudenosaunee were only able to pursue their own destinies, as non-*Onkwehonwe* did with respect to following their own laws and customs, equality would be preserved alongside *kaswentha* autonomy.

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<sup>48</sup> “Convention of Indians: Mohawk Chiefs to Meet and Consider the Wampum Treaties,” unknown newspaper, Kingston, 25 August 1890, LAC, RG10, vol. 2320, file 63,812-2.

<sup>49</sup> The signatories included: Joseph Maracle (age 68), James Brant (age 67), Elizabeth Powles (age 86), Christina Zeron (age 72), John John (age 81), Deby [?] Brant (age 66), Isaac Brant (age 61). The fact that they recorded their ages may have been to indicate them as elders of the community, and therefore vested with knowledge and deserving of respect, according to Haudenosaunee cultural norms.

<sup>50</sup> Letter to Sir Fredrick Athur Stanley, Baron Preston, Governor General, from elders Joseph Maracle, James Brant, Elizabeth Powles, Christina Zeron, John John, Deby [?] Brant, Isaac Brant, 20 Nov 1890, LAC, RG10, vol. 2320, file 63,812-2.



In 1891, the chiefs from Tyendinaga wrote to Prince Arthur, “Chief of the Six Nations – Ka Ra Kou Tye,” an adopted name familiar from the 1872 Six Nations petitions. Joseph I. Brant, “De-ka-ri-ho-ken,” and four others wrote to their “Brother Chief” to remind him and his mother, Queen Victoria, of the everlasting nature of their council fire.<sup>51</sup> After reminding Ka Ra Kou Tye of the discarded rope and iron chains, as well as the treasured silver chain, “the strength and brightness of which would reject all decay,” Brant and the others pledged to fix it “to the immovable mountains.” Likely referring to the central fire at Onondaga (*Onoñda'gega'* translates as ‘At the Hills’) or the Mohawk home in the valley between the Adirondack and Catskill mountains, a familiar analogy made during the years of Sir William Johnson, Brant swore that “no mortal enemy might be able to move it.” The petitioners denounced the Canadian government for its refusal to recognize the treaties between the Six Nations and the Crown and their encroachment “on our liberties and rights and privileges.” They listed three points of contention: the British North America Act; the Indian Act, “which is imperious to our nationality”; and divisions in their own community into the Conservative party, the Reform party, and the Confederate party, or “Ri-di-noh-shio-ni.” The “Ri-di-noh-shio-ni”

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<sup>51</sup> Brant and others at Tyendinaga to “His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught and Chief of the Six Nations – Ka Ra Kou Tye,” 20 April 1891, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 57,169-1. Joseph I. Brant’s title De-ka-ri-ho-ken, is the first title of the turtle clan of Mohawk chiefs and means, according to Fenton’s *Roll Call*, “It separates or divides the matter, of two opinions, offices” (Simeon Gibson), “Between two statements” (Hale), “Double speech” (Chadwick); Alex General described the title as “of two opinions” since the original holder had initially opposed the Peacemaker’s message and then “was finally appeased by accepting the leading chiefship of the Mohawk.” It is unclear what Prince Arthur’s pine tree title, Ka Ra Kou Tye, means, although it is certainly not a hereditary title but rather hung around the neck, or an adopted position. Likewise, it is unclear whether Brant’s title was actually given during a Condolence Ceremony by members of the Oneida or Cayuga nations (the nephews) or whether those at Tyendinaga gave it to him. A major problem with so many Mohawk communities (Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, Akwesasne, Tyendinaga, and a large Mohawk contingent at Six Nations) and in fact all Haudenosaunee communities in both the United States and Canada today, is the duplication of titles. William N. Fenton, *The Roll Call of the Iroquois Chiefs: A Study of a Mnemonic Cane from the Six Nations Reserve* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1950), 59. Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 2002.

likely referred to *Rotinohsiónni*, the Mohawk version of Haudenosaunee, the group which wanted to retain the original clan based government. One of the other parties likely favoured the Indian Act's electoral system, while the third may have desired a return to the hybrid clan-electoral system in place in Tyendinaga between the 1840s and 1870. Brant described the bundle of sticks imagery used by Sir William Johnson in 1755 and chastised, "it appears to us that the child has grown up and separated the bundle of sticks which is contrary to the Wampum Treaty" of Friendship between the two peoples. Woven on the belt, the path of peace shall always remain open and "the two Governments shall always be looking towards one another, and if at any time the Six nations desires to see his British brother, the British will come on."<sup>52</sup>

The second belt that Brant explained had "two dark rows [that] represents the two Governments" which "shall not interfere with each other" and shall remain within their own vessels. Undoubtedly using what is today called a Two Row wampum, or *Tékeni Teiohá:te'*, Brant preserved the language of a separate canoe and ship in wampum, whereby neither side shall create compulsory laws for the other.

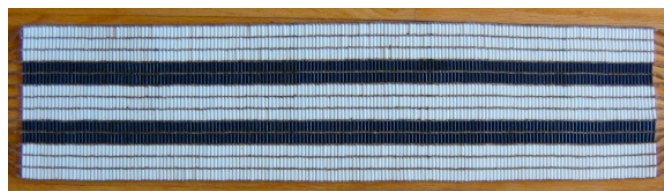


Figure 14: The *Tékeni Teiohá:te'* (Two Row) Wampum  
Wampum replica made by Ken Maracle of the Wampum Shop using glass imitation beads.  
Photo taken by the author.

Canoe and ship discourse existed in multiple petitions even before being associated with a wampum belt, so it is likely that the *kaswentha* principles of autonomy implicitly

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<sup>52</sup> Petition to Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, from Joseph I. Brant and others of Tyendinaga, 20 April 1891, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 57, 169-1.

existed *independently* of a particular wampum belt, but, at the same time, were assumed in *all* wampum relationships. Just like the *Haienhwá:tha'* wampum and others discussed in earlier chapters incarnated the principles of autonomy and coexistence as central tenants of Haudenosaunee political philosophy, the *Tékeni Teiohá:te'*, or Two Row, similarly expressed very old ideas in a popular fashion. As the Canadian government increasingly abrogated previous British relationships, it seems that the independent partners depicted on the Friendship belt were retooled into a canoe and ship on the Two Row Wampum that integrated ancient *kaswentha* autonomy and coexistence with an immediate and pressing concern for survival. As the Canadian state continued to threaten Haudenosaunee sovereignty with increasingly restrictive Indian Acts, the Two Row Wampum became an important way to explain the implicit *kaswentha* ethic of the Covenant Chain and the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* to insensitive and uninterested Canadian authorities.

Indeed, Brant attempted to shame Ka Ra Kou Tye by the Dominion's intrusion into the canoe and explained "that when the British supremacy on this continent was in peril that our forefathers shed brooks of blood...[and] relinquished over two millions [sic] acres of their hereditary grounds." Because of their steadfast loyalty, Brant found the treatment by the Canadian government especially harsh as the "laws aim to curtail our treaty rights and to abolish our nationality as a people." Brant appealed to his brother Ka Ra Kou Tye for protection from the Canadian government, as well as for copies of various treaties, land patents (including the Haldimand Proclamation) and the four folio

volumes of British-*Onkwehonwe* treaties to use in his battle against the Dominion.<sup>53</sup> These four folio volumes comprised the records of Indian Affairs of New York, which Colonel Guy Johnson, appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs upon his father-in-law's death in 1774, brought to Canada at the outbreak of the American Revolution. Historian Charles Howard McIlwain maintained that Guy Johnson transferred the volumes to Sir William's son, Sir John Johnson, when he took over the role of Superintendent in 1782. Today, the Library and Archives Canada hold the third and fourth volumes, dating from 1723, but the first two volumes (1677-1723) have disappeared, although portions of them have been preserved elsewhere in Peter Wraxall's *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs Contained in Four Folio Volumes* and E.B. O'Callaghan's edited volumes of New York documents.<sup>54</sup>

While J.J. Cartwright at the Record Office in London may not have been able to locate the four folio volumes, he nevertheless told the Colonial Office "that an exhaustive search has been made" but that he could not locate the other patents requested. He did enclose a copy of the Royal Proclamation that defined 'the rights of the Indian Reservations' although he did not explain how the Record Office failed to hold copies of documents as important as the British North America Act or the Haldimand Proclamation.<sup>55</sup> Clearly, the documents and the relationships they incarnated held more importance for the Haudenosaunee who requested them than for the Record Office that could not furnish founding documents of Canadian history.

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<sup>53</sup> Petition to Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, from Joseph I. Brant and others of Tyendinaga, 20 April 1891, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 57, 169-1. The Mohawk Trustees today possess an original copy of the Haldimand Proclamation.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Howard McIlwain, "Introduction," *AIA*, lxxxviii, lxxxix.

<sup>55</sup> J.J. Cartwright of the Record Office to the Colonial Office, 20 August 1891, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 57, 169-1.

In April of the following year—almost a full year since the initial request was made— Secretary Jeremiah Hill, or De-yon-hoh-kwea wrote the secretary of state for the colonies, shocked that the Imperial Colonial Office could not locate “the many solemn Treaties.”<sup>56</sup> Casually mentioning that Tyendinaga had obtained the Colonial Documentary History of New York, Hill described finding many treaties reprinted from the originals.<sup>57</sup> Hill mentioned a few documents and exchanges of covenant chain belts, as preserved in the written record, and reiterated his belief that “all the Chain belts that were given to our forefathers that is to last as long as the Sun and Moon shall endure.” Hill refused to believe the Indian Agent’s claim that the documents could not be found and asked once more for copies. Again reminding the secretary of state that Haudenosaunee forefathers “shed brooks of their blood for their brethern [sic] the English people and...[had] faithfully adhered to the treaties with pleasure,” Hill claimed that the only way “to ameliorate your treaty rights and retain our nation rights and ceremonies that would be fulfil[ed] according to the Covenant Chain belt of the two dark [illegible—possibly rows?].”<sup>58</sup> Perhaps the most obvious example of the Two Row Wampum’s initial bond and outgrowth from the Covenant Chain alliance, Hill’s letter demonstrated a stark difference between Haudenosaunee and British-Canadian links with the past. For the Haudenosaunee, the past comprised of an ever-evolving narrative where maintaining

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<sup>56</sup> Jeremiah Hill held the fifth title on the Mohawk roster at Tyendinaga, De-yon-hoh-kwea, which Fenton’s *Roll Call* describes as meaning “It lives by two life givers” (Hewitt), “Double life” (Hale), or, as Chief George Johnson described to Hale, it may refer to the name of a shrub, “which has great tenacity in life.” Fenton, *Roll Call*, 59.

<sup>57</sup> Presumably, the “Colonial documentary history of New York” could be either of the following volumes of reprinted primary sources (treaties, letters, etc.): E.B. O’Callaghan, ed., *Documentary History of the State of New York*, 4 Vols. (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Co., 1849-1851); E.B. O’Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York; Procured in Holland, England and France*, 15 Vols. (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1853-87).

<sup>58</sup> Petition from Jeremiah Hill to Lord Knutsford, 7 April 1892, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 57, 169-1; and DIA memo from Superintendent Dewdney to Tyendinaga Indian Agent, 1 September 1891, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 57, 169-1.

relationships remained of utmost importance; for the new Dominion government, a modern age and quasi-independence from Great Britain superseded past relationships in the quest for nationhood. Indeed, Great Britain transferred the responsibility for dealing with *Onkwehonwe* peoples from military to civil authorities in 1830 Upper and Lower Canada, and then from the province of Canada to the Dominion at Confederation. In all cases, Canada's relationship with Haudenosaunee allies unilaterally shifted and marked a real change in the attitudes towards *Onkwehonwe* people who now had to be assimilated into white Canadian society.<sup>59</sup>

A month later, Secretary of State for the Colonies Lord Knutsford wrote Governor General Stanley regarding the same request for documents. Knutsford added nothing about the records, sticking to the story that they had not been located, but he listed other issues that he wished addressed: “1<sup>st</sup> that the BNA Act gives the Dominion Government full power to legislate for the Six Nations and other Indians whether they are satisfied or not; 2<sup>nd</sup>, that the Indians are required to conform to the Indian Act which affects their nationality; 3<sup>rd</sup>, that the Act giving the Indians the franchise to vote for Members of Parliament causes divisions among the six Nation Indians dividing them into Parties.”<sup>60</sup> Taking a hard-line, Knutsford obviously had little experience dealing with Haudenosaunee discontent, a recurring problem with many officials based overseas. As far as Knutsford could tell, *Onkwehonwe* peoples remained under the thumb of the Dominion, and he had neither the authority nor the interest to explore previous treaties and/or wampum that, in the eyes of the Haudenosaunee, proved otherwise. Past

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<sup>59</sup> J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hold the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 118-119.

<sup>60</sup> Knutsford to Stanley of Preston, 11 May 1892, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 57, 169-1. No response addressing Knutsford's concerns has been found.

relationships clearly held no interest; Dominion *Onkwehonwe* policy reflected immediate political needs and must be followed.

Obviously, Haudenosaunee people were not the children the Dominion government mistook them for and they constructed clear and sophisticated arguments based on historical documentation—both wampum and written—in order to defend an ancient system of government and culture. It was not by coincidence that so many similar petitions originated from Six Nations, Tyendinaga, and Akwesasne, since individuals often travelled between and married into the three communities.

Anthropologist Gerald Reid has described how Joel Johnston, the leader of the movement to reinstall the hereditary chiefs in Tyendinaga, in fact came from Six Nations Territory and had married into the Bay of Quinte community.<sup>61</sup> Another individual from Six Nations, Seth Newhouse, also married a woman from Tyendinaga and travelled extensively between numerous Haudenosaunee communities while he researched and recorded Haudenosaunee political history.

Newhouse authored or assisted with several versions of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*, one of which Chapter One employs and another compilation of which achieved fame when published in Arthur C. Parker's *The Constitution of the Five Nations or The Iroquois Book of the Great Law*.<sup>62</sup> The Newhouse/Parker version remains the best known and most often quoted today and gives the impression of a codified constitution with

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<sup>61</sup> Gerald F. Reid, "'To Renew Our Fire': The Development of Rotinonhsionni Identity and Nationalism in Canada in the Era of the Indian Acts," Paper presented to the American Society for Ethnohistory Annual Meeting, Williamsburg, Virginia, 2006, 7.

<sup>62</sup> The four known Newhouse versions include: Seth Newhouse (Da-yo-de-ka-ne), "The Original Literal Historical Narratives of The Iroquois Confederacy. or the Birch Bark Canoe," APS, Microfilm No. 348, 1885; Seth Newhouse, "Translation of the Mohawk version of the Constitution," NAA, Hewitt Collection, No. 3490, 1887 (1937); Seth Newhouse, "Translation of the Mohawk version of the Constitution," NAA, Hewitt Collection, No. 1343, 1898; Seth Newhouse, "First draft of the constitution of the Five Nations," NAA, Hewitt Collection, No. 1359, 1880; Parker, *Constitution*.

wampum ‘articles’ to explain each and every rule that should be followed by the chiefs and Confederacy. Interestingly, the Newhouse/Parker version differed substantially from the Six Nations Committee of Chiefs 1900 version and Chief John Arthur Gibson’s 1912 version, which relay a story, not a guidebook to Haudenosaunee constitutional law. Indeed, a different Newhouse version did not receive endorsement from the Six Nations chiefs, likely because they resented Newhouse’s Mohawk-centric telling of the *Kayaneren’kó:wa*, as William Fenton suggested or, as J.N.B. Hewitt criticised, due to his shortcomings in understanding the Confederacy’s basic structure. In addition, it is possible that the chiefs viewed Newhouse’s versions to be too westernized in breaking down the messages of the Peacemaker and Hiawatha into compartmentalized rules, in ignoring the narrative voice which Haudenosaunee orators hold dear, and in attributing a wampum string to every passage to add legitimacy in the face of ever-scrutinizing Canadian authorities.<sup>63</sup> Newhouse likely hoped a written constitution would bolster the impression of Haudenosaunee consensus-government, which Canadian authorities denounced as unsophisticated and primitive.<sup>64</sup> Unsurprisingly, Six Nations’ Superintendent Gilkison found Newhouse objectionable as he “has become somewhat notorious and disreputable and it is said, not at all reliable” in recent years.<sup>65</sup> By writing the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* as a constitution, Newhouse rendered the laws and traditions of the

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<sup>63</sup> William N. Fenton, “Seth Newhouse’s Traditional History and Constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 93.2 (1949): 141-58; J.N.B. Hewitt cited in Sally M. Weaver, “Seth Newhouse and the Grand River Confederacy at Mid-Nineteenth Century,” *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies*, Michael K. Foster, Jack Campisi, and Marianne Mithun, eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984): 166.

<sup>64</sup> Tommy Deer of Kahnawake has argued that Newhouse used numbered sections in his constitution “to prove to the Dominion of Canada that the Haudenosaunee had an organized constitution and were well equipped and able to govern themselves.” Teyowisonte (Thomas Deer), “Tracing the White Roots of Peace,” [www.revolutionarycreations.com/lit\\_page/haudenosaunee/tracing\\_the\\_white\\_roots\\_of\\_peace.PDF](http://www.revolutionarycreations.com/lit_page/haudenosaunee/tracing_the_white_roots_of_peace.PDF) accessed 15 June 2008.

<sup>65</sup> Memo from Gilkison to Vankoughnet, 16 March 1878, LAC, RG10, vol. 2051, file 9464.



canoe accessible to non-*Onkwehonwe* people, as well as to those Haudenosaunee who may have stepped into the Euro-Canadian ship.

Given the very specific nature of the bylaws included in the Newhouse versions it seems very likely, as Tommy Deer of Kahnawake has argued, that a large portion of the manuscripts comprised material “added to the rafters” in the decades and centuries after the Peacemaker. The bylaws, Deer continued, could have been “resolved by the chiefs in Grand River [and] applied only to that community” and did not necessarily derive from the words and teachings of the Peacemaker.<sup>66</sup> It is only natural that teachings should evolve over time to address very real demands and, much as the *kaswentha* ethic has been expressed in a different manner from the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* to the Covenant Chain alliance to the Two Row Wampum, the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* itself has been shaped and reshaped depending on Haudenosaunee needs. Indeed, Newhouse seems to have been involved in a much larger process of revitalization and renewal since he also popularized the Friendship and Two Row Wampum in nineteenth-century Haudenosaunee society.

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<sup>66</sup> Teyowisonte, “Tracing the White Roots of Peace.”



Figure 15: Seth Newhouse in pan-Indian garb, holding the Two Row Wampum and Friendship Belt. Courtesy of the Library and Archives Canada, Mrs. J.T. Brown Collection (PA-068280)

Newhouse, pictured in pan-Indian garb typical of the period, holds a Friendship Belt and a Two Row Wampum that look remarkably polished and refined for belts with underlying messages that supposedly dated from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed, Ethnologist Frederick Wilkerson Waugh photographed the same belts more closely in 1915 and, upon examination of the photographs, it seems likely that the belts date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries for two reasons: first, the beads are too tightly woven together and the sides of the belt are too even for an older

belt; second, the leather strip on the end of each belt is highly unusual and appears to have been constructed for ease of holding, as in the above photograph.

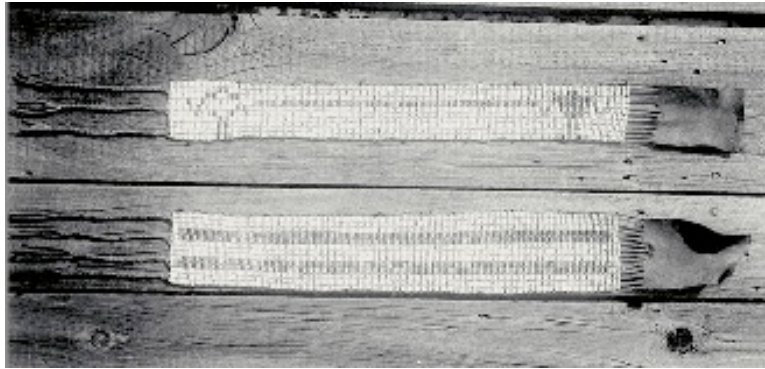


Figure 16: “Wampum Strings in Possession of Seth Newhouse”  
Photographed by Franklin Wilkerson Waugh in 1915  
Courtesy of Photo Archives, Canadian Museum of Civilization, (34730)

The story of these two belts is fascinating, since neither appears in the Six Nations collection held by wampum keeper John Buck, photographed in 1871, nor in the oral memory of Thomas Webster, Onondaga wampum keeper, when he read the belts in 1892.<sup>67</sup> Where, then, did Newhouse acquire these wampum belts in a time of wampum scarcity if they did not date from the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries and if they were not part of Six Nations’ wampum collection? Given that a number of the ‘rafter’ belts with diagonal lines that commemorated the addition of another nation to the Confederacy have since disappeared, it is possible that some of them, especially those with an unknown/unimportant message, were unstrung to be rewoven into the Friendship and

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<sup>67</sup> Augusta I. Grant Gilkison, “What is Wampum? Explained by Chief John Buck in 1887”, *Annual Archaeological Report*, 36 (1928), 48-50; and Henry B. Carrington, *The Six Nations of New York: The 1892 U.S. Extra Census Bulletin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 33-34. Similarly, no nineteenth-century ethnologist mentioned such a belt in either Canada or the United States. Although a Friendship belt appears in Buck’s collection photographed by Horatio Hale in 1871, the bead count reveals that it is not identical to the one held by Newhouse. Kathryn V. Muller, “The Two ‘Mystery’ Belts of Grand River: A Biography of the Two Row Wampum and the Friendship Belt,” *American Indian Quarterly*, 31.1&2 (2007): 129-164; Elisabeth Tooker, “A Note on the Return of Eleven Wampum Belts to the Six Nations Haudenosaunee Confederacy on Grand River, Canada,” *Ethnohistory* 45.2 (Spring 1998): 219-236; and William Fenton, “Return of Eleven Wampum Belts to the Six Nations Haudenosaunee Confederacy on Grand River, Canada,” *Ethnohistory* 36.4 (Fall 1989): 392-410.

Two Row Wampums.<sup>68</sup> Wampum became increasingly scarce after the trade in shell beads decreased during the American Civil War and during the western wars of American expansion against *Onkwehonwe* people.<sup>69</sup> As Newhouse travelled from community to community, listening to stories of discontent with the ship's intrusion into the path of the canoe, he must have thought how a Friendship or Two Row belt would brilliantly depict former relationships and assert Haudenosaunee autonomy. Furthermore, they would be the perfect accompaniment to the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* that he was drafting to mimic western constitutional design.

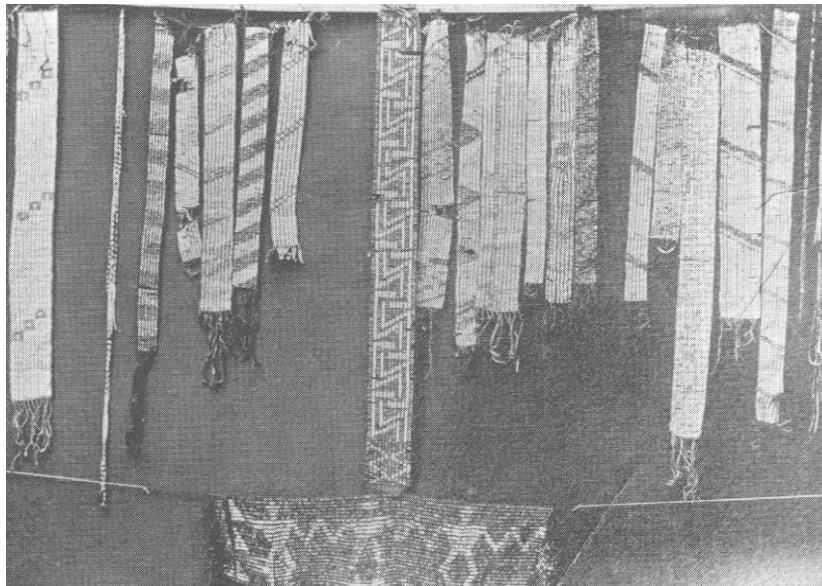


Figure 17: The Six Nations' belts under the trusteeship of John Buck Photographed by Horatio Hale in Brantford, Ontario, 14 September 1871 Courtesy of the **Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.190.3.2)**

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<sup>68</sup> Tehanetorens also described some rafter belts in *Wampum Belts* (Onchiota: Six Nations Indian Museum, 1972). Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 1993. Of course, some of these belts could also have been sold to private collectors, which would explain why they can not be tracked down in museums.

<sup>69</sup> Lorraine E. Williams and Karen A. Flinn, *Trade Wampum: New Jersey to the Plains* (Trenton: New Jersey State Museum, 1990).

In 1944, Jesse Cornplanter of Tonawanda wrote to both William N. Fenton and the Museum of the American Indian—Heye Foundation, searching for white wampum strings needed to run ceremonies. Upon exchanging a corn mortar and pestle for a wampum string, Cornplanter wrote Fenton in thanks, saying, “it was worth the trade I think since Wampum is scarce now days. I am glad to get them. Jesse Cornplanter to William N. Fenton, APS, Fenton Papers, Folder 3, Series I: Jesse Cornplanter, 16 May 1944; 17 May 1944; 13 July 1944.

Perhaps Newhouse himself tightly wove new belts from the less important ‘rafter’ belts or perhaps his wife, daughters, or other community members helped him, but it seems almost certain that someone created these polished belts for the express purpose of displaying and teaching from them. Just because Newhouse or some other interested party likely wove these two particular belts in the late nineteenth century, does not mean that the values they incarnated were any less important or real to the Haudenosaunee. Much as the *Haienhwá:tha’* belt could not have been woven in the time of the Peacemaker—for a glass bead is found in its centre—the *Tékeni Teiohá:te’* is simply a more modern manifestation of the much more ancient *kaswentha* ethic, simply rearticulated for a late-nineteenth-century audience.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, while the discourse of a separate canoe and ship dates at least from the 1872 *Onkwehonwe* council address of John Smoke Johnson, a Six Nations Mohawk like Newhouse, it became increasingly popular over the next three decades, as Newhouse travelled between communities to collect information on the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* and as opposition to the Dominion’s legislation became increasingly vocal.

The earliest link between canoe and ship discourse and a particular wampum belt in Canadian records occurred in an 1885 petition from Mohawk women of Six Nations, who opposed the 1885 Franchise Act, which would allow property-holding Haudenosaunee men to vote in Canadian elections.<sup>71</sup> The three women from the Turtle,

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<sup>70</sup> William N. Fenton, “The New York State Wampum Collection: The Case for the Integrity of Cultural Treasures,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 115.6 (December 1971): 444-446.

<sup>71</sup> Although this is the first reference found in the LAC to the Two Row *Wampum*, the earliest mention found occurred in a March 1864 New York City area newspaper. A delegation of Iroquois on their way to Washington, D.C. stopped at the Long Island Historical Society where Onondaga chief Amos Thomas explained “the wampums presented by General Washington at the final treaty.” The newspaper recorded

Wolf, and Bear clans wrote Governor General Stanley “according to our Ancient treaties as Brother” and relied upon wampum to explain how the Canadian government violated Great Britain’s pledge: the “two Rows Parallel represents the two Government[s],” which “will Exist and shall not interfere with each other.” The British then “made an Illustration that the British will remain in his vessel that is his Government[,] while the Six Nations will also abide in their Birch Bark Canoe meaning their Government.” Most crucial given the current complaints, “the British will never ma[k]e any door way laws for the Six Nations to Enter in So that they should become British Subjects.” Angrily, the women criticised Prime Minister Macdonald’s “dishonest” legislation that forced *Onkwehonwe* peoples to violate their own laws and become “like the other Subjects of Britain.”<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, as lawyer Richard Bartlett has described, Macdonald recognized *Onkwehonwe* people as “British subjects as well as allies” and believed that voting in federal elections would protect them “as independent as the working man of the factory.”<sup>73</sup> However altruistic Macdonald’s intentions, the women asserted that the only way to preserve Haudenosaunee nationality entailed protecting their “liberties rights and privileges which we have inherited from god himself.” Prudently, the women noted that they did not oppose advancement “in the arts and Sciences of Civilization etc: nor does [our government] hinder us to become Bible Christian.” In fact, they drew parallels

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what seems to be the Two Row as follows: “a white wampum with two parallel lines through it, signifying the ever existence, side by side of the institutions of the red men and the pale faces in a state of peace.” What seem to be a Hiawatha and a Washington Covenant Belts are also briefly explained. “[? Illegible ?] and History of the Iroquois: Peter Wilson, Chief Sachem of the Six Nations, Before the L. I. [Long Island] Historical Society,” Unknown New York City area newspaper (not the *Times*), 24 March 1864. Many thanks to George Hamell for mailing me this reference.

<sup>72</sup> Petition from Six Nations to Stanley, 2 September 1889, LAC, RG10, vol. 2349, file 69,976, pt.2.

<sup>73</sup> Richard Bartlett, "Citizens Minus: Indians and the Right to Vote," *Saskatchewan Law Review*, 44 (1980): 169.

between the Peacemaker and Jesus Christ, both of whom sought to spread peace and happiness, while their chiefs, some of whom were Christian, “teach their people the ways of peace as set forth in the new Testament by the Holy Spirit of God.” Fearing that the “Government of the Earth will be destroyed,” the women “will not therefore Enter the Ship or Government of the white man who is doomed to destruction.”<sup>74</sup>

Somewhat surprisingly given the current adherence of chiefs to Longhouse rituals, Christianity could coexist alongside the traditional government in the late nineteenth century’s canoe. Adherence to the Peacemaker’s system of government at Six Nations at least did not depend on religious persuasion (Longhouse versus Christian), but rather chiefs (who could have followed either religion) versus dehornerers. Dehornerers, who came from both Christian and Longhouse backgrounds, strove to ‘dehorn’ the symbolic antlers of office that a chief wore and convert the Six Nations government to the Indian Act’s elected system. Other Haudenosaunee, such as the Christian Mohawk Workers, adamantly supported the traditional government and argued for secularism since they believed that the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* and the Longhouse religion as practised by the followers of Ganyodaiyo (Handsome Lake, more correctly translated as ‘Good Lake’) existed independently of one another.<sup>75</sup> By the late nineteenth century, many Haudenosaunee at Six Nations had either adopted Christianity or the *Gaiwi:yo:ho* (the Code of Handsome Lake), a set of teachings spurred by the spiritual visions of the early nineteenth-century Seneca prophet. Influenced in part by the surrounding Quaker community and by his own near-death experience from alcohol, Ganyodaiyo’s visions

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<sup>74</sup> Petition from Six Nations to Stanley, 2 September 1889, LAC, RG10, vol. 2349, file 69,976, pt.2.

<sup>75</sup> Sally Weaver, “The Viability of Factionalism Among the Iroquois,” *Proceedings of the Second Annual Congress of the Canadian Ethnology Society*, National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service, Ottawa, 28.1: 392.

helped develop a moral code and restore the old ways and ceremonies of the ancestors to revitalize Haudenosaunee culture after the destruction caused by the American Revolution, the dispossession of land, the poverty, and the alcoholism rampant in many communities.<sup>76</sup> True to the *kaswentha* ethic, individual Haudenosaunee could follow the *Gaiwi:yo:ho* of Handsome Lake, or the early Longhouse ways as did the Peacemaker and Hiawatha, or Christianity; their spiritual beliefs did not matter so long as the clan-based governance of the Confederacy was maintained. It seems, therefore, that the canoe-ship discourse initially responded to the threat to traditional government, which implied a cultural threat by consequence but not necessarily by design. As the hereditary government eroded throughout Haudenosaunee communities in the subsequent decades, culminating in the 1924 victory of the dehorner movement at Six Nations and the imposition of an Indian Act elective system by Canada, the canoe may have swollen to hold Haudenosaunee culture, including the Longhouse religion, which, without a recognized government, enfranchisement and consequently assimilation, threatened to erase.

Others from Six Nations also opposed the Franchise Act and in 1887, nine chiefs—including John Buck, wampum keeper, and William Jacobs, signatory to earlier petitions—along with another 219 individuals and 248 warriors and headmen, wrote

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<sup>76</sup> Arthur C. Parker, *The Code of Handsome Lake the Seneca Prophet*, New York State Museum Bulletin 163 (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1913). Reprinted by IROQRAFTS, Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory, 2000; Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969); George Beaver, *Mohawk Reporter: The Six Nations Columns of George Beaver*, Wm Guy Spittal ed. (Ohsweken: IROQRAFTS reprints, 1997), 146-48.

Today, many Longhouse people continue to follow the *Gaiwi:io*, while others—mostly at Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, and Akwesasne—have rejected its perceived Christian theology and have revitalized the old Longhouse tradition of the Peacemaker and the ceremonies that came even before his time.



Governor General Lansdowne in protest.<sup>77</sup> The petitioners argued that “none of their people ought to be mixed up in the White man’s elections” by virtue of their status as allies and the existing treaty rights with Great Britain. Fearing that any involvement would result in “the demoralization almost necessarily occasioned to many Indians by the Election contests of White men for position and power,” they asked once again that “our most reasonable and humble request to be laid at the foot of the throne.” Unfortunately, the DIA only drafted a response almost five years later, claiming that the original petition had been misplaced; due to the long delay, “no action upon the petition in question is called for,” an all too typical response for a department that considered Haudenosaunee concerns to be an inconvenient hindrance to the civilization program.<sup>78</sup>

While the Department of Indian Affairs sought to make the Haudenosaunee as equal and as non-*Onkwehonwe* as other Canadian citizens, the petitioners appealed for a different notion of equality, one which allowed Canadians to pursue their own laws in the ship and which allowed the Haudenosaunee to stay inside their own canoe. Anger and frustration continued to spread through Haudenosaunee communities and in 1890, 121 individuals from Kahnawake sent a letter to Governor General Stanley “to reform and to renew of our national rites and Ceremonies” and to preserve their status as allies—not subjects—of the British Crown. They desired the abolition of the elective council, imposed at the request of a some individuals in 1889, and “wish[ed] to have the Hereditary Chiefs to take the reins and Conduct of our welfare” in order to “Control our

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<sup>77</sup> According to the 1888 Six Nations census that historian Susan Hill reprinted in her dissertation, a total of 3362 people lived on the reserve: 915 men, 914 women, and the rest children or youths. Therefore, 476 signatures/marks meant that approximately 26% of the adult population signed the petition. Susan Hill, “The Clay We Are Made Of: An Examination of Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River Territory,” PhD Thesis, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, 2006, 414.

<sup>78</sup> Petition from the chiefs and warriors to Lansdowne, passed on to the secretary of state by William Paterson, 10 June 1887, LAC, RG10, vol. 2349, file 69,976 pt. 2; and Response, 28 Feb 1892, LAC, RG10, vol. 2349, file 69,976 pt. 2.

rights and properties without asking Somebody to Control it for us.” Astutely, the signatories understood that “the Indian Act aims the Abolishment of all Indian nations of Canada” and “that the Franchise Act aims the wiping out of our nationality as Ro-di-noshion-ne or confederacy,” a nationality that they wished to retain “until the Lord Comes.”<sup>79</sup> Again, nationality and religion were not synonymous, especially in a place like Kahnawake that originated as a Jesuit mission; Christians could still be Haudenosaunee so long as they did not step out of the consensus-governing canoe and into the enfranchising ship.

Women of the Bear clan in Kahnawake quickly penned another letter a few days later and demanded the Governor General to rescind the recent elections: “Since Every nation throughout the world retains their own Customs, rites and Ceremonies and According to the British Constitution that it gives them full privileges and Entire power to Create Kings, Queens and Lords and Peers as Hereditaries.”<sup>80</sup> The hypocrisy of the boat steering the canoe must have astounded those convinced of a previously autonomous relationship. Indeed, a year previous, in 1889, individuals at Tyendinaga also began to request the abolition of their band council and the reinstatement of the chiefs. Increasingly annoyed women at Tyendinaga wrote petitions that outlined how the “Ro-di-ya-ner has at all times the full power to Legislate, oversee and supervise in all matters of business, interests, advantages and general welfare of the people,” according to the constitution of the Six Nations. The women ominously mentioned the chief’s pledge to

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<sup>79</sup> Letter signed by 121 petitioners from the Kahnawake Territory to Governor General Stanley of Preston, 4 December 1890, LAC, RG10, vol. 2320, file 63,812-2. Anthropologist Gerald Reid has detailed the implementation of the Indian Act at Kahnawake in *Kahnawà:ke: Factionalism, Traditionalism, and Nationalism in a Mohawk Community* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

<sup>80</sup> Letter from Iroquois women of Caughnawaga to Stanley of Preston, n.d. (received 8 December 1890), LAC, RG10, vol. 2320, file 63,812-2.

keep the war club “buried in Oblivion by always propagating the Policy Peace, and Justice between their Allied Nations of Indians and between Man and Man” also reflected his role as “Moralist or Spiritual adviser.” After listing the newly appointed nine Mohawk titles and those who currently held the position, they steadfastly concluded that a “large majority of the Indians [are] in favor of the Ancient Constitution of the Confederacy” and they “declare null and void of the Unconstitutional the Existence of Elective Councillors.”<sup>81</sup>

Two months later, the Tyendinaga petitions adopted a harsher tone, indicating that the Dominion should not take Haudenosaunee support and peace for granted. Joseph I. Brant, a newly chosen chief of the Turtle clan, promised the Superintendent that he would NOT take up the hatchet to “struggle for honor or Conquest.” “To maintain our Civil Constitution and liberties rights and privileges,” however, was another matter as these were “the very same for which our forefathers left their Native land [in the Mohawk Valley] and came into this Country,” presumably under the impression that their laws would be better respected by their British brethren.<sup>82</sup> Letters became increasingly antagonistic and in 1891, the Governor General received another letter from Tyendinaga which attacked the presumption that the Haudenosaunee would “surrender their usages and adopt the White Mans laws,” which “the words of the Wampum treaties” do not require. The Mohawk ominously cautioned that they “do not wish to make any

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<sup>82</sup> Letter from Joseph I. Brant to Superintendent General, 19 August 1889, LAC, RG10, vol. 2320, file 63,812-2.

demonstration of a warlike character” but simply demanded that the majority be allowed to rule, just as the majority rules in the House of Commons.<sup>83</sup>

Dominion officials must have faced a conundrum over whether to enforce the Indian and Enfranchisement Acts since a vocal minority of Haudenosaunee actively campaigned for its implementation. At Six Nations, some of the more Christian Mohawk, Tuscarora, and Oneida petitioned for the elected system since they were disillusioned with the ability of the hereditary chiefs to manage and protect their land and finances. Sally Weaver has illustrated how the first requests for an elected council came from Isaac Powless, a young Upper Mohawk man, in late 1861 and early 1862. Spurred by the movement for responsible government at the time, Isaac and others also rallied over the bankruptcy of the Grand River Navigation Company where the Six Nations, which the DIA had made as major shareholders in compensation for sold lands, lost their entire investment. The reformers, Weaver has argued, believed an elected council would better represent the electorate and that educational qualifications “would better equip them to protect the property and rights of the Six Nations against white incursions.”<sup>84</sup>

The chiefs, meanwhile, continually tried to keep up with the changing needs of the community’s government, instituting a fire insurance programme, house-building loans, relief payments, funeral expenses, elderly care, land and timber access, etc.<sup>85</sup> Other chiefs, such as John Smoke Johnson and his son, George, the council interpreter at Six Nations, sought to address shortcomings of traditional government in a modern era by modifying the Peacemaker’s system, which the more traditional Onondaga were loath to

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<sup>83</sup> Letter from Tyendingaga to Stanley of Preston, n.d. (received 14 November 1891), LAC, RG10, vol. 2320, file 63,812-2.

<sup>84</sup> Weaver, “The Iroquois,” 207; Weaver, “Seth Newhouse,” 171-72; and Weaver, “Iroquois Politics.”

<sup>85</sup> Doxtator, “Iroquois Clans,” 233-34.

do. As Weaver elaborated, George, father of renowned Mohawk poet Pauline E. Johnson, supported the Department of Indian Affairs' "suggestion to reduce the number of chiefs, and he would later support the introduction of voting into council to hasten the decision-making process."<sup>86</sup> While more conservative elements of Six Nations society opposed such changes, some people in the community actively sought to reform their government according to the strictures of the Indian Act. The new legislation that the Dominion government threatened to impose exacerbated these divides at Six Nations and created resolute camps with those who advocated the traditional system of chiefs, those who sought modification of ancient rules, and those who sought to 'dehorn' the antler-wearers in favour of the elective system. All three parties, Weaver has explained, could agree on one thing; they each "wanted a maximum of local autonomy in running their own affairs."<sup>87</sup>

Those chiefs who sought to modify the ancient process of consensus building voted in an early 1880s council to decide whether the chiefs, as Weaver put it, "could hold office until either an elected system was instituted or they were deposed by the Government on grounds of improper and dishonest behavior" as the 1880 Indian Act dictated. Amazingly, given the wealth of petitions against the Indian Act, Weaver has shown how 23 chiefs voted in favour of the Act and included individuals such as John Buck, wampum keeper, who later opposed the Franchise Act in 1887, while only eleven voted against it. Importantly, the vote was cast, not by ballot, but by publicly stating one's allegiances either for or against the Act, presumably in front of the Six Nations Superintendent, which may have influenced the results. The issue of voting itself was not

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<sup>86</sup> Weaver, "Iroquois Politics," 130. For more on the 'antlers of office,' see Chapter One.

<sup>87</sup> Weaver, "Iroquois Politics," 121.

without controversy as some reformist chiefs became impatient with the slow progress of debate and decisions; the Oneida and Mohawk “proposed a reaffirmation of traditional rules of discourse and unanimity,” only to be opposed by others. While voting itself contravened the traditional governing by consensus, some chiefs must have found it politically expedient. Furthermore, Weaver has described how the chiefs cited the Act when it supported their decisions such as “excluding undesirable whites from their land” and requested exemptions when it contravened their policies on membership or inheritance, for example.<sup>88</sup>

While some chiefs sought to reform the hereditary system with the vote, others strove to destroy it and implement a purely elected system in accordance with all regulations of the Indian Act. The dehorner movement may seem to contradict the *kaswentha* ethic, but divisions into various camps were nothing new for a society that treasured individual autonomy. The crucial difference in the nineteenth century was that dissenters—in this case the dehorner—could not move away and establish another community elsewhere if they could not reform their community, as Catholic converts had done in the seventeenth century when they moved northwards to what became Kahnawake. Although establishing a brand new community was not very common in earlier times because it required intensive planning, labour, and fractured family ties, the option simply evaporated in the reserve period and communities remained deeply divided, which removed the capacity to stand united against the Crown while simultaneously demonstrating the *kaswentha* ethic’s insistence on individual autonomy. Tied to their artificially constructed reserve lands, the Haudenosaunee therefore fought amongst themselves and some even sent incessant letters to their Superintendent, the

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<sup>88</sup> Weaver, “Iroquois Politics,” 216-22.

Dominion and the Crown to demand an elected system. In 1894, 212 warriors, individuals, and even some chiefs sent a petition to the Superintendent General in Ottawa and alleged that the system of “hereditary life chiefs is detrimental to the advancement of the nation” for the following reasons: the uneducated men in council were “incompetent to guide a people who are progressive and prepared for still further advancement in civilization”; no encouragement existed for young men to “devote their energies and talents for the good of the nation”; the council was not representative since people “have no voice or share in the management of their own affairs nor in the expenditure of their own money”; and current chiefs incurred too much expense. The petitioners concluded, “that an elective council would tend greatly to promote the general advancement of our people” as outlined in section 75 of the Indian Act.<sup>89</sup>

Since those 212 individuals could not simply abandon Six Nations and take up residence—and the elected system—elsewhere, they stood their ground and petitioned for what they thought would best serve their community.<sup>90</sup> Clearly, 212 people was far from a majority of Six Nations adults, especially when compared to the 476 individuals who had campaigned to keep the hereditary system in 1887, but the competing groups felt their divisions strongly. In 1896, two Onondaga and Cayuga chiefs and three Cayuga, Mohawk, and Onondaga warriors at Six Nations wrote Governor General Aberdeen to express their fear that the British laws were “quenching, destroying our Ancient Council

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<sup>89</sup> Petition from chiefs, warriors and members of Six Nations to T. M. Daley, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 1889, LAC, RG10, vol. 2284, file 148,479-148,728.

Strangely, 177 of the signatures seem to be all in the same hand and seem to be on different paper than the petition itself. This is not to say that individuals did not support the dehorner movement—some certainly did—only to point out that the numbers remain unclear and, in this case, rather suspect.

<sup>90</sup> 212 individuals of a 1894 population of 3216, according to Doxtator, comprised about 6% of the entire population (including children). Historian Susan Hill reprinted the 1888 Six Nations census, which indicated a total of 3362 people, 915 men, 914 women, and the rest children or youths. If numbers were adjusted for 1888, the dehorner petition would have been signed by approximately 12% of adults at Six Nations. Doxtator, “Iroquois Clans,” 132; Hill, “Clay We Are Made Of,” 414.

Fire of the Great Peace, that is to say the enfranchisement to the Indian Populations in Canada has created two parties of Indians on this Reserve.” The voters and anti-voters, or dehorners and traditionalists, caused “ill, bitter, hatredness, grudge feelings one against the other and now our Ancient ties of brotherly affection and love is now vanished to certain extent.” The “red children” begged their “Brother” to pay attention to the familiar wampum with “two white streaks,” one of which represents the British government, while the other “represents the Iroquois Government, and the two Governments shall never be made in one... Each nation shall be Governed by their own Government. Independently.” Referring to Newhouse’s Constitution, the chiefs and warriors asserted their own law: “when any of the Iroquois submit to laws and Regulations made by other People Alienated themselves, forfeited [sic] their birthrights have no interest or claim in the Confederation and Territory.” Therefore, those who wished to vote should be expelled from the community since they had become “independent British Canadian subjects and as if they are white men. They are no more Iroquois Government’s subjects.”<sup>91</sup> They had passed under the arms of the chiefs who encircled the Tree of Peace and had boarded the Canadian ship, an interpretation that reconciled the *kaswentha*’s individual autonomy of choice with the desire – indeed, a historic pledge – to maintain a sovereign Haudenosaunee government.

Only six individuals signed the 1896 petition: Johnson Williams (“Onondaga Chief”), Jacob Silversmith (“Cayuga Chief”), William Sandy (“Cayuga Warrior”), George Martin (“Mohawk Warrior”), John Buck (“Onondaga Warrior”); Seth Newhouse

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<sup>91</sup> Petition from Six Nations chiefs and warriors to John Campbell Hamilton Gordon, 25 November 1896, LAC, RG10, vol. 4027, file 57,169-1.



witnessed the petition.<sup>92</sup> Ironically, as Weaver points out, the signature of so few chiefs illustrated that the council on a whole “did not support their arguments” as they had “circumvented the official procedure, broaching the council’s policy that all such communication must first go through council.”<sup>93</sup> The contradictions in policy and practice remain striking: the signatories petitioned to preserve the chiefs’ governance, citing articles of their constitution, yet at the same time they broke a cardinal rule of nineteenth-century Haudenosaunee diplomacy, demonstrating how circumstances forced individuals to compromise some beliefs in order to save others.

In response, the Acting Superintendent General explained to the Governor General that the Government simply could not specially exempt the Six Nations from the 1885 Franchise Act and concluded that the matter required no further attention. The Acting Superintendent General, however, conceded that the Haudenosaunee opposition to the Act “is not without good ground” and believed that repealing it “should be carefully considered,” a surprising suggestion given officials seldom took Haudenosaunee concerns seriously.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, shortly thereafter, newly elected Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier, who had opposed *Onkwehonwe* enfranchisement at its inception the previous decade, disenfranchised the *Onkwehonwe*, as Weaver has explained, “on the grounds that they were wards of the government.” Unfortunately, the council had since changed its mind and now supported enfranchisement due to the excitement of the previous election; they quickly realised, however, that enfranchisement provided a powerful tool to the dehorners who argued that the federal vote should transfer into a local vote. The chiefs

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<sup>92</sup> Petition from Six Nations chiefs and warriors to John Campbell Hamilton Gordon, 25 November 1896, LAC, RG10, vol. 4027, file 57,169-1.

<sup>93</sup> Weaver, “Iroquois Politics,” 289.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from Acting Superintendent General to the Governor General, 9 December 1896, LAC, RG10, vol. 4027, file 57,169-1.

quickly revoked their support and chose to remain in their own canoe, autonomous from the federal governing structure.<sup>95</sup>

As the nineteenth century wound to a close, the Canadian government imposed the Indian Act on Kahnawake, Akwesasne, and Tyendinaga; after a traumatizing invasion of their council house by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Six Nations soon followed in 1924.<sup>96</sup> The irony of having democracy imposed at the point of a gun was likely lost to Dominion officials, but many Haudenosaunee continued to protest against the intrusion of the ship upon the canoe, even sending delegates to the League of Nations to plead their case.<sup>97</sup> In the decades since Canadian Confederation, the canoe and ship moved from powerful metaphors on their own to possessing additional legitimacy with wampum, as they became a crucial component in the battle for Haudenosaunee survival. Shrewdly, the Haudenosaunee learned how to mediate foreign protocol as they now relied upon written petitions, documentary records, and a written constitution in an effort to voice their discontent—and prove the validity of their beliefs—in ways in which they expected Dominion officials to understand.

While in the past the *kaswentha* ethic had allowed for a divergence of opinion within the Confederacy, increasingly intrusive Canadian legislation caused a polarization between those who supported the chiefs and those who advocated their replacement, which could lead to complete assimilation. Since the era of *métissage* had clearly

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<sup>95</sup> Weaver, “The Iroquois,” 238. See also Weaver, “Iroquois Politics,” 290.

<sup>96</sup> The Dominion police also imposed democracy in Akwesasne, which led to the shooting death of one unarmed Mohawk man, Jake Ice. Rarihokwats, *How Democracy Came to St. Regis and the Thunderwater Movement* (Akwesasne: Akwesasne Notes, ~1971).

<sup>97</sup> On Deskaheh’s trip to the League of Nations, see: Akwesasne Notes, ed., *Basic Call to Consciousness* (Summertown, Tennessee: Native Voices, 2005[1978]); Joelle Rostkowski, “Deskaheh’s Shadow: Indians on the International Scene,” *Native American Studies*, 9.2 (1995): 1-4; Grace Woo, “Canada’s Forgotten Founders: The Modern Significance of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Application for Membership in the League of Nations,” *Law, Social Justice & Global Development Journal*, 1 (2003).

vanished, compromise was no longer possible and the continued existence of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy was at stake. Questions of who could and could not be included within the protective circle of the chiefs therefore became more and more exclusive and the canoe grew to hold not only the laws and government, but also the tradition, language, and culture of the Haudenosaunee in the twentieth century. As Weaver has argued, the threats from the Dominion government and the dehorner movement caused some elements of Haudenosaunee society to assume “a defensive posture characterized by conservatism, an extreme isolationist ideology and militant leadership” that will become especially apparent in the next century.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, the Two Row Wampum’s message of separation began to slowly replace the Covenant Chain alliance ideal of friendship and brotherhood, as the *kaswentha* ethic adapted to suit contemporary circumstances.

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<sup>98</sup> Weaver, “Iroquois Politics,” 313.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **The *Kaswentha* Ethic in the Modern Era: Protest and Government Hearings from 1959 to 2001**

On 5 March 1959, 1300 Haudenosaunee people defiantly marched towards their 96-year old council house in Ohsweken, Six Nations Territory. Sick and tired of the Indian Act's intrusion on their territory, the group of both Christian and Longhouse followers had gathered to physically refute the 1924 coup whereby the Canadian government had replaced their traditional chiefs with an elected system.<sup>1</sup> Pausing outside the council house for a speech or two, the revolutionaries nailed a proclamation to the door, which, as one contemporary observer reported, "abolished the elective council, restored the hereditary chiefs and appointed an Iroquois police force of a hundred and thirty-three" persons. The group then took the locked door off its hinges and poured into the room originally constructed to house the hereditary chiefs of Six Nations. The elected council had already fled through the backdoor on the advice of the Indian Department, and the jubilant crowd welcomed the singing chiefs who filed into the room to assume their traditional council positions before their supporters. The mood quickly turned to business and the chiefs discussed a programme to make the reserve self-sustaining: they pledged to build a slaughterhouse and canning factory, to manufacture clothing, souvenirs, and cigarettes, to farm cooperatively and establish a storehouse, to begin a student loan programme for higher education, and to build a historical museum.

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<sup>1</sup> Annemarie Shimony, "Aftermath of a Revolution," unpublished, undated paper, from the collection of Abner Shimony, 1.



Figure 18: Council House in Ohsweken, Six Nations, built in 1863.  
Photo taken by the author.

Many women and men stayed in the council house day and night for the following week, partly to demonstrate their sovereignty and partly due to uncertainty about the Canadian response to the revolution. Indeed, after seven days, their fears came true when at three in the morning, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) “attacked” a crowd of about 130 people present in the council house. A “general melée” erupted and, Wilson continued, “the men were dragged along and clubbed; the women got black eyes and bruises and the wife of Chief Joseph Logan Jr. had one arm so badly hurt that she was for some time unable to use it.” One cameraman who was filming an injured woman had his camera smashed by a RCMP riot-stick, a shocking display of violence that was later broadcasted on a Toronto television station. The RCMP issued thirty-three arrest warrants but on the assurance of the Six Nations’ lawyer that “the pro-Confederacy

people would no longer use militant methods but depend on ‘peaceful negotiation and litigation in the civil courts,’ these charges were later dropped.”<sup>2</sup>

Eventually, Chief Logan’s wife, on behalf of the hereditary chiefs, brought an action for an injunction to keep the elected councillors from selling reserve land and for a declaration that the 1924 order in council, which resulted in the overthrow of the chiefs, be declared outside the authority of the Crown. The Haudenosaunee emphatically argued to the court that they had always been “faithful allies of the British Crown” and “that they never were and are not today subjects of the Crown.” The Ontario High Court, however, ruled against Mrs. Logan and the chiefs and found that the fact that the Haudenosaunee settled on lands under the Crown’s protection meant that they had become subjects.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Logan’s supporters returned home, dejected, and the elected council resumed their daily governing of the reserve from the council house.

Those who supported the *Kayaneren’kó:wa*, however, would not be so easily dissuaded and eleven years later, a smaller number of dedicated souls occupied the council house for a few days before being ejected in a less violent manner. This second revolution also made its way to the Ontario High Court where the revolutionaries argued that the 1924 overthrow had been unlawful because it removed the territory’s legitimate government, which, as an ally to the Crown, did not fall under the Indian Act. The trial judge for the 1970 revolution did not agree and ruled in 1973 that “the Six Nations Band was not a sovereign people” but were “subjects of the Crown and bound by the laws of

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<sup>2</sup> Annemarie Shimony, “Conflict and Continuity: An Analysis of an Iroquois Uprising,” Michael K. Foster, Jack Campisi, and Marianne Mithun eds., *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); Edmund Wilson, *Apologies to the Iroquois* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992 [1959]), 260-264; Personal recollections of William Guy Spittal, comments to the author on Chapter 5 of this dissertation, May 2008.

<sup>3</sup> *Logan v. Styres et al.*, Ontario High Court, 20 D.L.R. (2d) 416, 1959, <http://library2.usask.ca/native/cnlc/vol05/261.html>, accessed 13 April 2008.

Canada.” Nevertheless, in a victory for those who supported the traditional government at Six Nations, Justice Osler of the Ontario High Court agreed that the lands “are held in fee simple and not as a ‘reserve,’” which meant “the Indian Act cannot apply.”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, given that of 5,000 on-reserve residents, only 547 cast votes in the 1969 election (councillors in all districts but two won by acclamation), Osler ruled that the hereditary chiefs better represented the residents than members of a little-recognized band council imposed by the Indian Act.<sup>5</sup>

As an agent of the Crown, Justice Osler could hardly endorse the idea of Haudenosaunee sovereignty but his recognition of the hereditary chiefs, and by implication, the clan mothers and faithkeepers, as the most legitimate political power implied an implicit, and admittedly contradictory, respect of the *kaswentha* ethic. Osler recognized one of the most important autonomous aspects of the *kaswentha* ethic—the fundamental right to self-government in the manner prescribed by the Peacemaker—despite his insistence that the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* be confined by the Canadian nation-state. While Osler’s decision would have freed Six Nations from the confines of the Indian Act and could have paved the way for the reinstatement of a Longhouse government in Ohsweken, he did not challenge the sovereignty of the Crown over Haudenosaunee people, so his ruling rang hollow for those who saw *kaswentha* autonomy existing parallel, not subordinate, to Canadian sovereignty.

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<sup>4</sup> *Isaac v. Davey*, Ontario High Court, 3 O.R. 677, 1973, <http://library2.usask.ca/native/cnlc/vol09/099.html>, accessed 13 April 2008.

<sup>5</sup> *Isaac v. Davey*, Ontario High Court. Not everyone supported the chiefs: anthropologist Annemarie Shimony described how the chiefs took a poll of the reserve during the 1959 revolution to gauge their support and threatened those who did not sign their support with exile. Despite the threat, half of the reserve refused to give their support and of those who signed, minors comprised a large percentage, which made it difficult to present a united front to the Canadian government in favour of the hereditary system. Shimony, “Aftermath,” p.3; Wilson, *Apologies*, 267-68.

Unfortunately for those who had fought so hard to restore the Longhouse government, Osler's small, bittersweet victory was short-lived, as Justice John D. Arnup of the Ontario Court of Appeal overturned the judgement on appeal and placed a permanent injunction upon Haudenosaunee people from obstructing the running of the elected council. Arnup considered "that the tract in question is still vested in the Crown," not owned in fee simple as Osler had concluded, and therefore remained subject to the rules and governance of the Indian Act. He assumed that the Haudenosaunee were loyal subjects of the Crown, despite assertions of the defendants to the contrary, and that *Onkwehonwe* title to the land was "dependent upon the good will of the Sovereign."<sup>6</sup> The council house thus returned to the hands of the elected officials, and while the chiefs appealed the decision all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, they too considered the Indian Act to apply and prohibited the chiefs from impeding access to the council house.<sup>7</sup> Neither the Ontario Court of Appeal nor the Supreme Court of Canada returned to the issue of whether the traditional chiefs or the band council better represented the will of the people, first raised by Justice Osler.<sup>8</sup>

While a battle over one small building may seem superfluous, especially when the chiefs have continued to lead ceremonies and to conduct business in the various Longhouses on the territory, the council house is of great symbolic value. As the one-time seat of the Confederacy government in Canada, the council house had updated the

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<sup>6</sup> *Isaac v. Davey*, Ontario Court of Appeal, 5 O.R. (2d) 610, 1974, <http://library2.usask.ca/native/cnlc/vol09/115.html>, accessed 13 April 2008. Title being dependant on the "good will of the Sovereign" is a precedent that originated in *St. Catharines Milling & Lumber Co. v. The Queen*, 10 O.R. 196, 1885, <http://library2.usask.ca/native/cnlc/vol02/374.html>, accessed 15 November 2008.

<sup>7</sup> *Davey et al. v. Isaac et al.*, Supreme Court of Canada, 2 S.C.R. 897, 1977, <http://csc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/1977/1977rcs2-897/1977rcs2-897.html>, accessed 15 November 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Donald J. Bourgeois, "The Six Nations: A Neglected Aspect of Canadian Legal History," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 6.2 (1986): 253-270.



‘Whole House’ of the eighteenth-century records to the Victorian era and symbolised the modernization of Longhouse chiefs, who maintained their ceremonies and languages but now governed as best they could by consensus in suits and ties while concerning themselves with municipal issues. The council house provided a seat for Peace, Order, and Good Government of the Canadian Constitution to co-exist alongside the Peace, Good Minds, and Friendship espoused by the Peacemaker and demonstrated that the old ways could continue to exist with the new. Finally, in January 2007, the band council returned the council house voluntarily to the chiefs as a good will gesture in the midst of a new era of cooperation between the competing forms of government spurred by the recent Caledonian land reclamation.



Council in session, Ohsweken, Brant Co., Ont.—Osnoluga Chief in centre.

Figure 19: Council in session, Ohsweken, 1871.  
Courtesy of the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution (961-c-1)

The revolutionary attempts to restore the council house also demonstrate the increasingly adamant tone and actions of Haudenosaunee peoples—Longhouse, Christian, and non-practising alike—who sought to return to the ways of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* and reassert the *kaswentha* ethic's autonomy. While in the past, the *kaswentha* ethic had been represented by the Covenant Chain relationship, the increasing nineteenth-century intrusion of first the Crown and then the Canadian state taught the Haudenosaunee that friendship had given way to domineering interference. After trying to educate their former brethren to the historical relationship between equals, the Haudenosaunee now turned to increasingly overt, insistent, and sometimes violent methods of asserting autonomy against Canada's ever-increasing assimilatory efforts.

Land reclamations, government hearings, and court cases have all recently challenged the assumed sovereignty of the Canadian state and attempted to reassert the historical relationship of two separate vessels travelling in the same direction on one river. Aided by twentieth-century social and political movements whereby newly formed states cast off colonialism, civil rights movements taught equality of all peoples, and demonstrations, sit-ins, and violence became increasingly powerful tools of protest, the Haudenosaunee organised themselves to reclaim their autonomy, by force if necessary. Not only did a desire to reunite the Confederacy grow, but a longing for the Haudenosaunee homeland in what is now upstate New York intensified within the communities now settled in the country called Canada. Even some living in the communities of Akwesasne, Kahnawake, and Kanehsatake, whose residents had left their homelands in the Mohawk Valley for French friendship in Canada three hundred years

ago, saw a return to their roots as the cure for Indian Act rule and intensifying social problems on their territories.

In May of 1974, members of the Kahnawake Warrior Society, a group of young people who sought to revive Mohawk teachings and language, launched an effort to reclaim their ancestral homeland when they occupied a 612-acre abandoned girls' camp at Moss Lake in New York State's Adirondack Park. Although archaeological evidence does not indicate an ancient settlement in that area, the Mohawk undoubtedly hunted, fished, and travelled through the Adirondack forests and mountains for centuries.<sup>9</sup> In Kahnawake, they had become frustrated by their confrontation with the Sureté du Québec police force over efforts to evict non-*Onkwehonwe* families from the territory, which degenerated into violence not only within their own community, but also in the neighbouring non-*Onkwehonwe* city of Châteauguay.<sup>10</sup> In the wake of the violence, a party of thirty or so people packed up their belongings, gathered their children, and moved southwards to escape from community dissention and, in a very potent example of *kaswentha* independence within Haudenosaunee society, the group followed the historic tradition of founding new villages to cope with divisive viewpoints.

The small group—soon to grow to an estimated 200 people—renamed the abandoned girls' camp *Ganienkeh*, after the Mohawk's "Land of the Flint" homeland, and pledged that their move was but the first step in reclaiming nine million acres of

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<sup>9</sup> This, however, was not the first time that the Mohawk had moved back to their now-New York State lands that had been lost during the American Revolution: in 1957, Standing Arrow and his followers moved onto a short-lived settlement along Schoharie Creek, near Fort Hunter, New York. More recently, in 1993, Tom Porter and followers from Akwesasne bought a plot of land just west of Standing Arrow's earlier settlement, near Fonda, New York, and established the Mohawk farming community of Kanatsiohareke. Wilson, *Apologies*, 39; and Kanatsiohareke Website, <http://www.mohawkcommunity.com/>, accessed 1 April 2008.

<sup>10</sup> "Mohawk Nation at Kanawake Evict Non-Indians," *Akwesasne Notes* (Early Winter 1973): 18-20. NL-EP, oversized box; and Audra Simpson, "To the Reserve and Back Again: Kahnawake Mohawk Narratives of Self, Home and Nation," Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, 2003, 84-87.

traditional territory stolen after American Independence. Accompanied by approximately a dozen head of cattle, along with rabbits, chickens, pigs, ducks, geese, and the three vegetable sisters, the Mohawk proposed to live cooperatively off the land, according to the rules of nature and the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*, and “relearn the superior morality of the ancients” that they felt lacking after living in a small community next to Montreal for three hundred years.<sup>11</sup>

The men, women, and children (including newborn babies) settled onto the land, which the State Department of Environmental Conservation had purchased in 1973 in order to establish a state park. The Mohawk planted seeds, made homes for themselves and the animals out of existing structures, and probably celebrated the Strawberry and Raspberry Ceremonies with great optimism for in the wake of the Wounded Knee II standoff between the American Indian Movement and federal agents in South Dakota, state authorities were reluctant to forcefully evict the dedicated—and armed—group.<sup>12</sup> Hidden behind a thick forest and accessed by a single security gate, those at Ganienkeh assured the surrounding residents of their peaceful intentions “which in no way spurs fear or distrust” as they shunned all “alien substances” and non-traditional influences from their community.<sup>13</sup> Many non-*Onkwehonwe* neighbours supported Ganienkeh: as Robert

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<sup>11</sup> Louis Hall (“compiled by”), “Ganienkeh Manifesto,” NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 11; An abridged version of the manifesto is also found in “Ganienkeh: ‘Land of the Flint,’” *Akwesasne Notes* (Early Summer 1974): 12. NL-EP, oversized box; Kathleen Powers, “Indians Return to Adirondack Lands,” unknown newspaper, unknown date (after 28 October 1974), NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 14; and Michael J. Blair, “American Indian Occupation of State Land at Moss Lake,” Confidential Report commissioned by NYS Assemblyman K. Daniel Haley (Dem.), NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>12</sup> Dennis Banks with Richard Erdoes, *Ojibwa Warrior: Dennis Banks and the Rise of the American Indian Movement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004); and Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: Untold Stories from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: New Press, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> “Security Tight at Moss Lake,” *Adirondack News*, 21 May 1974. NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 14.

Hall, the publicity director for the Town of Webb, claimed, “we can fully understand their desire for wishing to return to this abundant land.”<sup>14</sup>

As the seasons changed and the corn became ready to harvest, the tranquillity at Moss Lake was shattered by gunshots, which rang out from Ganienkeh and injured a man and a young girl who drove by in separate vehicles on a state road alongside the park. A 22-year old man, Stephen Drake, was shot in the shoulder after drinking and, with his brother, “speeding back and forth in front of the gate shouting at the Indians and giving war-whoops” while nine-year old April Madigan was also shot and critically wounded one evening while travelling in a car with her parents and brother. The Mohawk claimed that persons inside both vehicles had first fired upon individuals manning the Ganienkeh security gate and they had only returned fire in self-defence, regrettably injuring the young girl travelling with her reputedly gun-toting parents. The Mohawk spokesman Kakwirakeron (Art Montour) insisted that this was not the first time people in Ganienkeh had been fired upon and harassed by passers-by; informal interviews with area residents after the shootings suggested that Steven Drake had indeed been harassing the *Onkwehonwe* after drinking. On the other hand, the editor of the local paper and advisor to the anti-Ganienkeh organisation COPCA (Concerned Persons of the Central Adirondacks), Michael Blair, speculated in a report on the occupation that the Mohawk may have mistook fireworks or even shots fired by hunters in the vicinity for gunfire directed at them.<sup>15</sup> Regardless, the circumstances surrounding the shootings remain

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<sup>14</sup> “Security Tight at Moss Lake,” NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 14.

<sup>15</sup> Michael J. Blair, “American Indian Occupation of State Land at Moss Lake,” Confidential Report commissioned by NYS Assemblyman K. Daniel Haley (Dem.), NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 1; Einhorn Interview Notes, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 1; Nicholas J. Lyman, “Indians Firm in Intention to Stay on Moss Lake Land,” 8 November 1974, *Watertown Daily Times*, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 14; Bernard Christman, “Indian land grab protested by residents,” *North Country Catholic*, 11 December 1974, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 15; Jonas Kover, “Indians: Will Meet No More,” *Utica Daily Press*, 7 March 1975, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 16.

contested and no one was ever charged but the incidents prompted the newly formed COPCA to petition for the removal of the Mohawk. Some media groups, perhaps eager to sensationalise stories and increase sales, encouraged local hysteria by spreading rumours; one local TV station even falsely broadcasted (and later retracted) that “a group of 200 armed Indians head[ed] towards the camp.”<sup>16</sup>

After the shooting, other *Onkwehonwe* people flocked to the site in support of those at Ganienkeh: the American Indian Movement and several attorneys arrived on scene and the Onondaga nation threatened retaliatory action if the state police entered Ganienkeh, promising to cut the power lines to the city of Syracuse, New York and to block the interstate that runs through Onondaga territory.<sup>17</sup> Haudenosaunee communities, however, remained divided in their support of Ganienkeh: three Tribal councillors from the American side of Akwesasne wrote the New York Governor in November 1974 to stress that “the untimely and unwarranted take-over...by a band of militant group of Indians (calling themselves Mohawks), has in no way been sanctioned or condoned by this responsible governing body.” The following month, “Concerned Onondaga Indians” wrote with “honest regret” for “the actions of a few so-called ‘Representatives of the Iroquois,’ which they are not. They are only renegades who only represent crime and violence.” The Six Nations government was also not consistently supportive and indeed objected to the use of the community’s title, “Independent North American Indian State

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Numerous news articles also chronicled the shootings in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Boonville Herald*, the *Watertown Daily Times*, the *Adirondack News*, and other local papers found at the NL-EP, Box 1.

<sup>16</sup> Bernard Christman, “Indian land grab protested by residents,” *North Country Catholic*, 11 December 1974, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 15.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Cook, “How Peaceful Mohawk Take-Over Spawned Bitterness,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 24 November 1974, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 14; Gail H. Landsman, *Sovereignty and Symbol: Indian-White Conflict at Ganienkeh* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 149.

of Ganienkeh,” since it suggested that Ganienkeh was independent of the Confederacy; Ganienkeh, presumably eager for allies, obligingly changed its letterhead.<sup>18</sup>

Other Haudenosaunee people, however, remained dedicated to the cause and readily lent their support to bolster what they saw as historic basis for their claim. Both Louis Hall, secretary to the Ganienkeh Council Fire, and Oren Lyons, a spokesperson for the Onondaga nation, told the press that a 1794 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, the Treaty of Canandaigua, called for the American President to intercede when an *Onkwehonwe* person injures a non-*Onkwehonwe*.<sup>19</sup> Problematically, the text of the Treaty of Canandaigua does not mention the Mohawk since it dealt with the remaining Haudenosaunee nations—the Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca (the Tuscarora also did not sign)—in what became the State of New York after the American Revolution. The Mohawk who allied with the British had received compensation for territory lost through land grants along the Grand River and the Bay of Quinte in what is now Canada.<sup>20</sup> Although only one Mohawk, Henry Young Brant, was reported present as an observer who did not speak at the treaty, author Doug George-Kanentiio from Akwesasne has argued that the Mohawk participation was implied by the “repeated references to the ‘Six Nations’ ... who were assured they would retain active possession of their lands along with exclusive jurisdiction over their citizens.”<sup>21</sup> Even if the presence of one Mohawk

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<sup>18</sup> John Biguree (?), Russell R. Lazore, and Rudolph Hart (?) of St. Regis to Governor Malcolm Wilson, 25 November 1974, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 9; Carl Dorsey, Calvin Gibson, and Edna Pierce of Onondaga to unknown, 20 December 1974, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 9; Landsman, *Sovereignty and Symbol*, 151.

<sup>19</sup> Jonas Kover, “Indians: Will Meet No More,” *Utica Daily Press*, 7 March 1975, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 16; Anonymous, “Eagle Bay Shootings Still Probed,” *Watertown Daily Times*, 30 October 1974, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 14.

<sup>20</sup> 1794 Canandaigua Treaty Commemoration Committee, Inc., Treaty Text, [http://www.canandaigua-treaty.org/The\\_Canandaigua\\_Treaty\\_of\\_1794.html](http://www.canandaigua-treaty.org/The_Canandaigua_Treaty_of_1794.html), consulted 19 March 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Jack Campisi and William A. Starna, “On the Road to Canandaigua: The Treaty of 1794,” *American Indian Quarterly* 19 (Fall 1995): 467-90; Doug George-Kanentiio, “The Mohawk Nation and the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua,” G. Peter Jemison & Anna M. Schein, eds., *Treaty of Canandaigua 1794: 200 Years*

man implied participation, he would have attended on behalf of those who had recently settled in Tyendinaga and Six Nations after the Revolution. Instead, those who founded Ganienkeh came from Kahnawake and had voluntarily abandoned the Mohawk Valley for the Jesuit mission community beginning in the 1660s; some argued that they therefore had no right to lay claim to land in New York State.<sup>22</sup>

Setting aside the validity of the claim to Moss Lake, those at Ganienkeh used familiar symbols and discourse to express their status as a sovereign Mohawk nation. One spokesman, Art Montour, or Kakwirakeron, told the media about the principles of the Two Row Wampum, but it was not until a local non-*Onkwehonwe* craftsman made him an eighteen inch-long belt out of Czechoslovakian beads bound together with strips of rawhide, that the *kaswentha* message could visually be expressed.<sup>23</sup>

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*of Treaty Relations between the Iroquois Confederacy and the United States* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 2000), 125.

<sup>22</sup> Blair-Montour Debate, 31 May 1975, tape 1 (of 2), NL-EP, Box 3, Series 4: Audio Tapes, 1974-1975, Folder 48; "Ganienkeh Manifesto," NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 11; Extract from 1945 UN submission by Six Nations representatives, *Logan v. Styres et al.*, Ontario High Court; Anonymous letter to Mr. Eugene Gerhard, Editor in Chief of the New York State Bar Journal, 24 April 1979, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 4; Michael J. Blair, "American Indian Occupation of State Land at Moss Lake," NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>23</sup> Michael J. Blair, "American Indian Occupation of State Land at Moss Lake," Deletions, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 2.





Figure 20: Art Montour holding a Two Row Wampum replica  
Published in the Crystal Courier, 8.14 (8 March 1978),  
Newberry Einhorn Collection, Box 1, folder 23

Some news articles briefly mentioned the Two Row and one spokesman, Oserase, explained, “We’re going to stay in our own canoe and the white people are going to stay in their own sailboat and we’re going to travel together.”<sup>24</sup> Few other Ganienkeh spokespeople, however, referred to the Two Row Wampum; press releases and newsletters (from both Louis Hall at Ganienkeh and COPCA) remained completely silent on the subject, and even the interviews locally conducted by Gail Landsman for her book, *Sovereignty and Symbol*, had little to contribute in terms of Two Row discourse.<sup>25</sup> Certainly, the entire Moss Lake incident revealed the *kaswentha* ethic in action even if

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<sup>24</sup> Tony Baker, “Indians in precarious legal perch: Eagle Bay encampment viewed as chance for survival,” *Syracuse Herald-American*, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 15.

<sup>25</sup> Louis Hall Ganienkeh newsletters, <http://www.louishall.com/newsletters/ganienkeh.html>, accessed 20 March 2008..

the Two Row was not prominently displayed; not only did dissenting members of Kahnawake take their own fate into their hands by moving onto the land, but their avowed independence from the Canadian and American governments depicted sovereignty in very real terms. It appears, as in the historic period, that the principles of separation and sovereignty existed on their own; the Two Row remained an important tool to explain the Haudenosaunee worldview, but the *kaswentha* ethic existed independently of any wampum belt.

Even those late nineteenth-century petitions showed that little Two Row discourse emanated from Kahnawake itself, which does not imply a lack of the *kaswentha* ethic's autonomy. Philip Deering from Kahnawake has suggested that Confederacy wampum in general may not be used to the same extent in his community because of its different history as a mission community and as a member of the Seven Nations of Canada dwelling alongside French Canadian neighbours. Haudenosaunee people in Kahnawake *lived* Haudenosaunee culture and values and even if they did not overtly express it with the Two Row, the Circle Wampum, and the Hiawatha wampum, their fundamental messages are no less potent.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, anthropologist Audra Simpson has similarly described how Kahnawake has articulated nationhood in different ways from the rest of the Confederacy. In the late-nineteenth century, ethnologists accused Kahnawake culture of being “inauthentic” or, as J.N.B. Hewitt wrote, for possessing “practically no *trustworthy* knowledge of the *structure* and the *institutions* of the ancient League” because their traditions differed from the Six Nations experience of Seth Newhouse's codified constitution.<sup>27</sup> Just because Kahnawake placed less emphasis on a Newhouse

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<sup>26</sup> Interview between Kathryn Muller and Philip Deering, Kahnawake, 17 August 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Hewitt quoted in Simpson, “To the Reserve,” 104.

form of constitutionalism or, in the 1970s, on wampum itself does not mean they were Haudenosaunee pretenders, especially since the *kaswentha* ethic of independence is so clearly articulated by their actions.

Although the Two Row Wampum at Ganienkeh was not very prominent in 1974, *kaswentha* principles continued to be reflected in the Ganienkeh manifesto and in the press. The Ganienkeh manifesto compiled by Louis Hall asserted the human right “to operate his state with no interference from any foreign nation or government.”<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, Hall and Montour dreamed of establishing an “Independent North American State,” governed by the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* to which members must pledge allegiance “on the sacred wampum” to “support, defend, and protect” their model “of proper, moral government and society.”<sup>29</sup> Ideally, the large *Onkwehonwe* community would draw members from beyond the Mohawk and even Haudenosaunee nations; they would all live cooperatively and thereby eliminate the need for outside influence, especially Canadian/American financial aid and even money itself.<sup>30</sup> As such, sovereignty was not just discourse, but would be *lived* at Ganienkeh, Gail Landsman learned, and it must come from within: “if it is ‘given’ and accepted, it means it can also be taken away by some outside power.”<sup>31</sup> The *kaswentha* ethic of autonomy from the Canadian/American states thus took on a pan-Indian message common in the 1960s and 1970s; no longer did the separation of peoples only include the Haudenosaunee in their canoe, but all *Onkwehonwe* peoples now piled into one vessel to remain autonomous

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<sup>28</sup> Hall, “Ganienkeh Manifesto,” NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 11.

<sup>29</sup> Suggestion (unclear from whom), “Pledge of Allegiance to the Independent North American Indian State,” NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 10.

<sup>30</sup> Hall, “Ganienkeh Manifesto,” NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 11.

<sup>31</sup> Gail Landsman, “Ganienkeh: Symbol and Politics in an Indian/White Conflict,” *American Anthropologist* 87.4 (Dec., 1985): 832-33.

from the ever-intrusive ship.

The Ganienkeh people took their dream of an *Onkwehonwe* state to the United Nations, and used public symbols like a call to human rights and land disenfranchisement to epitomize their struggle against the Canadian and American authorities. Following the tradition established in 1923 by Six Nations Cayuga Chief Deskaheh, who petitioned the League of Nations to recognize Haudenosaunee sovereignty, Ganienkeh now looked to the United Nation's 1948 Declaration of Human Rights for support. The Ganienkeh Manifesto used the UN Declaration to assert Haudenosaunee nationality and the right to "an area of land for our own territory and state where we can exercise our own proven government and society."<sup>32</sup> International comparisons bolstered the hopes of those at Ganienkeh: in 1972, the United States restored the islands of Okinawa to Japanese administration, a "rendering of justice" which the Mohawk expected "shall be extended to American Indians."<sup>33</sup> The militant traditionals, as Louis Hall called his fellow Ganienkeh nationalists and other *Onkwehonwe* activists, had never accepted the Canadian Indian Act or the American Federal Indian Law, "and so retained their nationhood" as "no nation has the right to reduce another nation to the band or tribe status by a trick."<sup>34</sup> The United Nations, however, did not condone the Mohawk arguments of sovereignty and self-determination and, in a 1975 press release, described Ganienkeh as in the "domestic jurisdiction of a member state."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Hall, "Ganienkeh Manifesto," NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 11.

<sup>33</sup> Hall, "Ganienkeh Manifesto," NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 11.

<sup>34</sup> Louis Hall, "A Message from Ganienkeh," Issue 1 (December 1974), <http://www.louishall.com/newsletters/ganienkeh/no1.html> accessed 26 March 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Louis Hall, "A Message from Ganienkeh," Issue 5 (15 February 1975), <http://www.louishall.com/newsletters/ganienkeh/no5.html> accessed 26 March 2008.

Notwithstanding a lack of UN support, the people at Ganienkeh acted in a sovereign manner and employed events and objects other than the Two Row as popular symbols of nationhood. From a Mohawk perspective, Landsman argues, even the 1974 shooting of two people “became a symbol of Mohawk sovereignty over its own land” and “the viability of the Six Nations as the legal traditional government of the Iroquois people.”<sup>36</sup> Certainly, a refusal to hand over alleged Haudenosaunee criminals has existed since the seventeenth century and had been rekindled to demonstrate to outsiders the legitimacy of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*. The claim, however, would have been more convincing had they based it upon the 1664 agreement of separate jurisdictions, rather than the Treaty of Canandaigua, *which the Mohawk never signed*. Unfortunately, although Mohawk chiefs investigated the shooting incident, they only pledged to make the findings public after the Office of the U.S. President investigated the shots fired onto Ganienkeh territory, allegations which the state troopers had already dismissed.<sup>37</sup> While it is very likely that a few bad apples on both sides were responsible for the troubles and while it is reasonable for the Mohawk to expect justice for gunshots fired towards their own people, allowing individuals to go unpunished for almost killing a nine-year old girl understandably angered many neighbours. More damaging, it left the impression of an unruly group of bandits who could not properly investigate, try, and punish dangerous individuals according to their own laws. In order for the sovereignty of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* to have legitimacy, the community should have proven to their neighbours that their own laws were just and fair and that the peaceful coexistence of the *kaswentha* ethic would not be compromised by a few reckless individuals.

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<sup>36</sup> Landsman, *Sovereignty and Symbol*, 151.

<sup>37</sup> Louis Hall, “A Message from Ganienkeh,” Issue 4 (17 January 1975), <http://www.louishall.com/newsletters/ganienkeh/no4.html>, accessed 20 March 2008.

Indeed, many of those living at Ganienkeh sought to escape the wrenching divisions in their home communities: as they saw it, traditionalists followed the Longhouse ways and tried “to protect the land, nature and way of life,” while the educated “Elected Trustees” sought “profit, power, fame, and greed, by selling land for highways, factories, seaways, and to any form of so called progress.”<sup>38</sup> Certainly the divisions were not so clearly defined at home, nor were all elected councillors corrupt and non-traditional, but such divisions nevertheless had disastrous repercussions on closely knit communities; in Akwesasne by the late 1970s, the tensions erupted into a violent siege at Raquette Point between multiple groups that lasted for days. Many viewed Ganienkeh as a retreat from community dissention, drugs, alcohol, gambling, and other vices; Ganienkeh offered the possibility of a new start based upon old principles but isolated from the baggage that hindered and divided the reserve communities.

Accordingly, those at Ganienkeh also publicized a return to the old ways of Haudenosaunee culture, as they shunned technology and material possessions and focused instead on a cooperative, not competitive, lifestyle.<sup>39</sup> Kakwirakeron (Montour) described his culture as environmentally sound and “based more on human values, on human development, both physical and of the mind.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the preservation of the land for the Seven Future Generations was a tenet hailed by those Landsman interviewed; by preserving the land, the culture would also endure.<sup>41</sup> Jamie Horn from Kahnawake proudly claimed only herbal preventative medicine grown from the land would be used in

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<sup>38</sup> Mohawk young people of St. Regis, Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, Tyendinaga, and Six Nations, “To the Citizens of the United States (Vermont),” NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 11.

<sup>39</sup> Kathleen Powers, “Indians Return to Adirondack Lands,” unknown newspaper, unknown date (after 28 October 1974), NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 14.

<sup>40</sup> Powers, “Indians Return to Adirondack Lands,” NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 14.

<sup>41</sup> Landsman, “Ganienkeh,” 833.

the planned Independent North American Indian State to allow the *Onkwehonwe* to “be completely free of the Whiteman.”<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, those at Ganienkeh sought to return to the nature of the land, a goal that the Confederacy supporters in the late nineteenth century did not stress as they sat in the Six Nations council house in Victorian dress debating timber regulations. Ideas of how self-determination was to be expressed therefore differed although the quest for independence remained the same.

In order to maintain their unique culture, those at Ganienkeh desired the separation of the peoples—however problematic that may be given the multitudes of Mohawk with mixed ancestry—and dreamed of “withdraw[ing] from the white man’s civilization, to learn again to exist without cars and automatic washers, to live in harmony with the land as their forefathers did.”<sup>43</sup> The separation of the ship and the canoe would not exist merely for legal matters, but, according to these Mohawk, would exist at every level of being. Although Oserase for one had “nothing against the white people” and fondly recalled the brotherhood of a bygone treaty era, he insisted that each person should “be the same height,” just like the chiefs, and not rule over the other.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps because the Canadian and American governments had trampled their *Onkwehonwe* kin in recent years, those at Ganienkeh went to great lengths to ensure continued separation from their “white brothers.” Upon first arriving at the camp, the Mohawk “felled trees to block the snowmobile trails that cross[ed] the camp and erected a tall tepee near the old

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<sup>42</sup> Jamie Horn, “Independent North American Indian State,” unpublished, undated (but probably in early 1974, before the move to Moss Lake) document, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 10.

<sup>43</sup> Anonymous, “Trouble in the Land of the Flint,” *Time*, 23 December 1974, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 15.

<sup>44</sup> Tony Baker, “Indians in precarious legal perch: Eagle Bay encampment viewed as chance for survival,” *Syracuse Herald-American*, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 15.

camp gate,” politely yet firmly turning away any tourist or hunter who stumbled upon the encampment.<sup>45</sup>

In order to maintain the *kaswentha* ethic, the people of Ganienkeh also drew upon the increasing militancy of the American Indian Movement (AIM), which occupied the former island prison of Alcatraz in 1969 and fought reputedly corrupt tribal councillors and federal authorities in 1973 at Pine Ridge Reservation in what would be called Wounded Knee II.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, prior to the move to Ganienkeh, Louis Hall had informed AIM co-founder Dennis Banks that the Kahnawake group planned to “squat on the land[,] plant every available acres [sic] [and] resist all efforts to be removed—possession is nine points of the law.”<sup>47</sup> Hall swore Banks to secrecy for fear that non-traditionalists “may betray the movement” and he believed that the move to Ganienkeh would help AIM “by focussing national and international attention on more injustice, persecutions, oppressions, racism, prejudice and genocide by the U.S. nation.”<sup>48</sup> Protest had now given way to revolt as those at Ganienkeh refused to be treated as defeated subjects any longer and the *kaswentha* ethic adopted increasingly militant undertones. Finally, the secluded location in the Adirondacks would allow for AIM Vietnam veterans to “train young warriors [in] the art of defending their homeland and where they may settle with their families.”<sup>49</sup>

Understandably, the thought of an armed militia hostile to the American government worried Ganienkeh’s neighbours, and to quell their fears, the Mohawk

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<sup>45</sup> Anonymous, “Trouble in the Land of the Flint,” NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 15.

<sup>46</sup> One of the leaders of the Alcatraz occupation, interestingly enough, was a Mohawk by the name of Richard Oaks.

<sup>47</sup> Louis Hall to Dennis Banks, Letter, 17 February 1974, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 10. Landsman has argued that AIM’s involvement in Ganienkeh was very minimal and really only existed shortly after the 1974 shootings. Landsman, *Sovereignty and Symbol*, 150.

<sup>48</sup> Hall to Banks, Letter, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 10.

<sup>49</sup> Hall to Banks, Letter, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 10.



promised not to reclaim private lands or to evict “white people” from their homes, which they claimed would contravene the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* even though a thwarted attempt to evict non-*Onkwehonwe* in Kahnawake spurred the move to the Adirondacks.<sup>50</sup> Although they sought separation, the Mohawk also met in neighbourhood homes and in community/church gatherings to explain their purpose and message: “We come peacefully, trying to be of one mind,” one spokesperson claimed after the shootings of Stephen Drake and April Madigan.<sup>51</sup> Although armed, the *Onkwehonwe* did not want to fight with their neighbours; they were, however, prepared to defend their settlement and, as an extension, their culture to the death. While separation was a key component of their project, the support of sympathetic outsiders was equally necessary and, ironically, one could not come without the other. No matter how far the canoe travelled from the ship, the river and whatever rapids lay ahead remained the same for both vessels, thus locking Ganienkeh and their neighbours together to weather any future storms.

By 1977, the state had purchased another plot of land near Altona, New York, and remarkably offered it to the Ganienkeh settlers, despite the fact that their claims directly challenged the state’s—and indeed, the nation’s—territorial sovereignty.<sup>52</sup> As spokesman Kakwirakeron (Montour) believed, Ganienkeh is “a separate territory with no legal ties to the United States” and, despite a court ruling to the contrary, “the state

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<sup>50</sup> Anonymous, “Trouble in the Land of the Flint,” *Time*, 23 December 1974, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 15; “Mohawk Nation at Kanawake Evict Non-Indians,” *Akwesasne Notes* (Early Winter 1973): 18-20. NL-EP, oversized box.

<sup>51</sup> Mary-Lou Weisman, “Indians turn area white mens’ faces faces red,” *Fairpress, Inc.*, Fall 1974 (post-shooting), NL-EP, Box 2, Folder 39.

<sup>52</sup> On the settlement and move to Altona, see Maryanne Gallagher, “Indians Begin Move to Greener Pastures,” *Utica Press*, 1 August 1977, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 22; Anonymous, “Clinton County Mohawks to Mark Holiday With Neighbour’s Help,” *Watertown Daily Times*, 23 November 1977, NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 22.

government and police have no jurisdiction.”<sup>53</sup> Once the group had accepted the state’s offer and had settled at the new site, those at Ganienkeh continued to forcibly express *kaswentha* autonomy when pressed. In fact, during Akwesasne’s late 1970s stand-off, when an assault by state police seemed likely, Ganienkeh warriors pledged to launch a counter-offensive towards the town of Altona in order to divert the state police.<sup>54</sup> Also in 1980, Ganienkeh opposed the United States Department of Agriculture aerial spraying initiative for gypsy moths near their territory; when the USDA ignored their demands and sent a crop duster over the area, gunfire hit the plane. The pilot was uninjured and uncertain as to whether the shots had come from Ganienkeh, but the USDA terminated its plans for aerial spraying and sprayed from the ground instead.<sup>55</sup> These displays of violence marked a drastically different stage in the *kaswentha* ethic’s expression from the nineteenth century where a war of words was more common, but they recall the *kaswentha*’s warrior autonomy of the seventeenth century. Warriors acted how they wanted, when they wanted, in a similar manner to those at Ganienkeh who asserted their independence and their sovereign right to defend their territory notwithstanding the laws of the surrounding communities. It does not appear that clan mothers kept individuals in check during these overt displays of violence, although since men acted as the spokespeople—much like in colonial times—it is difficult to know whether they were working behind the scenes.

The occupations of the Six Nations council house and at Ganienkeh must have convinced the Canadian and American governments that the Haudenosaunee would not

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<sup>53</sup> Laurie Asseo, “Indian community seeks return to simpler lifestyle,” *Unknown newspaper*, unknown date (post-1979), NL-EP, Box 1, Folder 25.

<sup>54</sup> Landsman, *Sovereignty and Symbol*, 37-38.

<sup>55</sup> Landsman, *Sovereignty and Symbol*, 37-38.

sit idly by and watch their *kaswentha* ethic—and by consequence, the Haudenosaunee themselves—disappear. The violence of each occupation—either from the baton of the RCMP or the firearms of the Mohawk—likely worried authorities who sought to find a balance between asserting their own sovereignty and respecting public opinion in a time of civil rights and anti-colonial discourse. The Haudenosaunee, meanwhile, had begun to articulate the *kaswentha* ethic as separation above all and proved that they were prepared to fight, and die if necessary, for their nation. That said, not all expressions of the *kaswentha* ethic resulted in violence, especially as Canadian authorities began to show an increasing interest in the 1980s and 1990s of pursuing a dialogue of self-government with *Onkwehonwe* peoples. As the violence of these first two incidents gave way to discourse, Haudenosaunee spokespeople began to increasingly turn to the Two Row Wampum as the perfect, increasingly ubiquitous symbol of the *kaswentha* ethic.

The Two Row Wampum played a prominent role in a 1981 Haudenosaunee visit to Governor General Edward Schreyer. As discussions surrounding the patriation of the Constitution unfolded between Canada and Great Britain, Schreyer met with some Haudenosaunee chiefs in his Rideau Hall residence in Ottawa to read the Friendship and Two Row wampums. Renowned chief and ceremonialist Jacob Thomas and his wife Yvonne had travelled from Six Nations to join their colleague and friend Michael K. Foster of the Canadian Museum of Civilization and they met others from Six Nations, Oneida of the Thames and Akwesasne at Rideau Hall, the governor general's residence.<sup>56</sup> Most of the chiefs arrived in pan-Indian garb, including Plains war bonnets, although

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<sup>56</sup> The account of this meeting is taken from the following sources: Michael K. Foster, "The Reading of the Friendship (Covenant) and Two Rows Belts at the Governor General's, scheduled for 4:00 PM on 26 Feb. 81," unpublished notes from Foster's personal collection; personal conversation between Kathryn Muller and Yvonne Thomas, Six Nations, June 2007.

Thomas wore a *kastó:wah* with one eagle feather slanting backwards to indicate his Cayuga citizenship. As the designated speaker for the event, Thomas lit his pipe upon arrival to help enhance the sincerity and power of his abridged wampum message; although Thomas had recently recorded a lengthy reading of the Two Row and Friendship belts with Foster, such meetings with government officials usually did not allow for such an intensive recitation. Thomas would therefore rely upon a shortened version prepared by his late father, Dawit, also renowned for his knowledge of traditional languages and culture.<sup>57</sup>

After the preliminary introductions, Thomas opened the proceedings with a shortened *Ganónhonyonk*, or Thanksgiving Address, with Don Richmond acting as an ill-trained translator, and then moved on to the two belts.<sup>58</sup> The readings lasted only 33 minutes, and Thomas, as usual, read the Friendship belt first before moving on to the Two Row, perhaps indicating that friendship had to come before separation. The interested governor general grasped the importance and imagery of the belts and asked after the greatest tarnish or the thickest dust present on the Covenant Chain. After much discussion, the chiefs responded that the greatest transgression involved the foreign laws that violated the terms of the Two Row, specifically, Josey Logan explained, the Indian Act, the theft of interest monies, and the imposed elective band council system. The governor general sincerely empathized with the chiefs' complaints, but could only offer to arrange a meeting with a senior government official since the Statute of Westminster

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<sup>57</sup> Dawit is the Haudenosaunee version of the name David.

<sup>58</sup> Although Thomas spoke English quite well, it is typical council protocol to speak in one's *Onkwehonwe* language and to have it translated; indeed, Foster's notes also mention that Dawit Thomas always spoke in broken English to white officials because they took him more seriously! Both Thomas and Foster commented on the significantly shortened version given by Richmond and they noticed several "egregious errors, such as referring to the silver covenant chain as a 'golden chain,' and bringing the Germans into the sequence of successive white governments (Dutch-French-English-Americans)." Michael K. Foster, personal notes and photographs pertaining to the 1954 "renewal" council in Washington, D.C., 1976.

(1931) had limited his own, as well as the Queen's, jurisdiction. As allies following the *kaswentha* ethic, the chiefs had no choice but to refuse meeting with Canadian officials, for they had ratified their treaties with the British Crown and could not submit to Canadian law/parliament.



Figure 21: Haudenosaunee visit with Governor General Edward Schreyer in 1981  
Courtesy of Yvonne Thomas of the Jake Thomas Learning Centre.

The first three men on the left are Mohawk Chief Allan MacNaughton, Cayuga Chief Jacob Thomas, and Onondaga Chief Peter Skye.

While the meeting with Schreyer accomplished little other than spreading the Two Row message to a sympathetic governor general, the chiefs probably hoped that his attentiveness would encourage others to sympathise with their cause since he did not possess the power necessary to affect change. The Haudenosaunee must have been dismayed when Canada largely ignored *Onkwehonwe* treaties and concerns during the patriation of the constitution from Great Britain in 1982; the Queen moved further and further away from her position as an allied mother as she unilaterally handed over the last

remnants of her dealings with the *Onkwehonwe* to Canada. While Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognized and affirmed Aboriginal and treaty rights, which the Supreme Court of Canada would continue to define over the subsequent decades, it did not preserve the special relationship between equal allies—each with their own constitution—that the Haudenosaunee held dear. That same year, the Liberal government appointed a Special Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Self-Government, called the Penner Report after the committee chair Keith Penner, to explore the legal and institutional issues of band councils and reserves of *Onkwehonwe* people.

The Penner Report, released in 1983, drew on the results of meetings across the country, called to determine how Aboriginal self-government might become possible within the confines of the Canadian nation-state. Those Mohawk who spoke to the Report’s commissioners very bluntly expressed demands for a return to *kaswentha* autonomy and respect for a Two Row relationship. At a hearing in Kahnawake, Joseph Norton of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake (MCK—Indian Act band council), requested “a restoration of our own form of government, a re-alliance with the other embers of the Iroquois Confederacy, and a new mutually consensual relationship with the federal Government of Canada; a renewal of the relationship we had under the Two Row Wampum Treaty.”<sup>59</sup> MCK councillor Billy Two Rivers claimed that Mohawk government and nationhood encapsulated by the Two Row Wampum simply meant “coexistence and parallel with each other. We pose no threat to you.”<sup>60</sup> While it may seem that these Indian Act band councillors were talking themselves out of a job, Myrtle Bush saw a role for their municipal-style government as “the condoled chiefs, at a higher

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<sup>59</sup> Joseph Norton, Canada, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Committee on Indian Self-Government [Penner Report] (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1983), Kahnawake, 27 May 1983, 30.86.

<sup>60</sup> Billy Two Rivers, Penner Report Hearings, Kahnawake, 27 May 1983, 30.125.

level, do not have to deal with traffic laws.”<sup>61</sup> Thus, a recognition of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* would allow for a Two Row relationship to exist both with Canada, but also on a more local level between the land, culture, and language concerns of the condeled chiefs and the day-to-day running of a municipal government.

A few days later, the Land Rights Committee of the Haudenosaunee spoke about “the two-row wampum, the silver covenant chain, and certain other agreements and treaties as part of our constitutional framework” encapsulated by the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*.<sup>62</sup> In a written statement presented to the Penner Report’s commissioners, the Confederacy outlined several important concepts, including the principles of Righteousness, Reason, and Power: Righteousness refers to “the justice practiced among people using their purest and most unselfish minds in harmony with the flow of the universe”; Reason means “the soundness of mind and body, and the peace that comes when the minds are sane and the body cared for”; and Power entails “the authority of law and custom, backed by such force as is necessary to make justice prevail.”<sup>63</sup> The Haudenosaunee outlined the theoretical framework of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* and sought to convince the commissioners of the philosophical and practical scope of their own laws in an effort to demonstrate their legitimacy and applicability in a non-Indian Act Kahnawake governing structure. Not since the years of Sir William Johnson had authorities seemed so interested in learning about or willing to contemplate the existence of the *kaswentha* ethic’s political autonomy.

Unfortunately for the aspirations of those in Kahnawake, the Penner Report did not conceive of a purely nation-to-nation relationship between the Haudenosaunee and

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<sup>61</sup> Myrtle Bush, Penner Report Hearings, Kahnawake, 27 May 1983, 30.115.

<sup>62</sup> Bob Antone, Penner Report Hearings, Kahnawake, 1 June 1983, 31.16.

<sup>63</sup> *Statement of the Haudenosaunee Concerning the Constitutional Framework and International Position of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy*, Penner Report Hearings, Kahnawake, 1 June 1983, 31A: 2-14.

the Canadian state. The Report instead recognized that *Onkwehonwe* governments should receive provincial-like powers such as “land, resources, taxation, justice, economic development, and social services.”<sup>64</sup> Certain national matters, such as defence, postal service, national systems of transportation and communication, the monetary system and external affairs, would remain under federal jurisdiction, although they may be altered to fit the particular needs of particular *Onkwehonwe* communities.<sup>65</sup> Although the Report lies much closer to *kaswentha* principles than previous government policies, in that the *Onkwehonwe* “would be free to set their own course within Canada to the maximum possible extent,”<sup>66</sup> it implies that the power of self-government is not inherent, but rather is bestowed by a benevolent Canadian state.<sup>67</sup> The Report, while praising the Two Row Wampum message and even picturing the belt on its back cover, could not have fulfilled the *kaswentha* ethic’s ambitions since the relationship still remained one of subordination and dominance.

Haudenosaunee individuals remained frustrated at the incapacity of government officials to grasp the Two Row’s *kaswentha* concept and in 1983, Brian Deer of Kahnawake told Quebec’s National Assembly that “the Canadian government does not really understand the principles of the Two Row Wampum.”<sup>68</sup> Errors abounded in the Penner Report, Bob Antone from Oneida of the Thames believed, “even though they

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<sup>64</sup> Sally Weaver, “A Commentary on the Penner Report,” *Canadian Public Policy* 10.2 (1984): 218.

<sup>65</sup> Noel Lyon, *Aboriginal Self-Government: Rights of Citizenship and Access to Governmental Services* (Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1984), 18.

<sup>66</sup> Canada, *Response of the Government to the Report of the Special Committee on Indian Self-Government* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, March 5, 1984), 1.

<sup>67</sup> An inherent right, by contrast, refers to the law and governance of indigenous polities that were established long before Europeans set foot on Turtle Island; if these rights were never extinguished, it follows that they continue to exist. See Patrick Macklem, “Distributing Sovereignty: Indian Nations and Equality of Peoples,” *Stanford Law Review* 45 (1993): footnotes 27 and 160.

<sup>68</sup> Assemblée nationale du Québec, Journal des débats, commissions parlementaires, quatrième session, 32e Législature, Commission permanente de la présidence du conseil et de la constitution, Audition de personnes et d’organismes autochtones sur les droits et les besoins fondamentaux des Amérindiens et des Inuits. 23 November 1983. Québec:B-9304.



have covered [the back cover] with the [Two Row] symbols of our nationalism.” “The one point is that they can draw pretty pictures,” Antone sarcastically intoned, “but it means very little when you read the material in this document because they do not talk clearly about the races that have existed in this country.”<sup>69</sup> Quite simply, the Penner Report’s presumption that Haudenosaunee people needed lessons in governance was preposterous; instead, “all they have to do is to say that we recognize your government as being the legitimate government of your lands” and, by doing so, recognize Haudenosaunee autonomy in a climate of necessary coexistence.<sup>70</sup>

Deer and Antone had travelled to Quebec City as part of the Land Rights Committee of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy that, with the Kahnawake Band Council, met with members of the National Assembly (MNAs) to discuss Aboriginal self-government. After offering Thanksgiving with the *Ganónhonnyonk*, Bruce Elijah, also from Oneida, continued to express feelings of good will and health in the Oneida language; Elijah, like Jacob Thomas at Rideau Hall before him, maintained the tradition of speaking in his own language despite his fluency in English.<sup>71</sup> Such seemingly small matters of protocol held immense importance, Charlie Patton recently explained: “if you go [to a meeting] dressed in Canadian clothes and a suit and tie and carrying a lawyer’s briefcase, talking from the perspective of Canadian law, talking in his language, and kind of pushing your own laws and own culture to the side, then Canada already has you beat, because he’s talking to himself.”<sup>72</sup> The Haudenosaunee dressed in their own clothing and

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<sup>69</sup> Débats de l’Assemblée nationale, 23 November 1983, B-9310.

<sup>70</sup> Débats de l’Assemblée nationale, 23 November 1983, B-9311.

<sup>71</sup> Débats de l’Assemblée nationale, 23 November 1983, B-9294-9295.

<sup>72</sup> Interview between Kathryn Muller and Charlie Patton, teacher at Karonhianonhnha School, Kahnawake, 31 January 2008.

used their own language in order to clearly speak from their own mind and with their own law, a perpetual reminder that they resided firmly within their own canoe.

Elijah continued by reciting the Three Bare Words of the Condolence Council, reminiscent of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century council proceedings: he offered “very cold water, clear water, clean water...[to] help to clear our throats so that we may speak good words,” he cleaned the ears with “a very soft white feather...so that we could hear the words clearly,” and he used “the finest and the softest nice white leather” to clean the eyes from any clouds.<sup>73</sup> The moderator, Brian Deer, explained to the small group of MNAs that the Haudenosaunee Confederacy “is constitutionally sovereign in the international world” and under international law, but recent cooperation between the Confederacy and Kahnawake’s band council allowed for a joint presentation between the Confederacy and Indian Act representatives.<sup>74</sup> Hence, the two competing governing bodies—one regulated by the Peacemaker’s teachings, the other by the Indian Act—came together in pursuit of a common goal to insist upon Kahnawake sovereignty.

Joseph Norton, then head of the MCK band council, epitomized the *kaswentha* ethic in a modern era: “as outlandish or idealistic as it may seem,...we view ourselves as part of the Mohawk Nation that has...not given up the right to its self-determination.” Returning to the principles of law, Norton insisted that “legally, we have never signed any document that has abrogated that right,” although the failure to continually exercise the right to self-determination has given Quebec and Canada the wrong impression. Indeed, once Quebec and Canada had become accustomed to exercising their sovereignty in the nineteenth century, it became increasingly difficult for them to acknowledge and

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<sup>73</sup> Débats de l’Assemblée nationale, 23 November 1983, B-9296.

<sup>74</sup> Débats de l’Assemblée nationale, 23 November 1983, B-9296.

respect the *kaswentha* ethic as Sir William Johnson had done by helping to create a climate of diplomatic *métissage* in the mid-eighteenth century. Another Kahnawake band councillor, Franklin Williams, cautioned the government of Quebec to “cancel legislation” that impacted and infringed “upon the rights of the Mohawks of Kahnawake” so that, despite all odds, “both cultures will continue to coexist in peace, harmony, and friendship.”<sup>75</sup>

Paul Delaronde, a founding member of the Ganienkeh community in New York State, then presented the MNAs with the “Wampum for the Circle of chiefs,” as he explained “that the chiefs of the Confederacy are united, that they are holding hands together, that the people are in this circle from the clan-mothers, to the smallest ones who crawl on the earth....Our language is in this circle; our laws are in this circle; our culture and our traditions are all in this circle.” Much as the chiefs all stood at the same height around the Circle Wampum, Patton explained that all nations should be of equal stature and act as brothers while remaining careful to not balance precariously with a foot in either vessel. Sadly, Patton admitted that some of his people have fallen in the gap between vessels by using alcohol, drugs, or by committing suicide so while educating the MNAs was important, he also sought to educate those in his own community so that they might respect the canoe and return to it.<sup>76</sup> While the Circle Wampum protected the culture in the canoe, the Two Row continued to remind the Haudenosaunee of their historic understanding with the newcomers, which, Patton suggested, “can be extended to other nations who are willing to work with our peoples in peace.”<sup>77</sup> Any future extension of the Two Row Wampum would simply be another step in the *kaswentha* ethic’s

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<sup>75</sup> Débats de l’Assemblée nationale, 23 November 1983, B-9297-98.

<sup>76</sup> Débats de l’Assemblée nationale, 23 November 1983, B-9303-06.

<sup>77</sup> Débats de l’Assemblée nationale, 23 November 1983, B-9303-06.

existence, as the principles of autonomy and coexistence shifted to reflect a modern climate of multiple *Onkwehonwe* nations who are now all struggling for autonomy within the borders of the Canadian nation-state.

Shrewdly, those at Kahnawake remembered how to walk a fine line between two competing powers while speaking with both the Federal government and the separatist Parti Québécois government, just as they had once balanced the colonies of New France and New York. Bob Antone tried to create a bond between colonized peoples—as the Quebec separatists saw themselves—and asked “are you not trying to liberate yourselves as a French-speaking people, as a distinct people, to a true democracy? If you are, you should allow us the same. You should allow us to have the same aspirations, and maybe even more so; we are an original government in this land.” Antone asked the MNAs to take the Two Row message to Canada, whose relationship with the Haudenosaunee had “been broken over many years of oppression.” Clearly, those from Kahnawake had realised that practicality meant they must negotiate with Canada and not just with the Crown, especially after they witnessed the 1982 patriation of the Canadian Constitution. While Antone promised to be “prepared for a new relationship based on our Two Row Wampum,” he insisted that Canada has “no power to tell us what self-government is going to be for our people.” Antone gracefully rejected the offer of Denis Lazure, le ministre délégué aux relations avec les citoyens, for a seat on the Quebec delegation for the Federal-Provincial conference because while they could negotiate as a sovereign nation, any involvement in internal Canadian affairs “would be a violation of the [Two Row] treaty and of the agreement that our forefathers have made.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Débats de l’Assemblée nationale, 23 November 1983, B-9310-9315.



Figure 22: Reading the Two Row Wampum in Quebec City, 1983  
From left to right: Charlie Patton, Paul Delaronde, Dennis Nicholas, Brian Deer  
Courtesy of Brian Deer

Unfortunately, René Lévesque's PQ government did not heed any of the lessons of sovereignty presented by the Haudenosaunee delegation and, in 1985, the National Assembly passed the *Motion for the Recognition of Aboriginal Rights in Quebec*, to the vehement objections of *Onkwehonwe* peoples and Liberal MNAs, who viewed the resolution as incomplete and unsubstantial. Indeed, barrister Paul Joffe has argued that Quebec possessed ulterior motives, including: presenting 'showpiece' legislation to claim they treated *Onkwehonwe* peoples wonderfully compared to the rest of Canada; creating a Quebec-only process for dealing with the *Onkwehonwe* to aid in the sovereignty movement; and, finally, by recognizing the *Onkwehonwe* as 'nations,' Quebec denied

them status as ‘peoples’ and thus “den[ie]d them the right to self-determination.”<sup>79</sup>

Denying self-determination to *Onkwehonwe* peoples would prevent the division of Quebec territory in the event that the *Onkwehonwe* chose to continue dealing with Canada, and not recognize Quebec, after a ‘yes’ vote in a sovereignty referendum, which very nearly occurred in 1995.<sup>80</sup>

Despite the promising hearings and meetings, neither the Quebec nor the Canadian governments truly grasped the idea of *kaswentha* autonomy whereby the Haudenosaunee demanded treatment as allies, not subjects, of the Crown. As a result of these deaf ears, combined with escalating frustrations over the theft of land since the 1840s, some members of the now-Mohawk community of Kanehsatake, moved onto a plot of land slated for development by the city of Oka despite the presence of *Onkwehonwe* burial grounds. Prepared to protect the land at any cost, the reclamation escalated and, in the summer of 1990, became the full-blown Oka Crisis, quickly turning violent as the Sureté du Québec tried to forcefully evict the protesters, much to the opposition of John Ciaccia, the Quebec Minister of Indian Affairs who criticised cabinet members who saw the crisis “as a criminal activity only and wanted it treated that way.”<sup>81</sup> The Mohawk insisted they had a right to the land they called the Pines and expressed their *kaswentha* autonomy by taking matters into their own hands, much like at

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<sup>79</sup> Paul Joffe, “The 1985 Québec National Assembly Resolution on Aboriginal Rights: A Brief Commentary,” 29 May 2000, from the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission website, [www.ajic.mb.ca/joffe.pdf](http://www.ajic.mb.ca/joffe.pdf), accessed 12 March 2008, 4.

<sup>80</sup> See Grand Council of the Crees, *A Sovereign Injustice: Forcible Inclusion of the James Bay Crees and Cree Territory into a Sovereign Quebec* (Nemaska, October 1995).

<sup>81</sup> See Donna Goodleaf, *Entering the War Zone: A Mohawk Perspective on Resisting Invasions* (Penticton: Theytus Books Ltd., 1995); Geoffrey York and Loreen Pindera, *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka* (Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1991); Kenneth Deer, “John Ciaccia reflects on 1990 ‘A crisis that should never have happened’,” *Eastern Door* 9.24 (10 July 2000): <http://www.easterndoor.com/archives/9-24/9-24-4.htm>, accessed 20 March 2008; John Ciaccia, *The Oka Crisis: A Mirror of the Soul* (Dorval: Maren Publication, 2000).

Ganienkeh. Soon, Kanehsatake's brothers and sisters in Kahnawake blocked the Mercier Bridge between the south shore and the Island of Montreal in support while others from Ganienkeh, Akwesasne, Tyendinaga, Six Nations, and elsewhere arrived at both the Bridge and the Pines to offer words of encouragement, provisions, and weapons.

The most promising outcome of the crisis, explained Tommy Deer who, as a teenager, was on the front lines of the Mercier Bridge, was that it woke the community up and made people realise that they could not be complacent about their rights. In heeding the call of clan mothers to help in whatever way possible, a deeper sense of nationalism developed as people began to ask themselves, "what are we fighting for?" Ultimately, Deer himself turned towards the Longhouse, as did many of his peers, largely due to the Crisis, which "really installed in a generation of young people this pride in being who we are."<sup>82</sup> Charlie Patton also of Kahnawake likened the Mohawk people to a cornered deer: "If our people are pushed and backed into a corner and we have no options, then to stand up and fight for our things."<sup>83</sup> Even the band council at Kahnawake has adopted a nationalist rhetoric in the wake of 1990, which some Longhouse followers consider hypocritical because although the MCK proclaims to follow the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*, the council operates in the elected, not clan-based, system.<sup>84</sup>

Canada came under international pressure during the Crisis for its treatment of *Onkwehonwe* peoples and the media provided unprecedented Canadian coverage of Haudenosaunee rights and demands. Many Canadians were disgusted by a non-*Onkwehonwe* radio announcer from Châteauguay, the community most affected by the

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<sup>82</sup> Interview between Kathryn Muller, Thomas Deer, and Cory McComber, Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitiókwa Language & Cultural Center, 10 October 2007.

<sup>83</sup> Interview between Kathryn Muller and Charlie Patton, teacher at Karonhianonhnha School, Kahnawake, 31 January 2008.

<sup>84</sup> Interview between Muller, Deer, and McComber.

Mercier Bridge closure, who incited violence towards cars full of evacuating children, women, and elders fled the community in expectation of a Sureté du Québec/Canadian Armed Forces raid. One elderly man died from a heart attack and the horrific images of Canadians stoning Mohawk cars remains burned into the minds of the public with Alanis Obomsawin's acclaimed film, *Rocks at Whisky Trench* (2000). In a sense, the Crisis also woke Canadians up to the fact that *Onkwehonwe* people still existed and emphatically refused to submit to the regulations of the Canadian state. Indeed, with the increase of media and, more recently, internet coverage, the Two Row Wampum now reached out in other mediums and a flag soon appeared with the wampum belt stretched across the top: as beads symbolically fell to the ground, a proud warrior raised a war club while resting his foot on top of an imperial crown.



Figure 23: Two Row Flag flying at *Kanonhstaton*, 'the protected place,' in Caledonia  
Courtesy of Doris Spittal

The flag depicts the modernization of the *kaswentha* ethic and the increasing militancy of the Two Row Wampum's message; the Canadian state had for so long challenged the



Haudenosaunee ideal of autonomy that the possibility of mutual collaboration now seemed questionable and even impossible in the eyes of some. The Queen and her agents had not fulfilled their bargain by treating the Haudenosaunee as subjects, and the warriors who had once fought with the British during the Seven Years War, the American Revolution, and the War of 1812 prepared to revolt to demand a return to their earlier relationship.

After the Crisis ended, those from Kanehsatake successfully defended their right to protect their land in a court of law, although today, almost nineteen years later, the land dispute itself has yet to be resolved. However, the Haudenosaunee saw that even small victories could be achieved in Canadian court and a place for the *kaswentha* ethic of autonomy and protest could be found in the Canadian judicial system. The Canadian courts, however, were not the easiest place for the *kaswentha* ethic to be expressed as Akwesasne Grand Chief (of the band council) Mike Mitchell discovered when, in 1988, he crossed the international border in Akwesasne from the United States with blankets, bibles, motor oil, food, clothing, and a washing machine. Upon stopping at the Cornwall customs office, Mitchell declared the goods, but insisted that he should pay no duty because of his constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights as a Mohawk man; the customs agents let him through, but charged him \$142.88 in duty nevertheless. Mitchell ignored the bill and redistributed the goods to the Mohawk community of Tyendinaga, on the Bay of Quinte, to “symbolize the renewal of the historic trading relationship between the two communities,” while the motor oil was resold in a local Akwesasne store.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *Mitchell v. Canada (Minister of National Revenue)*, Supreme Court of Canada, 33, 2001, 922.

Mitchell was following in the footsteps of another Mohawk from Akwesasne, Louis Francis, who once transported a washing machine, a refrigerator, and an oil heater into Canada from the United States. He, too, refused to pay duty and insisted that his border crossing rights were enshrined in Article III of the Jay Treaty of 1794, which allowed American citizens, British subjects, and “Indians dwelling on either side of the said boundary line” to freely “pass and repass” and “to carry on trade and commerce with each other.” Most importantly for Francis’ and Michell’s cases, “nor shall the Indians passing or repassing with their own proper goods and effects of whatever nature, pay for the same any impost of duty whatever.” Problematically for Mitchell, the Supreme Court of Canada had ruled against Francis in the 1956 decision, stating that the treaty could not be enforced because the Canadian government had never enacted legislation to affirm the rights. The United States, by contrast, has recognized the border crossing rights found in the Jay Treaty.<sup>86</sup>

As Mitchell’s case went to trial, he emphatically insisted that he did not support the smuggling of illegal cigarettes, weapons, or people, which has recently received much media attention in Akwesasne.<sup>87</sup> Seven months after Mitchell challenged the border

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<sup>86</sup> United States of American and Great Britain, *Jay Treaty*, 1794, <http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/jaytreaty/text.html>, accessed 3 December 2008; and *Francis V. the Queen*, S.C.R. 618, 10 D.T.C. 1077, 1956, <http://library2.usask.ca/native/cnlc/vol05/170.html>, accessed 3 December 2008.

<sup>87</sup> In March 2008, two high profile raids on Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, and homes in Montreal turned up drugs, cash, and a small arsenal and resulted in the arrest of Haudenosaunee and non-*Onkwehonwe* people. Illegal activities continue to be a problem perpetuated by a small minority of people within the Mohawk communities but the majority of Haudenosaunee citizens run perfectly legitimate businesses as in any small, thriving community. “Drug raids on Mohawk territories lead to 30 arrests,” CBC News, 26 March 2008, <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/ottawa/story/2008/03/26/mohawk-raids.html>, accessed 26 March 2008; “Cops crack contraband tobacco ring in Quebec, Nova Scotia,” CBC News, 19 March 2008, <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/nova-scotia/story/2008/03/19/qc-contrabandsmoke0319.html>, accessed 19 March 2008; and Philip Deering, “TSI NAHOTEN TETEWATATENONHWERATONHKHWA, Our Responsibility to One Another: The Business Policies and Strategies of the Kahnawake Mohawk From the Earliest Times to the Present, A Literature Review from a Stone-Age Perspective,” MBA Thesis, John Molson School of Business, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, March 2006, 40-41.

guards, a massive police raid by external police forces “invaded Akwesasne with 75 vehicles, a helicopter, two tow trucks, one front-end loader, and patrol boats” to bust a cigarette smuggling ring, an illicit business that the majority of the people opposed.<sup>88</sup> Mitchell characterized the raid as a failure given the small amount of drugs and cigarettes confiscated and believed that the external police forces displayed unjust force to alienate the people of Akwesasne.<sup>89</sup> Canadian laws worsened the smuggling crisis, Mitchell felt, although he refused to tell Canada “what laws you should make” as he resided firmly in his own ship.<sup>90</sup>

Mitchell’s border-crossing case slowly made its way through the Canadian courts and it spoke to the larger problem of applying Canadian law upon Haudenosaunee reserves: many Haudenosaunee people do not consider themselves to be Canadian citizens, but instead maintain the *kaswentha* ethic by following the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* as best they can in a modern society ruled by an unwanted Indian Act. In one *Eastern Door* (a Kahnawake weekly) editorial, Thomas Deer defined his political worldview: “I am not Canadian, nor do I seek to be....I am the citizen of a country that has existed long before the conception of the Canadian state.”<sup>91</sup> Similarly, at Six Nations, Onondaga Beaver clan Chief Arnie General (Dehatkadons) recalled his own refusal to swear allegiance to the Queen while in the Canadian Armed Forces in the 1950s. General told the sergeant, “I can’t do that, I can’t sign allegiance to the Queen because I’m an ally....If I was to sign

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<sup>88</sup> Mike Mitchell, “An Unbroken Assertion of Sovereignty,” Boyce Richardson, ed., *Drumbeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country* (Toronto: Summerhill Press, 1989), 128-133.

<sup>89</sup> Mitchell, “Unbroken Assertion,” 130; Interview between Kathryn Muller and Anonymous, Kahnawake, 22 October 2007.

<sup>90</sup> Mitchell, “Unbroken Assertion,” 130.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Deer, “Message to Canadians,” [www.revolutionarycreations.com/lit\\_page/indigenous/message\\_to\\_canada.pdf](http://www.revolutionarycreations.com/lit_page/indigenous/message_to_canada.pdf), accessed 11 March 2008.

allegiance to the Queen then I would come under federal law.”<sup>92</sup> Even during the Penner Report hearings, MCK chief councillor Joseph Norton explained that his people “are first and foremost citizens of the Mohawk Nation; secondly, we are North American Indians; and thirdly, historic circumstance has created a federal-Indian trust relationship which in 1960 the Canadian government unilaterally decided gave them the right to bestow citizenship on every Indian nation located above the Canada-U.S. border” when they unilaterally granted all *Onkwehonwe* people the vote.<sup>93</sup> Norton’s people “have historically resisted being labelled as either Canadian or U.S. Indians, because we firmly believe that such a label further erodes our sovereign and aboriginal rights and diminishes our pride and self-respect as a distinct and unique people.”<sup>94</sup> Any Haudenosaunee person who fights for the recognition of the *kaswentha* ethic in Canadian courts, therefore encounters a huge conflict of interest for how can these courts, appointed and governed by the Canadian government, fully recognize *Onkwehonwe* sovereignty?

While certain aspects of Haudenosaunee sovereignty—like border crossing tariffs—remained before the courts, other people lived their sovereignty on a day-to-day basis. Kenneth Deer, former editor of the *Eastern Door*, a Kahnawake weekly and secretary to the Kahnawake branch of the Confederacy, uses a Haudenosaunee passport as “a non-violent way...of expressing our sovereignty” and he has travelled to approximately twenty countries over the past twenty-one years from Switzerland to Venezuela.<sup>95</sup> Mitchell also used the Confederacy passport to cross the US-Canada border in 1988 and the Haudenosaunee delegation travelled to the United Nations in Geneva on

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<sup>92</sup> Interview between Kathryn Muller and Arnold General, Onondaga Chief, Six Nations, 14 February 2007.

<sup>93</sup> Joseph Norton, Penner Report Hearings, Kahnawake, 27 May 1983, 30.86.

<sup>94</sup> Norton, Penner Report Hearings, Kahnawake, 27 May 1983, 30.86.

<sup>95</sup> Interview between Kathryn Muller and Kenneth Deer, Secretary of the Kahnawake Branch of the Iroquois Confederacy and former Editor-in-Chief of the *Eastern Door*, Kahnawake, 17 October 2007.

a Confederacy passport in 1977, following in the footsteps of Six Nations Cayuga Chief Deskaheh who also used a Haudenosaunee passport on his trip to the League of Nations in 1923.<sup>96</sup> The Confederacy passport, issued by the central council fire in Onondaga, near Syracuse, New York, identifies individuals as members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and fulfils the security requirements of the international community.

Indeed, given the increased security in a post-9/11 world, the Haudenosaunee Documentation Committee has been collaborating with the American Department of Homeland Security and the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative in a traditional manner, “polishing the chain” to remind the United States of their “unique nation-to-nation relationship established centuries ago.”<sup>97</sup> The Committee has explained to officials “that as a sovereign nation and member of the international community, the Haudenosaunee are adhering to international security standards as opposed to standards established by the United States.”<sup>98</sup> American authorities have been surprisingly accommodating and seem to understand the right of *Onkwehonwe* peoples to “*cross the border for a traditional purpose*,” in accordance with the rights enshrined in Article III of the Jay Treaty.<sup>99</sup> In such a way, the American government has validated the Haudenosaunee insistence of sovereignty expressed by the passport, “the ultimate expression of identity,” in the words

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<sup>96</sup> José Barreiro, “A Report on the Hemispheric Movement of Indigenous Peoples,” Akwesasne Notes, ed., *Basic Call to Consciousness* (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Company, 2005 [1978]), 57-60; and *Mitchell v. Canada*.

<sup>97</sup> Press Release, “Haudenosaunee Confederacy Makes Important Strides on Border Crossing Issue,” Akwesasne Territory, 3 March 2008. Found on the website for the Mohawk Nation in Kahnawake: <http://www.kahnawakelonghouse.com/index.php?mid=4>

<sup>98</sup> Press Release, “Haudenosaunee Confederacy Makes Important Strides on Border Crossing Issue.”

<sup>99</sup> United States of American and Great Britain, *Jay Treaty*; and Press Release, “DHS Proposed Border Crossing Rules to Allow Native IDs,” 27 June 2007, Onondaga Nation Territory. Found on the website for the Mohawk Nation in Kahnawake: <http://www.kahnawakelonghouse.com/index.php?mid=4>.

of Tommy Deer, and has allowed them to pass from Canada to the United States and back again as citizens of their own nation.<sup>100</sup>

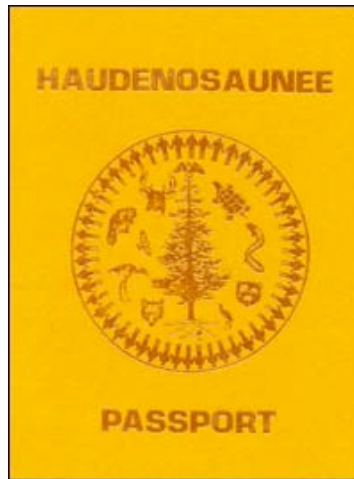


Figure 24: Confederacy passport with the Tree of Peace (with roots and an eagle), the emblems of the clans, and the chiefs forming a circle around the edge, just like the Circle Wampum.

From [www.iroquoisnationals.com/photos/passport.jpg](http://www.iroquoisnationals.com/photos/passport.jpg)

Canadian officials have been less eager than their American counterparts to accept the Haudenosaunee passport and recognize the traditional purposes for crossing the border. Canadian border officials have occasionally given Kenneth Deer a “hard time” for travelling on the Haudenosaunee passport, saying “Mister Deer, you’re not supposed to travel with this passport, you’re eligible for a Canadian passport.” The United States, on the other hand, Deer explains, “has a tacit recognition of the passport and they usually let us travel quite freely through the United States, so we have a better relationship with the United States than we do with Canada with regards to the passport.”<sup>101</sup>

Meanwhile, Mitchell continued his fight before the Supreme Court of Canada in 2001 and argued, “his people have an aboriginal right [to bring objects across an arbitrary

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<sup>100</sup> Interview between Muller, Deer, and McComber.

<sup>101</sup> Interview between Muller and Kenneth Deer.

border] that ousts Canadian customs law.”<sup>102</sup> As the 1996 *R. v. Van der Peet* decision established, to be an Aboriginal right, “an activity must be an element of a practice, custom or tradition integral to the distinctive culture of the aboriginal group claiming the right” and must have some continuity in pre-European contact tradition.<sup>103</sup> However, the majority of Supreme Court justices found that an Aboriginal right did not apply in Mitchell’s case because north-south trade was not an integral part of Mohawk culture.<sup>104</sup> However, while the dissenting opinion concurred that the trade was not integral to Mohawk culture, Justice Ian Binnie nevertheless hailed the Two Row wampum “concept” that Mitchell used in his defence. Describing it as merged or shared sovereignty, Binnie concluded “that First Nations were not wholly subordinated to non-aboriginal sovereignty but over time became merger partners.”<sup>105</sup> As such, both “aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians *together* form a sovereign entity with a measure of common purpose and united effort.”<sup>106</sup>

Binnie, unbeknownst to himself, confirmed the legal existence of a political *métissage* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries whereby a singular vessel, “or ship of state,” as he called it, included both *Onkwehonwe* and Canadian peoples. While some Haudenosaunee would likely disagree with his assessment that *Onkwehonwe* peoples existed as a component of Canadian sovereignty, Binnie articulated Haudenosaunee sovereignty in such a way that it could coexist with Canadian sovereignty.<sup>107</sup> Binnie also drew upon the American concept of domestic dependant nations articulated in nineteenth-

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<sup>102</sup> *Mitchell v. Canada*, 922.

<sup>103</sup> *R. v. Van der Peet*, 2 S.C.R. 507, 1996, <http://csc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/1996/1996rcs2-507/1996rcs2-507.html>, accessed 14 October 2008.

<sup>104</sup> *Mitchell v. Canada*, 922.

<sup>105</sup> *Mitchell v. Canada*, 976.

<sup>106</sup> *Mitchell v. Canada*, 977.

<sup>107</sup> *Mitchell v. Canada*, 977, 981.

century courtrooms, to illustrate that shared sovereignty in no way abrogated the sovereignty of the Crown; rather, shared sovereignty coexisted peacefully within American boundaries, much as both vessels flowed down the river of life in tandem.<sup>108</sup> While Binnie did not recognize the absolute *kaswentha* sovereignty of the Two Row Wampum—nor could he as an agent of the Crown—he moved one step closer to recognizing the fundamental relationship of reciprocity and coexistence that had formed between friends centuries ago. Binnie’s decision marked the first acknowledgement of the *kaswentha* ethic, found in the Two Row concept, as a useful tool in the Canadian judicial system.

Binnie’s opinion was not the only statement that saw the Two Row Wampum as compatible with Canadian sovereignty in the political spectrum; indeed, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), released in 1996, five years before Binnie’s judgement, hailed the Two Row Wampum as an ideal model for future *Onkwehonwe*-Canadian relations. The RCAP, commissioned after the Oka Crisis by Brian Mulroney’s Conservative government, strove to answer why Canada’s nation-to-nation relationship with *Onkwehonwe* peoples had become one of power and subordination and sought to uncover “a model for a renewed relationship” based upon the past.<sup>109</sup> The RCAP, likened to a truth commission by political scientist Alan Cairns, seriously considered *Onkwehonwe* voices in an effort to propose “specific solutions, rooted in domestic and

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<sup>108</sup> *Mitchell v. Canada*, 994.

<sup>109</sup> Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State*, (British Columbia: UBC Press, 2000), 118.



international experience, to the problems which have plagued those relationships and which confront aboriginal peoples today.”<sup>110</sup>

Despite the RCAP’s lofty goals, Jean Chrétien’s Liberal government, in power when the RCAP was released in 1996, ignored most of the suggestions, which outlined a future model of parallelism between *Onkwehonwe* and Canadians. Using Two Row imagery, the RCAP laid the foundations for a future co-living agreement, built upon historic nation-to-nation treaty relationships that guaranteed the right to self-determination.<sup>111</sup> Since Confederation linked distinct communities in a federal design of parallelism, the RCAP concluded that the same could work for *Onkwehonwe* communities today.<sup>112</sup> Such a new relationship could, according to Joyce Green, be based upon the four values of mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing and mutual responsibility, which echo not only the *kaswentha* ethic, but also the way many *Onkwehonwe* people view their relationship with the Crown/Canada.<sup>113</sup> While a model of parallelism itself does not necessarily coincide with the *kaswentha*’s practice during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries since it implies Canadian constitutional authority—instead of an equal partnership that balanced autonomous governing structures—it does reflect the organic nature of both the constitution and the *kaswentha* ethic, which, like living treaties, evolve to fit contemporary circumstances.

The Haudenosaunee once again patiently emphasised the autonomous nature of their laws at the RCAP public hearing in Akwesasne where notable Haudenosaunee

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<sup>110</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *For Seven Generations: An Information Legacy of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, About RCAP, Mandate and Terms of Reference (CDROM), Libraxus Inc., 1997; and Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, 117.

<sup>111</sup> RCAP, Publications, Volume 5, “Laying the Foundations of a New Relationship.”

<sup>112</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, 135.

<sup>113</sup> Joyce Green, “Options for Achieving Aboriginal Self-Determination,” *Policy Options* (March 1997), 11.

elders, scholars, and politicians such as Jacob Thomas, Ernie Benedict, and Mike Mitchell gathered. The attendees must have experienced some frustration as the RCAP hearing transcripts are almost identical to the Penner Report hearings with Haudenosaunee delegates reiterating again and again the importance of their treaties, the Two Row relationship, and a desire to have Canada recognize the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* and the Haudenosaunee sovereignty. Faithkeeper Oren Lyons travelled from Onondaga, near Syracuse, New York, to address the commissioners—recalling his early spokesperson days during the Moss Lake occupation—and he emphasised the principles of the Two Row and Friendship wampums: as each vessel travelled down the river of life, the Covenant Chain stretched between them so that all peoples would live forever in peace and friendship.<sup>114</sup> “A document of humanity,” Lyons paraphrased the Two Row, as he described an equal line between vessels so that all people could coexist in an equal and just manner.<sup>115</sup> Drawing international comparisons, Lyons recalled visiting Australian Aborigines who spoke of “two laws or two paths” when dealing with the state; Lyons attributed such thinking to the rules of natural law, where indigenous people worldwide simply assumed their own self-determination when they came into contact with foreigners.<sup>116</sup> Accordingly, such a worldview—the *kaswentha* ethic in the Haudenosaunee case—simply existed implicitly in every relationship made and in every treaty ratified.

Mike Mitchell, still embroiled in legal battles involving his cross-border travel, spoke about the Two Row principles of “co-existence, of support for one another, of

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<sup>114</sup> RCAP Hearings, Akwesasne, Cornwall Island, Ontario, 3 May 1993, Oren Lyons speaking, 101.

<sup>115</sup> RCAP Hearings, Oren Lyons, 100.

<sup>116</sup> RCAP Hearings, Oren Lyons, 73.

understanding, respect.”<sup>117</sup> More concretely, Mitchell insisted that Canada must respect Haudenosaunee ways and recognize their laws, while Louise Thompson of the Akwesasne Justice Department stressed the practical need to have a single law in the community, instead of competing Haudenosaunee, provincial, state, and national jurisdictions.<sup>118</sup> Similar discourse continued at the meetings in Kahnawake when Elizabeth Beauvais spoke about being “separate and independent national entities” and the “sharing of the mutual land area known as North America but the terms of that sharing will be subject to on-going talks, negotiations, and other mutually agreed upon processes for dispute settlement.”<sup>119</sup> Beauvais adamantly opposed any “Canadianization” and refused any subjugation by the Canadian state, calling instead for the “rightful recognition of our historic, current, and future rights as one of the original confederations of nations of North America.”<sup>120</sup>

Kenneth Deer elaborated on the more functional implementation of a Two Row agreement, whereby each side recognizes the other’s right to self-determination. Only once such recognition exists, can laws be divided into jurisdiction: “in certain places your law will hold sway and in certain places our law will hold sway, in certain places you will be allowed to live and in certain places we will be allowed to live.”<sup>121</sup> Deer emphasized that the Two Row does not mean that Canada would turn into a fragmented war-torn area like the Balkans; the Mohawk might not be interested in having their own monetary system, nor in having a standing army, but they nevertheless demanded a nation to nation

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<sup>117</sup> RCAP Hearings, Akwesasne, Cornwall Island, Ontario, 3 May 1993, Mike Mitchell speaking, 165.

<sup>118</sup> RCAP Hearings, Mike Mitchell, 242-243; RCAP Hearings, Akwesasne, Cornwall Island, Ontario, 3 May 1993, Louise Thompson speaking, 275.

<sup>119</sup> RCAP Hearings, Akwesasne, Cornwall Island, Ontario, 5 May 1993, Elizabeth Beauvais speaking, 463-466. The Two Row Wampum really seemed to dominate the discussion in Kahnawake, RCAP Hearings, Kahnawake, Quebec, 5 May 1993, Stuart Myiow speaking, 424.

<sup>120</sup> RCAP Hearings, Kahnawake, Quebec, 5 May 1993, Elizabeth Beauvais speaking, 469-71.

<sup>121</sup> RCAP Hearings, Kahnawake, Quebec, 5 May 1993, Kenneth Deer speaking, 496-497.

discussion with Canada so that a mutually acceptable co-living agreement could be created.<sup>122</sup>

Plenty of similarities have the potential to draw Haudenosaunee and Canadians together; Charlie Patton—who also spoke at the Quebec City self-government hearings—compared Canada and the provinces to “one house”: “They are families within one house and they have to come to one mind as to their relationship with our nation.”<sup>123</sup> As such, the provinces, like the Confederacy, stretch from east to west, with a central fire grounding the Canada confederation in Ottawa. Patton’s parallel helped the commissioners envision the Haudenosaunee Confederacy as a similar federal structure; much as each province has jurisdiction over more local matters, such as education, health care, and resource management, each Haudenosaunee nation remained autonomous in local affairs. All parties, however, needed to collaborate on issues of common importance, such as national defence and treaties. Crucially, Patton explained the Confederacy in terms that Canadian officials would understand, which continued a battle from the nineteenth century to make Canadian officials understand and respect the *Kayaneren’kó:wa* as a legitimate political system, capable of governing a people.

Despite the eagerness of the commissioners, the federal government ignored the RCAP’s hundreds of proposals and Jean Chrétien notably missed the ceremonial release of his government’s response.<sup>124</sup> The sole reaction occurred in 1998 when Chrétien sought to placate *Onkwehonwe* peoples with the Aboriginal Action Plan’s ‘healing fund’ for Residential Schools, which cost far less than the RCAP’s proposals and avoided the

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<sup>122</sup> RCAP Hearings, Kenneth Deer, 499.

<sup>123</sup> RCAP Hearings, Kahnawake, Quebec, 5 May 1993, Charlie Patton speaking, 388.

<sup>124</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, 121.

recommended third order of *Onkwehonwe* government.<sup>125</sup> Admittedly, a third order of government in line with Two Row principles would be difficult to implement, since it is impractical to believe that provinces, or their non-*Onkwehonwe* citizens, would eagerly return significant portions of their territory, often rich in natural resources, to *Onkwehonwe* governments.

Political scientist Alan Cairns, for instance, has argued the RCAP's third order of government to be impossible given the small sizes of *Onkwehonwe* communities and, importantly, ignores the huge number of urban *Onkwehonwe* by linking cultural survival to a land base.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, a third order of government, Cairns has argued, would destroy a common Canadian citizenship, by emphasizing our differences instead of our similarities.<sup>127</sup> Calgary political scientist and Conservative pundit Tom Flanagan also feared that the RCAP recommendations would redefine Canada "as a multinational state" and fragment the rest of the country. Flanagan also claims that the small nature of *Onkwehonwe* self-governing communities would cost too much money, be too inefficient and be rampant with massive corruption.<sup>128</sup> However, both Cairns and Flanagan have suggested drastically different solutions: Cairns has recommended a 'citizens' plus' status for *Onkwehonwe* people whereby they retain Canadian citizenship but acquire special rights by virtue of their Aboriginal and treaty rights; conversely, Flanagan has advocated a complete abandonment of reserves and of any special status for *Onkwehonwe* people as he believes they should assimilate and become full members of Canadian society.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Tom Flanagan, *First Nations? Second Thoughts* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 4.

<sup>126</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, 139, 123.

<sup>127</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, 7.

<sup>128</sup> Tom Flanagan, "An Unworkable Vision of Self-Government," *Policy Options* (March 1997), 20-21.

<sup>129</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*; Flanagan, "An Unworkable Vision"; Harry B. Hawthorn, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: A Report on Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies*. [The Hawthorn Report] (Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, 1966); and Indian Association of Alberta, *Citizens Plus*:

Ultimately, neither option respects the *kaswentha* ethic since even the concept of ‘citizens plus’ implies submission to a greater power and relies upon the benevolence of the Canadian state as the guarantor of special rights. The RCAP, the Mitchell decision, the Quebec City meetings, and the Penner Report all emphasized the Haudenosaunee demand to recognize their inherent autonomy within a structure of mutual friendship and cooperation as the only way to renew the relationship between the Canadian state and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. As such, many *Onkwehonwe* nations desire a nation-to-nation relationship with the Canadian government that pre-dates the 1867 federation. A special relationship outside the federal system would remain faithful to the original expectations of the *kaswentha* ethic among the Haudenosaunee but it remains to be seen what such a relationship would look like.

That said, the *kaswentha* ethic should not be so foreign to Canadian policy makers, since it rekindles an earlier relationship between partners who relied upon one another to survive. The *kaswentha* ethic, according to the *Van der Peet* rules was certainly a pre-contact activity that was “an element of a practice, custom, or tradition integral to the distinctive culture of the aboriginal group claiming the right” and therefore can be seen as an Aboriginal right.<sup>130</sup> Indeed, the existence and evolution of the *kaswentha* over time could even make it a fundamental part of today’s constitution, which pledges to recognize and affirm Aboriginal and treaty rights. As the RCAP argued, “Aboriginal governments give the constitution its deepest and most resilient roots in the Canadian soil,” so acknowledgement of the *kaswentha* ethic and the Covenant

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*A Presentation by the Indian Chiefs of Alberta to Right Honourable P.E. Trudeau* [The Red Paper] (Edmonton, 1970).

<sup>130</sup> *Mitchell v. Canada*, 912; *R. v. Van der Peet*.

Chain/Two Row reality though much of history, would only serve to strengthen Canada's partnership with the Haudenosaunee, not weaken it.<sup>131</sup>

Simultaneously viewing the *kaswentha* ethic's modern incarnation of the Two Row Wampum as a constitutional convention, or an unwritten but generally accepted practice, could also recognize its historic place in the development of Canada and reaffirm a relationship with *Onkwehonwe* peoples. Although constitutional conventions are not legally enforceable, they capture "the constitutional morality of the day," outlining the codes of "political morality ... that the political actors ought to be bound by."<sup>132</sup> Although the *kaswentha* ethic existed in the "practice, custom, and tradition" of Haudenosaunee political philosophy and was implicitly recognized in multiple negotiations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was not clearly articulated as the Two Row Wampum until the late nineteenth century. Therefore, simultaneously contemplating the *kaswentha* ethic's expression in the Two Row Wampum as a constitutional convention would not only rekindle the early partnership but would also further legitimize the existence of both Canadian and *Onkwehonwe* political units, moving away from a policy of assimilation and towards a relationship of mutual dependence and cooperation. While other *Onkwehonwe* peoples understandably possess their own views of relationships with the Canadian state, the Two Row can also provide a conceptual way of contemplating the relationship outside of Haudenosaunee circles. At the Assembly of First Nations Annual Meeting in 1994, for example, elected Huron-Wendat Chief Max Gros-Louis, spoke of a new "Three-Row" wampum, in which he

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<sup>131</sup> RCAP, Vol 2, Restructuring the Relationship, 214.

<sup>132</sup> A. V. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1961), 422-23; and W.S. Holdsworth, "The Conventions of the Eighteenth Century Constitution," *Iowa Law Review* 17.2 (January 1932), 161.

viewed another vessel running parallel to the original European ship and *Onkwehonwe* canoe, which represents “our common destiny and our joint government.”

Notwithstanding the visceral reaction that Gros-Louis received from the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs in Akwesasne for appropriating and altering the Two Row message, the dialogue of a canoe and ship, united yet distinct speaks to many aspirations of Canadian federalism.<sup>133</sup>

Constitutional conventions, just like the *kaswentha* ethic and the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*, continually undergo evolution, so accepting the validity of the Crown's historic relationship with the Haudenosaunee and attempting a return to the previous state of *métissage* would not be impossible. In fact, the 1998 *Secession Reference* on the legality of a unilateral declaration of independence from Quebec described an “ongoing process of constitutional development and evolution ... as a ‘living tree,’” which would allow the constitutional values to shift according to contemporary circumstance.<sup>134</sup> Such a model of an organic constitution beautifully coincides with the Peacemaker's Great Tree of Peace, whose roots embrace the land in a perpetual peace, as the branches grow to shelter a multitude of diverse peoples.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, the Haudenosaunee and Canadian houses are not so different as they remain united around their own constitutional trees, which drink from the same soil and breathe from the same air, thus remaining inexorably linked, notwithstanding their autonomous roots.

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<sup>133</sup> Kenneth Deer, “‘Three-Row’ Wampum Proposal Gets Rebuke,” *The Eastern Door* 3.25 (January 13, 1995), [www.easterndoor.com/VOL.3/3-25.htm](http://www.easterndoor.com/VOL.3/3-25.htm), accessed 3 June 2004.

<sup>134</sup> *Reference re. Secession of Quebec* [1998] 2 S.C.R. 217, paragraph 52. James [sákéj] Youngblood Henderson has also argued Native-Crown treaties should be considered constitutional documents. James [sákéj] Youngblood Henderson, “Empowering Treaty Federalism,” *Saskatchewan Law Review* 58.2 (1994).

<sup>135</sup> Peter Russell, *Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians Become A Sovereign People?* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 10.



As each separate tree, or the canoe and ship, remain autonomous yet interconnected, a conversation has at least begun about how best to renew the mutually beneficial, while not perfect, relationship of the past. The Canadian government seems to have realised, in a global context of anti-colonialism and human rights, that the assimilation of *Onkwehonwe* peoples is no longer an option, especially in light of armed uprisings and the current land reclamations/claims at Six Nations, Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, and Ganienkeh, not to mention from other non-Haudenosaunee communities. The *kaswentha* ethic itself has remained true to the ancient principles of autonomy and coexistence, which have continued to be rearticulated to address the new needs of the twentieth century. With a deeper focus on the autonomy of the canoe, the Two Row Wampum has been retooled into the most easily recognizable symbol of Haudenosaunee sovereignty and, much as in the past, wampum holds the key for a future relationship of friendship between peoples.

## CONCLUSION

### Moving Forward Towards a New Era of *Métissage*

When a group of Haudenosaunee men and women defiantly erected tents on that barren Caledonia construction site in February 2006, they continued a legacy of protest that had begun shortly after the settlement of the Haldimand Tract in the aftermath of the American Revolution. After a century and a half of fighting as allies with their British brethren, those Haudenosaunee and others who had followed Sir William Johnson's brother-in-law, war captain Joseph Brant, to the Grand River in 1784 quickly realised that the Confederacy did not fit into the Crown's plans for a dominion that reached from sea to sea. They argued, petitioned, and protested for Governor Haldimand's original 12-mile wide land grant to be honoured, by now whittled down by non-*Onkwehonwe* squatters and questionable land cessions, but the soon-to-be Dominion of Canada had forsaken their kin as more pressing matters arose for the establishment of their own country.<sup>1</sup> Canadian Confederation came and went and those at Six Nations realised the

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<sup>1</sup> The whittling down of the original Haldimand Tract, granted in 1784, was dishonest in numerous ways: Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe arbitrarily and independently reduced the size of the original grant in 1792; in the nineteenth century, chiefs were often duped or intimidated into signing documents outside their authority; some land was sold but Six Nations did not receive payment or the monies were invested by the Crown in the soon defunct Grand River Navigation Company; other payments were siphoned off to pay for government projects elsewhere or to pay off Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs Samuel P. Jarvis' debts (which ultimately caused him to lose his position); still more land was leased to non-Natives who subsequently petitioned their government to unilaterally transform the leases into bills of ownership. For details see Charles M. Johnston, *Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1964); Reg Good, "Crown-directed Colonization of Six Nations and Métis Land Reserves in Canada," PhD Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, Saskatchewan, 1994; Paul Williams and Curtis Nelson, "The Grand River 'Surrender' of 1841" in "Kaswentha," Research Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Seven Generations CD-ROM (Ottawa: Libraxus Inc., 1996), Treaties: Project Area 1: Early Treaty-Making in Canada, January 1995; Douglas Leighton and Robert J. Burns, "Samuel Peter Jarvis," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=38110&query=jarvis>, accessed 11 April 2008.

increasing threat, not only to their land but to their very existence as an independent people as the Dominion sought to extinguish the council fires of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa*.

The ongoing reclamation at Caledonia is hardly surprising given the refusal of Haudenosaunee people in general to abandon their centuries-old system of government and the equally staunch refusal of the Canadian government to recognize former British allies as anything but subjects. It seems that the ship continually steers into the path of the canoe and misunderstandings abound regarding the mutual responsibilities that the brethren pledged to uphold so long ago. Indeed, the Two Row Wampum has become the most prolific symbol of this separate-but-parallel relationship and Seth Newhouse, or other equally patriotic individuals, likely wove the wampum belt in the late nineteenth century to educate Euro-Canadians ignorant about the historic pledges of friendship and autonomy represented by the Covenant Chain alliance.

Perhaps unsurprising given its unambiguous message, the Two Row Wampum has become the omnipresent symbol of the Caledonian reclamation. Not only has the powerful flag with a warrior stomping upon a crown with a broken Two Row in the background been prominently flown at *Kanohstaton*, 'the protected place,' but a new, simpler flag of two purple rows on a white background has also gained prominence. The Two Row Wampum also now appears on almost every discernable medium, from key chains, rings and bumper stickers, to pens, disposable coffee cups, t-shirts and personal tattoos, all of which emphasise the desired relationship between Canada and *Onkwehonwe* people.<sup>2</sup> Two Row discourse has also guided the protesters, chiefs, and clan matrons who have taken matters into their own hands. *Kanohstaton* spokesperson Hazel Hill has referred many times to the Two Row Wampum in her email updates about

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<sup>2</sup> The Hiawatha symbol is also very popular to represent the Confederacy on a whole.

conditions on the reclamation site, which is used, along with other wampum belts like the Circle and Hiawatha wampums, to recognize and affirm the historical continuity of Haudenosaunee governance and sovereignty in the eyes of the people themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Amazingly, after so many years of ignoring the Confederacy, the Caledonia reclamation has forced government negotiators to sit down with the chiefs, not the elected councillors, to resolve the land claim as demanded by the *Kanonhstaton* protestors.<sup>4</sup> In the on-going negotiations, the chiefs have employed various wampum belts as tools to insist upon their *kaswentha* autonomy, to remind the officials of their promised relationship, and to complement the documentary record.<sup>5</sup> While discussions are far from over, the fact that the federal and provincial governments are speaking with the government deposed at their behest by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is a promising display of openness and the rediscovery of good minds between the parties. Only by speaking with one another and by exchanging wampum can reconciliation be possible and only then might the parties return to a previous era of political *métissage* where the canoe and ship remained simultaneously autonomous yet inexorably linked.

Of course, the path to *métissage* is not an easy one, especially for many Haudenosaunee people who have been harmed by the legacy of residential schools and the myriad of social problems that exist in many *Onkwehonwe* communities. The *kaswentha* ethic of autonomy is not perfectly understood or addressed by all

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<sup>3</sup> Hazel Hill, “‘Pirates of the Grand’ Walk the Plank—Six Nations’ Position On Canada’s Position,” Reclamation Update, 16 November 2006, email received 17 November 2006 from [orakwa@paulcomm.ca](mailto:orakwa@paulcomm.ca) mailing list; For other reclamation updates see

[http://www.firstperspective.ca/fp\\_template.php?path=20060421caledonia](http://www.firstperspective.ca/fp_template.php?path=20060421caledonia), accessed 12 September 2006; also, L. M. VanEvery, “Reconciling Differences,” *Vibrant* 4.1 (January 2008): 28-36.

<sup>4</sup> The people at Kanonhstaton refused to have the band council represent them, so the government had no choice but to speak with the chiefs.

<sup>5</sup> Leroy Hill described using wampum in the negotiations in Interview between Kathryn Muller and chiefs, sub-chiefs, and faithkeepers at the Haudenosaunee Resource Centre, Six Nations, 11 June 2007; Hill, “‘Pirates of the Grand’ Walk the Plank.”

Haudenosaunee individuals and efforts to reinstall the principles of the *Kayaneren'kó:wa* and create a working system of traditional government continue. In Six Nations, everything is complicated by the fact that it is a multi-national community and each nation and sides within each nation possess their own allegiances, whether to a particular Church/Longhouse or to the *Gaiwi:yo:ho* or to a secular group. While a large number of chiefs and faithkeepers work together as part of the Haudenosaunee Resource Centre, other chiefs have branched out on their own, and still others do not seem to fulfil their chiefly duties. Some have complained that chiefly titles have become restricted to immediate families, not to the most qualified individual in the extended matrilineal family, while still others have accused some current chiefs of running roughshod over the clan mothers and their opinions.<sup>6</sup>

Six Nations is not alone in dealing with internal issues in governance and conflicts also remain between the band council and traditional people in Tyendinaga, Akwesasne, Kanehsatake, and Kahnawake. Ever since 1979, the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake has spoken about rekindling the clan system as part of an overall project to renew traditional government in the community, as suggested during the hearings of the Penner Report on Indian Self-Government and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Problematically, many individuals lack a clan, perhaps forgotten from family history over time, lost because a maternal ancestor married a non-*Onkwehonwe* person, or obscured because of the Indian Act's habit of recording individuals according to their father's clan. Efforts continue within the Longhouse to adopt people into the various clans, but some traditional people insist that a MCK governed by clan membership is

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<sup>6</sup> These opinions and concerns arose in multiple personal conversations and interviews that I conducted at Six Nations but because of the contentious nature of the topic, the individuals shall remain anonymous.

simply not enough. The *Kayaneren 'kó:wa* cannot exist within the confines of the Indian Act, nor can it exist outside of the Confederacy itself and, to some, the most important aspect of traditional government entails “a spiritual connection to the old ways,” as one Longhouse follower put it. Still others resent the move towards clan-based governing by a band council that has adopted many symbols and principles of the Longhouse because it is “undermining our true identity.”<sup>7</sup> Clearly, much work remains to be done before people achieve one mind, but numerous communities have shown promising efforts of creating an open dialogue to work on internal problems, which can only strengthen the Confederacy overall.

In order for the *kaswentha* ethic to be respected by the Canadian government, the canoe holding the *Kayaneren 'kó:wa* must be sturdy and strong, an ambition to which numerous people within the Confederacy are working diligently to achieve. Although divisions exist, both between communities and within communities, many Haudenosaunee people remain united in rejecting assimilation and have reassessed and retooled the *kaswentha* ethic—and by consequence, the *Kayaneren 'kó:wa*, the Covenant Chain, and the Two Row Wampum—accordingly. No cultural ethic, law, or relationship remains static over time and while they all remain rooted in unwavering ideas of autonomy and coexistence, the circumstances that influence their expression has constantly shifted. Thus, the stories that make up Haudenosaunee history are far from

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<sup>7</sup> Tharihwaienes, Letter to the Editor, *Eastern Door* 16.29 (10 August 2007); Interview between Kathryn Muller, Thomas Deer, and Cory McComber, Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitiókwa Language & Cultural Center, Kanawake, 10 October 2007; Interview between Kathryn Muller and Anonymous 2, Kahnawake, 25 October 2007; Natalie, “Tióhton tsi ni:ióra'wistonte, Applying the Clan System to present-day local governance: Will we finally see a move toward Traditional government?” *Eastern Door*, 16.29 (10 August 2007); Teyowisonte (Thomas Deer), “A General Critique of the Kahnawake Charter,” Revolutionary Creations, [http://www.revolutionarycreations.com/lit\\_page/kahnawake/a\\_critique\\_of\\_the\\_Kahnawake\\_Charter.PDF](http://www.revolutionarycreations.com/lit_page/kahnawake/a_critique_of_the_Kahnawake_Charter.PDF), accessed 13 March 2008; and Interview between Kathryn Muller and Brian Deer, Kahnawake, 13 August 2007.

fragmented and disjointed examples of historical events that occurred in a finite time frame, but instead unite centuries of civilization as an ever-changing, constantly renegotiated narrative that adapts old ideas to novel circumstances. This ‘big picture’ interpretation sees richness and commonalities in the broad patterns of Haudenosaunee morality and the rhetorical and ceremonial forms through which they expressed the *kaswentha* ethic over time. The stories revealed in this dissertation, therefore, do not pretend to cover all political events or points of view over a period of half a millennia, but instead provide a uniquely Haudenosaunee perspective of intellectual history.

In the years since “Holding Hands With Wampum” was first conceived, many other Haudenosaunee reclamations, blockades, and land claims made news headlines across the country. The occupation of a quarry on disputed land and multiple blockades of the major Montreal-Toronto rail line in Tyendinaga have caused stand-offs with the Ontario Provincial Police, while the Quebec government has promised to negotiate a Kahnawake claim before extending an uncompleted highway through contested land on the south shore of Montreal. In the month of July 2008 alone, escalating standoffs at construction sites in Brantford, Ontario (part of the Haldimand Tract) and the blockade of another highway in Kanehsatake to protest an increased Sureté du Québec community presence have demonstrated the urgency of addressing not only questionable land cessions but, even more broadly, the state of relationships between the Crown and its allies. While anger, betrayal, and mistrust might occupy the minds of either side, perhaps a better historical understanding can steer both the canoe and the ship back to the council fire, where opposite ‘sides’ did not remain antagonistic, but instead understood their mutual set of obligations and responsibilities. If the Haudenosaunee can strengthen their

canoe and if the Canadian government can trim its own ship's sails, perhaps we can welcome a new era of *Onkwehonwe*-Canadian relations that just might rekindle the *métissage* of a not so ancient past.



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- Akwesasne.ca. <http://www.akwesasne.ca/index.html>.
- CBC News. [www.cbc.ca](http://www.cbc.ca).
- The Eastern Door. Kahnawake Weekly. <http://www.easterndoor.com/>. Print copies on file at the Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitiókwa Language and Cultural Centre.
- First Perspective. Peguis First Nation, Manitoba: Taiga Communications. <http://www.firstperspective.ca>.
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