

ken word to pass down their history, traditions, and rituals. This required prodigious feats of memory, for many of the major legends were extremely lengthy, running to 75,000 words or more. The ritualists and archivists of the Five Nations who possessed this large store of essential knowledge were the intellectuals of their communities, equivalent in status to any learned European priests and professors.

As an aid to memory, the Iroquois in later years used shells and shell beads. The Europeans called the beads wampum, from *wampumpeag*, a word used by Indians in the area who spoke Algonquian languages. According to the Iroquois tradition, Hayenwatha was the originator of wampum, but archaeological evidence shows that shell beads were in widespread use by the Iroquois and other Indians long before the formation of the Five Nations Confederacy. However, the more elaborate wampum "belts," with figures or designs on them, made for use in treaty negotiations and as historical records, seem to have been a later development among the Iroquois.

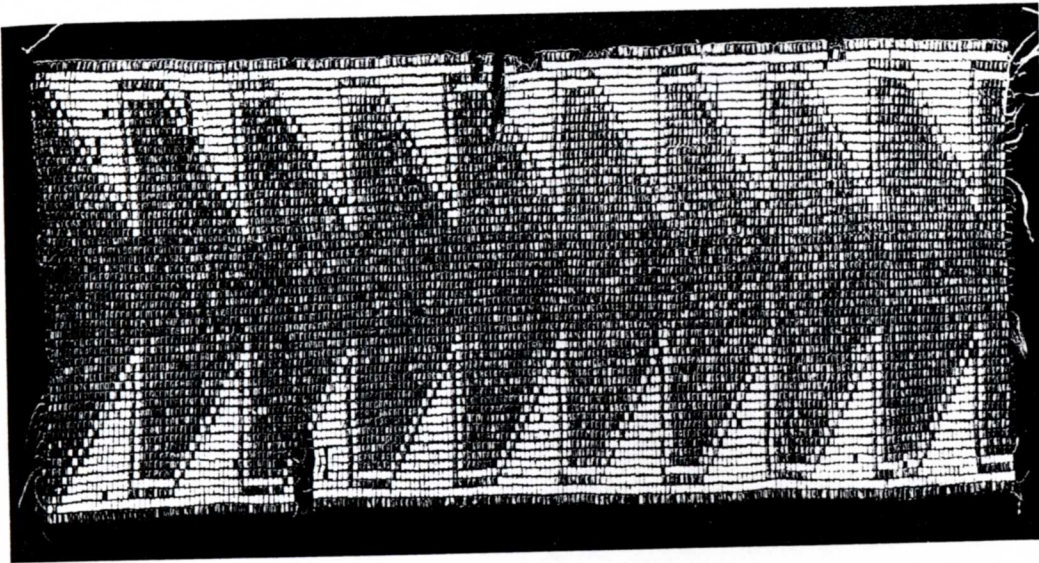
The type of wampum most commonly used in historic times was bead wampum. It was laboriously cut from various seashells, ground and polished, and then bored through the center with a small hand drill. Most wampum was made from the quahog, or large hard-shell clam. The Indians of Long Island, in southern New York, were the chief producers of wampum and paid huge

quantities of it in tribute, showing that they accepted the superior power of the Iroquois.

The Iroquois strung the beads and wove them into broad multirowed straps or belts for use in various ceremonies and in diplomacy. Strings of mourning wampum were used in condolence ceremonies to remove the grief from those who had lost a family member. Chiefs possessed wampum as a sign of their office. Strings and belts of wampum were used to convey messages in diplomatic relations and to represent the articles of treaties. A messenger who did not present wampum as a pledge of the truth of his words would not be taken seriously. Belts were also used to record great events in Iroquois history. The beads, purple and white, were arranged in designs to represent the event the belt was commemorating.

Certain elders were designated to memorize the various events and treaty articles that the belts represented. Those men could "read" the belts and reproduce their contents with great accuracy. These important belts were stored at Onondaga, the capital of the confederacy, in the care of a designated wampum keeper.

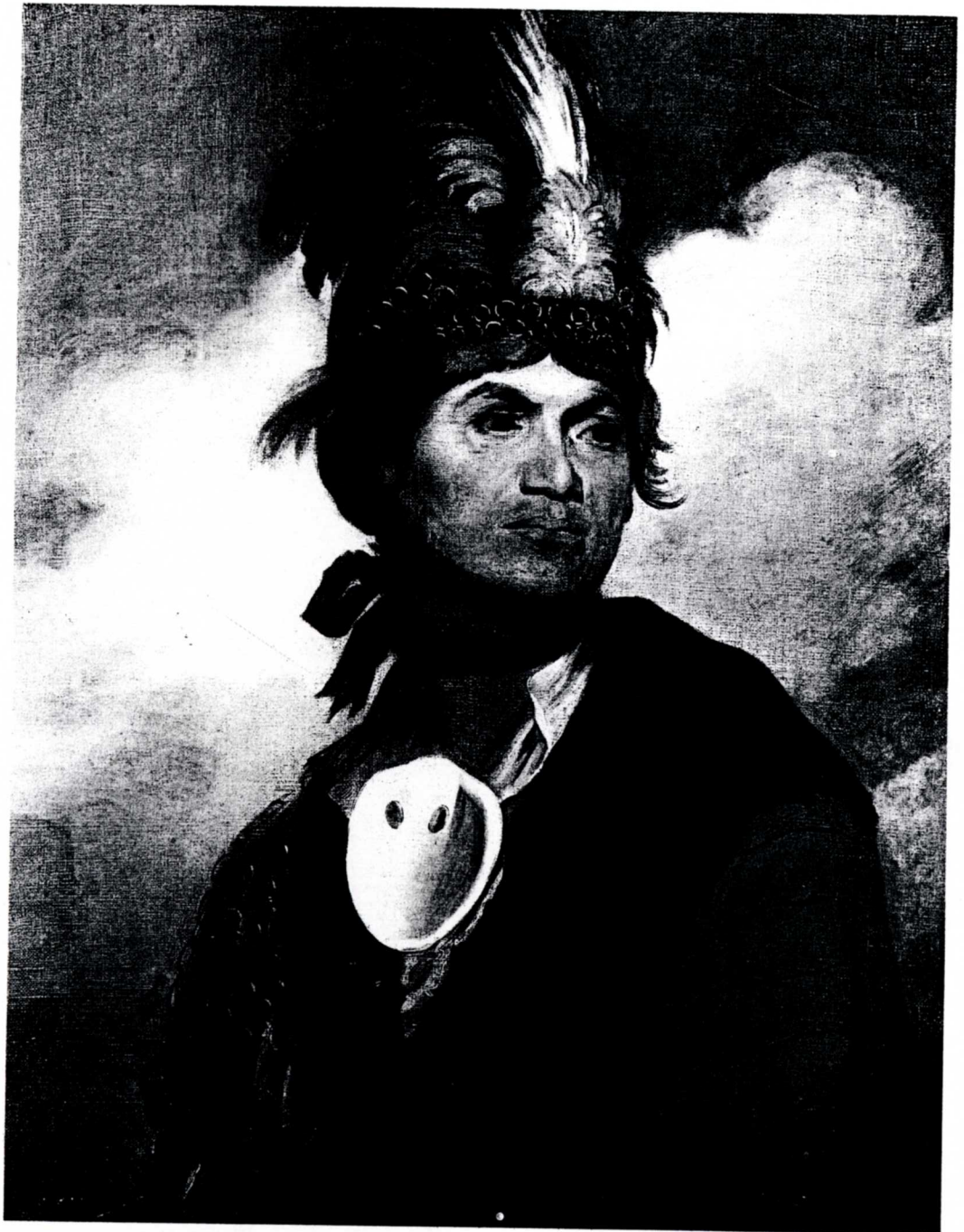
Life was good to the people of the Five Nations for generations after the confederation. They continued to prosper and generally to enjoy the blessings of nature. Nature was generous and the people were industrious. Iroquois culture was vigorous and dynamic.



The Wing or Dust Fan wampum belt, held by the council of the confederacy and displayed whenever the League's constitution was recited. Purple beads form the ever-growing pine tree, symbolic of the life of the League. This is the widest wampum belt known.

The confederacy was a remarkable creation, formed by an early people, showing their great political and social sophistication. They were kindly and reverent, affectionate and loyal toward their families, considerate and tender toward their friends. They had provided within their League a means for extending the house and admitting other peoples into their peaceful way of life. In later years, other Indian tribes would accept this offer and take shelter beneath the Tree of the Great Long

Leaves. The Five Nations prospered as a result of their unity. Unfortunately, the surrounding nations did not also benefit from the Great Peace. The Iroquois felt no security on their borders when neighboring nations rejected the confederacy or thwarted their interests. Even after the formation of the League, intermittent raids on the fringes of its borders continued. In later years, these conflicts often became furious beyond belief as the League sought to extend its peace by means of warfare. ▲



Joseph Brant, painted by Gilbert Stuart in 1786. The Mohawk leader whose Indian name was Thayendanegea fought against the Americans in the Revolutionary War.



WARFARE AND DIPLOMACY

During their brief interlude of peace with the Iroquois, the French missionaries had been remarkably successful in making converts. In 1667 and 1668, a small group of Oneidas established themselves along the St. Lawrence River, near the French settlement of Montreal. These Oneidas became the nucleus of a rapidly growing village of Catholic Iroquois. Onondagas, Hurons, and especially Mohawks swelled the population of the village, which took the name Caughnawaga (At the Rapids).

The Caughnawagas became firm allies of the French, even joining with them in military expeditions against the Iroquois in their old homeland south of Lake Ontario. Throughout the century of conflict between the French and English for predominance in North America, the Caughnawagas continued to support the French.

The Iroquois attacks on the tribes of the western Great Lakes region in the late 17th century gradually merged with the European wars between the French and the English that had spilled over to

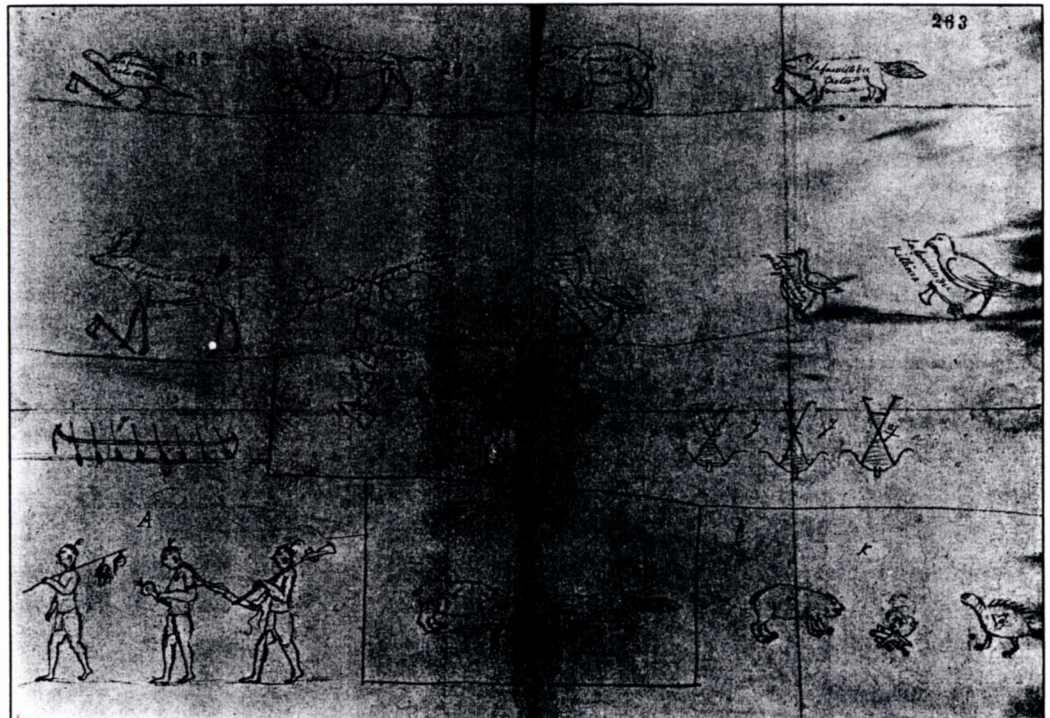
the North American continent. The French intervention against the Iroquois in support of their own Indian allies would prove to be a serious obstacle to Iroquois ambitions.

The Iroquois did gain, at least in the short run, from their alliance with the English. When Edmund Andros became governor of the colony of New York in 1674, he proceeded immediately to renew and strengthen English alliances with all the Algonquian and Iroquois groups within New York's borders. In the earliest Dutch period, the Indians and Dutch had used the metaphor of "chains" to describe their alliances: "We are brothers and are joined together by chains." The implication was that nothing could break this "Covenant Chain" and disrupt the friendship. Governor Andros expanded this Covenant Chain tradition to attach the Iroquois more firmly to the English and to promote the interests of his New York colony. He forbade other English colonies to make any treaties with New York's Indian tribes unless sponsored by the New York government. In 1667,

he permitted delegates from Maryland and Virginia to come to Albany, New York, to conduct peace negotiations with the Five Nations, whose warriors had recently been attacking the Indian tribes in those two colonies to the south. As a result of these negotiations, the Five Nations took Maryland and Virginia into the Covenant Chain. This enhanced the prestige and power of the colony of New York, securing English friendship for the Iroquois. It also enhanced the power of their confederacy by enabling them to incorporate other formerly hostile Indian tribes into the Extended Lodge.

The Covenant Chain would be manipulated by both the Five Nations and the English to increase their advantage over their opponents. The English now had the friendship of the most powerful Indian confederacy on the continent. The Iroquois, for their part, had made a valuable military and economic alliance with the aggressive English and had secured their borders to the east and south. To the north and west, however, were the French and their Indian allies and trading partners. In these regions, the Iroquois could feel no security except through warfare and conquest.

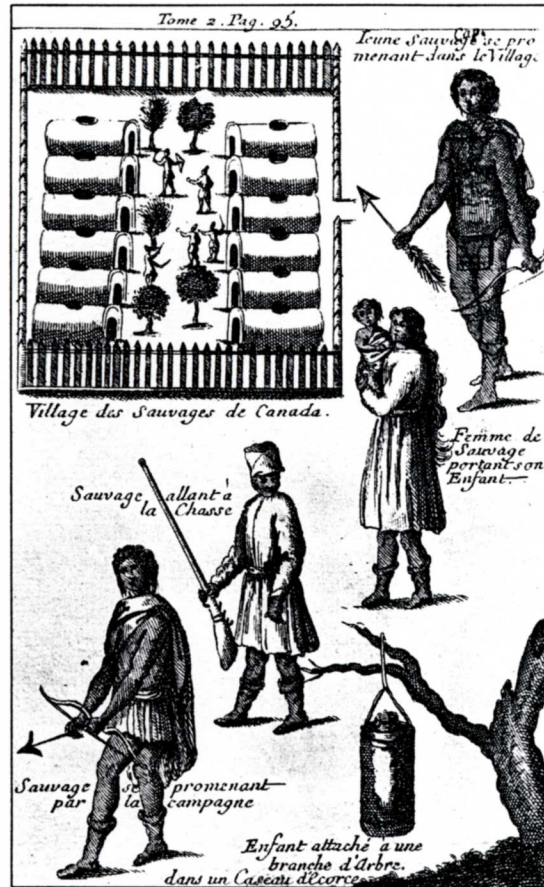
French copies of Iroquois drawings, 17th century. The top two rows show clan symbols. Third row center: a hunter killed three deer. Bottom left: a French sketch of warriors returning with scalps and a prisoner. Bottom center: a war council of the bear and beaver clans.



Beginning in 1680, the Iroquois carried on a devastating series of wars against these western Indians. The fur trade had become as important to the Iroquois as it was to the Europeans, and they determined to open new areas of supply. In one campaign after another they attacked the Illinois and Miami Indians of the Ohio and Illinois region, destroying their villages and killing or capturing huge numbers from each tribe. They alternately threatened and cajoled the Ottawa Indians north of the Great Lakes, who supplied the French with two-thirds of their furs. The French had a string of forts in the Illinois and upper Great Lakes regions. Seeing their position dangerously threatened by repeated Iroquois aggressions, they decided to intervene.

In June of 1687, Jacques-René de Brisay Denonville, the governor of New France, led an invading force of more than 2,000 French and Indians against the Senecas, destroying their villages, their standing crops, and their stored grain. The next year, the Cayugas, Onondagas, and Oneidas traveled to Montreal to negotiate a treaty with Denonville. The peace would not last long. Less than two years later, King William's War (1689-97) broke out between France and England. The Iroquois seized the opportunity and once more went on the offensive against the French, attacking the settlement of Lachine, not far from Montreal.

The French continually retaliated against the English and their Iroquois allies during the course of the war. In



An illustration from an 18th-century French book recounting a "dialogue between baron de Lahontan and an American savage." The word "sauvage" referred to a person who lived intimately with nature. This was later considered an ideal state for humanity.

February 1690, the new governor of New France, Louis de Buade de Frontenac, with a force of 210 French troops and Caughnawaga Indian allies, attacked and destroyed the English village of Schenectady northwest of Albany. Three years later, in 1693,

Frontenac surprised and destroyed the three Mohawk villages and took 300 captives. In July 1696, with 2,200 French and Indian troops, he successfully attacked the Oneidas and again the Onondagas.

In the western Great Lakes region, the Ojibwas led a coalition of Ottawas and Potawatomis known as the Council of the Three Fires. The warriors of the Three Fires hammered the Iroquois relentlessly and in three fierce battles in 1696 drove them out of the Ontario peninsula and claimed it as their own.

The Iroquois suffered an enormous number of casualties in these western wars. Instead of achieving their purpose, they who had once been the invincible conquerors of a vast territory were now themselves defeated. In the last decade of the 17th century alone they had lost at least 1,600 and perhaps as many as 2,000 of their own people. They had seen their homeland invaded and destroyed again and again by the French and their Indian allies. Now their western landholdings were being destroyed as well.

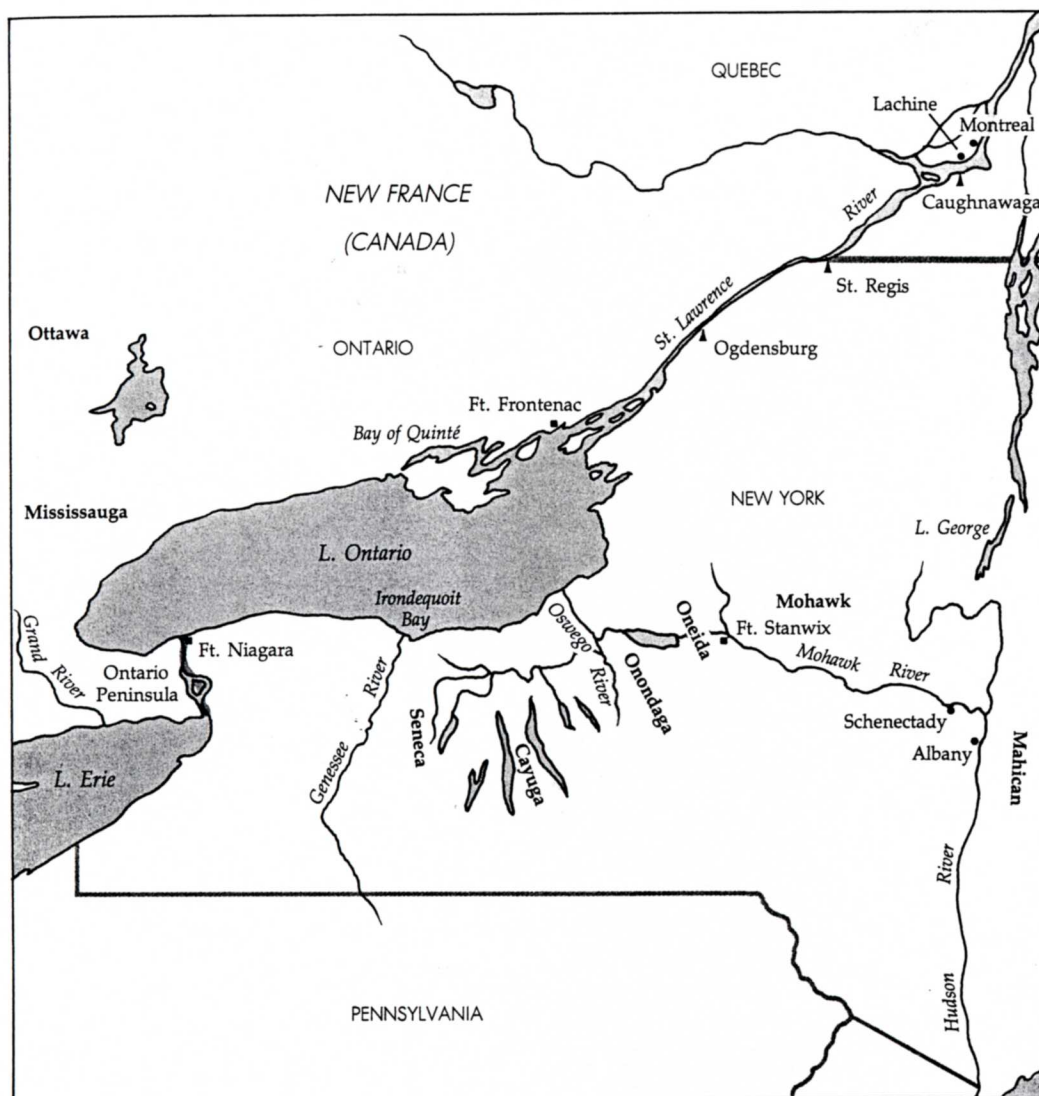
The Iroquois decided that the time had come for a new strategy. In early 1700, they sent out peace feelers to Governor Louis-Hector de Callière of New France. The governor responded favorably but insisted that the Indian allies of the French also be included in the peace. Both sides promised to return their prisoners and the Iroquois further requested the resumption of trade with the French and access to their smiths, who could repair their guns and tools.

They reminded the governor that they were making peace with him despite English disapproval and so asked for his protection should the English try to punish them. Governor Callière gladly agreed to all of the Iroquois requests. Both sides set August 1701 as the date for a great gathering at Montreal when the final treaty would be approved by all the warring parties.

The chief author of this new peace policy was the Onondaga statesman Teganissorens, pronounced by the English as Decanesora. He was the greatest orator of his day. One New Yorker who was acquainted with him likened him to the great Roman statesman Cicero. A man of abundant wisdom and ability and a true patriot, Teganissorens realized that the Iroquois' best interests lay in maintaining neutrality between the French and the English, not letting either European nation gain a predominance of power. The most important task for the Iroquois was now to preserve their own territory and their independence.

The new peace policy brought social and economic benefits to the Iroquois. Freed from danger from the north and west, they could now hunt and even settle in the Ohio region without fear of attack. They had granted the western Great Lakes Indians the right to travel through their territory to trade with them and with the English. The Iroquois profited greatly from this commerce, because they received additional furs from these western Indians in exchange for the goods and food they

IROQUOIS WARS, 1680-1764



supplied to the journeyers. The Iroquois could also trade with the French at Fort Frontenac on the northeastern shore of Lake Ontario, as well as at the new small trading post opened by the French at Irondequoit on the south shore of Lake Ontario.

When the French established a trading post at Niagara and a few years later strengthened it by building a large stone fort, the Iroquois became alarmed at such a formidable military presence in their territory. They therefore permitted the British to build a fort at the

mouth of the Oswego River and Lake Ontario. The French instantly recognized the Iroquois strategy of balancing one European nation against another.

For most of the next half century, the Iroquois lapsed only occasionally from their policy of neutrality. This policy was often under great strain, however, for pro-French and pro-English factions had developed within each tribe of the Five Nations. The strongest French advocates were among the Senecas and Onondagas. The English had more supporters among the Mohawks, who lived closer to Albany and the English settlements. During the various phases of Queen Anne's War (1702-13), King George's War (1744-48), and the French and Indian War (1754-63), the English were always able to rouse a number of Iroquois warriors to accompany their expeditions against the French. Despite these violations of the peace by individual warriors, the neutrality policy continued until the middle of the 18th century. The long period of peace enabled the Iroquois to rebuild their communities, increase their population, and expand their trade.

The English as well as the French recognized the political importance of establishing religious missions among the Indians they wished to attach to their cause. The Jesuits had been depleting the population of Iroquois country for years by luring large numbers of converts to their Catholic villages at Caughnawaga, near Montreal, and Oswegatchie (present-day Ogdensburg, New York). The former village was

composed mostly of Mohawks and the latter mostly of Onondagas and Cayugas. Around 1750, a group of Caughnawagas settled farther up the St. Lawrence River, where the French established a mission named St. Regis. Jesuit missionaries continued to be active among the Iroquois who remained in their homeland, where a number of converts, loyal both to their new faith and to the French who had converted them and who continued to show them favors, still lived.

The English were quick to learn the lesson and to take an interest in ministering to the Iroquois. The earliest efforts of English missionaries among the Mohawks, however, met with little response.

For many years, Dutch Reformed pastors who lived in or near Albany had also ministered to their Mahican and Mohawk neighbors and had made a number of converts. One young man, destined in later years to be a great leader among his people, was Theyanoguin, a Mahican who had been adopted by the Mohawks and who had become a chief. He took an interest in Christianity and was converted to the Protestant faith by the Dutch pastor Godfrey Dellijs. The Dutch and English knew him as Hendrick or, because of his chiefly status, King Hendrick. Enthusiastic about his new faith, Hendrick began to preach among the Mohawks.

In 1710, during Queen Anne's War, English officials at Albany were disturbed about their government's lack of interest in Indian affairs. They therefore

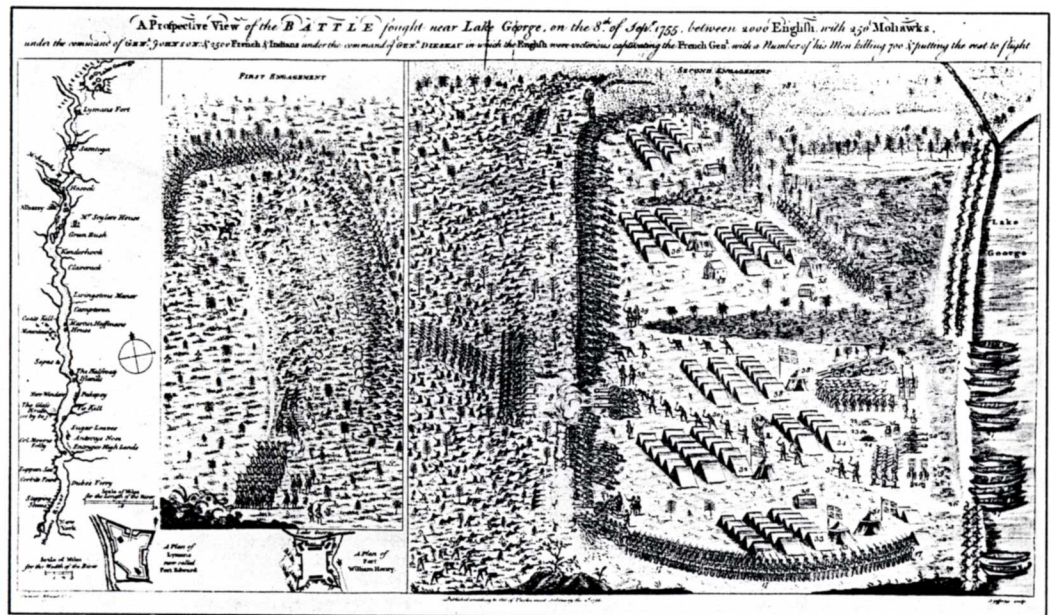


The four chiefs who went to London were painted there in 1710. Left: Chief Hendrick, with the wolf, his clan symbol, at lower left. Right: Sa Ga Yeath Qua Pieth Tow, Mohawk of the bear clan. Engravings made from these paintings were widely distributed in the colonies.

decided to send a delegation to England to emphasize the importance of holding on to Indian support. Colonel Francis Nicholson and Peter Schuyler took with them four chiefs: Hendrick, two other Mohawks, and a Mahican. Schuyler, a former mayor of Albany and a wealthy fur trader, had many years' experience in negotiating with Indians on behalf of the city of Albany and the colony of New York. He was held in particularly high regard by the Iroquois, who had come to consider him their special intermediary with the colonial government.

In London, the Indians were a sensation. They were entertained everywhere, had their portraits painted, and were presented at court. The "Four Kings," as they were known in England, asked Queen Anne to send help to combat the French and to provide Church of England missionaries for the Indian villages. The queen assented and became the patron of the Mohawk mission.

The Anglican missionary organization, the Society for Propagating the Gospel, had increased success in the years that followed in converting



Views of two stages of the battle of Lake George between the French and English with their respective Indian allies. At left is the Hudson River from New York City to Lake George.

the Mohawks to the Anglican faith. The missionaries also devised a system of writing the Mohawk language, provided schooling for young Mohawks, and translated religious literature into Mohawk. Hendrick became an Anglican lay preacher and the strongest supporter of the missionaries. By the 1740s, most Mohawks were at least nominal Protestant Christians and were firm friends of the English.

So loyal were the Mohawks that in later years the English would often refer to them as "the faithful Mohawks." One of the most faithful was Chief Hendrick. In 1755, when he was well past 70 years of age, he would put himself at the head of 300 warriors and join the

English in an expedition against the French. At a battle near Lake George in the Adirondacks, the English and Mohawks would defeat the invading French army, but the courageous Hendrick would lose his life.

But in the early 18th century, as a result of the peace settlement of 1701 following their defeats in the 1690s, the Iroquois sought ways to regain power. Military means were closed to them, so they turned to political efforts. A part of their strategy was to cooperate with the government of Pennsylvania and to assert the authority of the Iroquois Confederacy over the Indian tribes of that region. These Pennsylvania tribes were the Lenni Lenape (Delaware), Shaw-

nees, Conestogas (the remnant of the Susquehannocks), and Conoys (Piscataways). Pennsylvania officials saw an advantage in developing a special friendship with the Iroquois, because the confederacy could help control the tribes within their borders. They were particularly concerned that the Shawnees had become too friendly with the French. This "Pennsylvania policy" was thus mutually beneficial to Pennsylvania and the Iroquois.

After the Iroquois had agreed not to fight against France's Indian allies in the west, they turned their hostilities against the Indians of the south. In a long series of wars lasting more than 50 years, mainly against the Catawbas and the Cherokees in the Carolinas and Georgia, the Iroquois gained both prestige and captives. The English repeatedly tried to get the Iroquois to stop these attacks on their Indian allies, but the League persisted. They had everything to gain and nothing to lose. The French and their western Indian allies benefited by these wars, for the French had colonial interests in the south and were delighted to see English allies being destroyed. Once more the Iroquois were emerging as a force to be reckoned with.

The Iroquois' wars in the south brought them in touch with the problems of the Tuscarora tribe in North Carolina. The Tuscaroras were an Iroquois group that had migrated south before the formation of the confederacy but who still remembered their kinship with the northern tribes. Their non-In-

dian neighbors in North Carolina had for many years been encroaching upon their lands and kidnapping their children to sell into slavery. Pressed beyond their endurance, the Tuscaroras declared war on the colonists. The North Carolinians received the military support of colonists and various Indian allies, including the Catawbas, the Cherokees, and the Yamasees, from South Carolina. The Tuscaroras, defeated in the 1711-13 wars, migrated north to Pennsylvania and New York to take refuge in the Extended Lodge. The Oneidas adopted them and they became the sixth tribe of the League. The Five Nations, now strengthened and enlarged, would from this time on be known as the Six Nations.

The Iroquois were able to play their neutrality game between the French and English only until the end of the French and Indian War (1754-63). After that, the victorious English deprived France of its American colonies and emerged as the major power on the East Coast, in Canada, and in the Ohio region. Even during that war, the Iroquois had not been completely neutral, nor were they united in taking sides. The Mohawks had generally supported the English and the Senecas had fought with the pro-French Indians. Now the English occupied former French forts in Canada and the West, and they were far less accommodating to the Indians than the French had been. They had no need to be overly generous to the Indians, who could no longer ally themselves with the French.



Molly Brant, leader of the Iroquois women, commemorated on a 1986 Canadian stamp.

Indian resentment against the English flared up in a brief war known as Pontiac's Conspiracy (1763–64), after the Ottawa war leader who organized this rebellion. The Senecas took an enthusiastic part in this uprising, attempting to drive the British out of the West. The war failed in its objective and was soon over.

Sir William Johnson, the superintendent of Indian affairs for the northern department of Britain's American colonies, scolded the Senecas for their part in the war. As punishment, he forced them to cede some of their territory to the Crown.

Johnson had come to America from Ireland in 1738 to manage the Mohawk Valley estate of his absentee uncle, Ad-

miral Peter Warren. With financial help from Warren, Johnson acquired more and more land in that area, employing white servants and black slaves to work his property. He also went into business, importing goods from England to exchange for Iroquois furs. His farming and trading enterprises both prospered. He had been adopted by the Mohawks and was thoroughly acquainted with their culture. A Mohawk woman, Mary Brant (or Molly Brant, as she was better known), served as his housekeeper and his wife. Although he never legally married her, he treated her with great respect and affection. He raised all his children by her in the style becoming the sons and daughters of an English country gentleman. His wealth and community standing, combined with his good relationship with the Iroquois, led to the government appointment to manage Indian affairs, a post in which he served for years.

In the years following Pontiac's War, when Sir William Johnson was urging the Six Nations to hold fast to the Covenant Chain, trouble was brewing in the colonies. The settlers were becoming rebellious and protesting against British taxes. Sir William was concerned that the growing quarrel between the colonists and the Crown might disrupt the British-Indian alliances. He was particularly worried about the missionary to the Oneidas, Samuel Kirkland, who also worked among the Tuscaroras. Kirkland was not a member of the Church of England but a New England Puritan. He sided

with the colonists, not with their British government. Johnson tried to remove Kirkland but found that Oneida members of his church stood solidly behind their missionary.

Sir William died suddenly in 1774, during a treaty council with the Iroquois. He was succeeded in his office by his nephew, Colonel Guy Johnson. It was now Guy Johnson's task to hold the Iroquois loyal to the Crown as the colonists headed toward separation from Great Britain.

The American Revolution had a tragic impact on the Six Nations. The neutrality they had sought to maintain between contending parties broke down under pressures from the British and the colonials. The warfare that erupted in the country surrounding the Six Nations Confederacy eventually drew them all into the conflict, and they were not all of the same mind. Two of the most active Mohawk supporters of the Crown were Molly Brant and her younger brother Joseph, an energetic war chief. Meanwhile, the Oneidas had begun to enlist in the militia units being formed in towns in the Mohawk River Valley to fight against the Loyalists, who sided with the British.

In previous wars, when the Iroquois nations had divergent allegiances, they had been able to fight their respective opponents without fighting one another. The American Revolution would change all that. The confederacy council could not control the warriors in each nation. Each nation therefore chose sides for itself. The Oneidas and Tus-



"Public Testimonial . . . of . . . Esteem & Approbation" given by Sir William Johnson to Iroquois for "Attachment to his British Majesty's Interests, and Zeal for his Service."

caroras chose the new American union. The Mohawks, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas chose the king. The hostilities that raged through their own country and the surrounding non-Indian settlements meant that on more than one occasion, Iroquois was fighting Iroquois.

So destructive were the raids of the pro-British Iroquois and Loyalists that the government of New York appealed to the Continental Congress for help. In 1779, General George Washington authorized an invasion of Iroquois country. The officer in charge of the expedition was Major General John Sul-



The Seneca chief Cornplanter, in an oil painting done in New York in 1796

livan. A companion army under Brigadier General James Clinton joined Sullivan. In the fall, the two armies set off on what was to be the successful destruction of all the hostile Indian villages east of the Genesee River.

The Sullivan-Clinton campaign pushed the Loyalist Iroquois back to Fort Niagara. Here the British army and Indian Department were forced to protect and provide for the starving and homeless Indians throughout the severe winter that followed.

The American invasion did not defeat the Iroquois but merely increased their desire for revenge. The following spring, they came back with even more ferocity. Joseph Brant, although not the leading warrior of the confederacy, be-

came particularly active throughout the war. He led a raiding party that burned the Oneida and Tuscarora villages in retaliation for their support of the Americans.

The most distinguished warrior of the League was Kayengkwaahnton, or "Old Smoke," of the Senecas. Now elderly but still vigorous, he usually had to ride a horse on long marches in order to keep up with the younger warriors. The young Cornplanter, another Seneca, also held one of the leading positions as war chief of the confederacy.

The British completely ignored their Indian allies when they signed the Treaty of Paris, which ended the war with the United States in 1783. The Iroquois were horrified and incensed at what they considered a betrayal of their loyal services. British officers still in North America were also embarrassed by their government's neglect of the Indians whom, after all, they had enticed into the war. General Frederick Haldimand, commander of the British forces in Canada, pressured his government to grant land to the Loyalist Iroquois so they would not be left to the revenge of the victors.

The British government gave its approval and Haldimand bought a large tract of land from the Mississauga Indians along the Grand River on the Ontario peninsula. He presented it to the Mohawks and the other Loyalist Iroquois—"His Majesty's faithful Allies," as the general called them. Most of the Loyalist Iroquois who wished to migrate followed Joseph Brant to Grand



The silver medal given by Sir William Johnson to the western Iroquois in 1766. On one side is King George III; on the reverse, an Englishman and Indian with peace pipe shaking hands. The Iroquois eagle is at the top.

River. Another group of Mohawks, under John Deserontyon, settled north of the Bay of Quinté, with Haldimand's help.

On the Grand River Reservation, there were members of all the Six Nations. It is known today as the Six Nations Reserve. Most Senecas, however,

elected to remain in their own country rather than emigrate to Canada.

After centuries of conquest and domination, the Extended Lodge was now disrupted and its nations dispersed. The Iroquois were beginning a new phase in their history: the reservation period. ▲