



## Literature Review: The History of Kahnawà:ke to 1760

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For the Tiohtià:ke Project, January 2024

<sup>1</sup> Image from “Histoire de Montréal avec Maude Bouchard-Dupont: Toponymie autochtone,” 4 août 2021 <<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/ohdio/premiere/emissions/le-15-18/segments/chronique/365395/toponymie-autochtone-montreal-mohawk-grande-paix-montreal?isAutoPlay=true>>. Accessed January 5, 2023.

Table of Contents

- 1) Introduction: The Place of Kahnawà:ke in Scholarship on the Mohawks and Haudenosaunee p.3
- 2) Oral Traditions Associating the Mohawks with the St. Lawrence Valley Prior to European Contact p.33
- 3) First Contact, Dispersal of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians and Implications for the Mohawk Nation p.41
- 4) The Economy of Kahnawà:ke's Fur Trade with New York p.71
- 5) Kahnawà:ke Treaty Relations with the French and English Crowns to 1760 p.79

\*Note on terminology: this report will refer to individual nations (e.g., Mohawk, Oneida, etc.) by their standard English-language names. The six constituent nations of the League will be referred to collectively as "Haudenosaunee," and "Iroquoian" will be used to denote members of the linguistic family that includes the Haudenosaunee and other Iroquoian-speaking peoples.

1) Introduction: The Place of Kahnawà:ke in Scholarship on the Mohawks and Haudenosaunee

In a 1995 speech to the New York State Folk Arts Roundtable, Chief Irving Powless of the Onondaga Nation described the Haudenosaunee as “the most written about” and, simultaneously, the “most misinterpreted people on the continent.” Powless based his claim on the tendency of historians and anthropologists to develop and then perpetuate stereotypes about Haudenosaunee culture.<sup>2</sup> Within the extensive scholarly literature on the Haudenosaunee, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke occupy an even more complex place – one that has been represented historically as contrived, anomalous, and even pathological. Kahnawà:ke Mohawk anthropologist Audra Simpson’s groundbreaking (2014) monograph, Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States,<sup>3</sup> marked the first in-depth assessment of Kahnawà:ke’s place in the broader context of Haudenosaunee historiography. Simpson identified an early trend in studies of the Haudenosaunee “to authenticate early ethnographic assertions and place the Iroquois within western epistemes,” creating a “research loop” in which successive inquiries sought to confirm the veracity of earlier reports. This in turn yielded a very narrow model of cultural tradition – one that normalized practitioners of the Handsome Lake Religion on Seneca and Onondaga reservations in modern New York State as authentic, while simultaneously excluding the “mission Iroquois,” or “praying Indians” of Kahnawà:ke as outside the boundaries of historical Haudenosaunee cultural legitimacy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Daniel Franklin Ward, ed., “Interpretation: Why? How? By Whom?” New York Folklore 24 (1998): 66.

<sup>3</sup> Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Ch.3 (quotes pp.70, 94).

Notwithstanding the presence of Christian themes of salvation and sinfulness in the Handsome Lake Religion, which arose among the Senecas after the turn of the nineteenth century, early students of Haudenosaunee culture credited its adherents for remaining “at variance with the social and accepted economic systems of the white communities about them.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, they appeared to provide outsiders with discernible cultural differences to study. Consider the assessment of Seneca-descendant anthropologist Arthur C. Parker: writing in 1912, he analogized the historic movements of the Seneca Prophet Handsome Lake to those of the Peacemaker in the pre-contact League formation story, and distinguished sharply between the communities the former visited and those he did not:

“There is no record of Handsome Lake’s visiting Tuscarora, Oneida, or St. Regis [i.e., Akwesasne]. The result is that these reservations contain only Indians who are nominally Christian. The Oneida are virtually citizens, the Tuscaroras as capable of being so as any community of whites, and the St. Regis progressive enough not only to use all their own lands but to rent from the whites. Their ‘Indianess’ [sic] is largely gone. They have no Indian customs though they are affected by Indian folk thought and exist as Indian communities, governing themselves and receiving annuities. Their material culture is now largely that of the whites about them and they are Indians only because they dwell in an Indian reservation, possess Indian blood, and speak an Iroquois dialect. In contrast to these reservations, where the Indian has become ‘whitemanized,’ stand out the reservations of the Seneca and Onondaga.”<sup>6</sup>

Since Handsome Lake confined himself to select Haudenosaunee communities in New York State, those seeking to understand non-“whitemanized” Haudenosaunee culture only needed to follow his footsteps.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, when Tuscarora anthropologist John Napoleon Brinton Hewitt visited Kahnawà:ke in 1928, he confirmed the bias against non-Handsome Lake communities in

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<sup>5</sup> Arthur C. Parker, “The Code of Handsome Lake, the Seneca Prophet,” *New York State Museum Bulletin* 163 (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1912); rpt. in William N. Fenton, ed., *Parker on the Iroquois* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1968), 14.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> For an overview of Haudenosaunee ethnography, see Fred W. Voget, “Anthropological Theory and Iroquois Ethnography, 1850 to 1970,” in 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), 343-57.

mainstream Haudenosaunee ethnography by reporting to find there only unreliable, forgetful, confused, and “culturally perverse Indians.”<sup>8</sup>

Excluded from the Haudenosaunee ethnographic canon by the biases of outside researchers, the geographic location of the Mohawk community of Kahnawà:ke in modern Canada has also impacted its historiography in significant ways. To a great extent, scholars “situated in Canada write about Natives situated in Canada and generally confine their reviews to scholars and topics in Canada.” The same holds true for scholars based in the United States.<sup>9</sup> Rather than studying the history of Kahnawà:ke on its own geographic terms (which, prior to and after 1760 entailed extensive movement across intercolonial and eventually international boundaries), historians have structured their inquiries largely along national lines. By projecting the contemporary United States – Canada border retrospectively back into a time before it actually existed, historians have unwittingly reinforced the authority of these two settler-colonial nation-states and obscured the Mohawk conceptions of territoriality and identity fundamental to understanding Kahnawà:ke’s place in the broader context of Haudenosaunee history. Written off by American scholars as converts to Christianity, military allies of the French, and political exiles from the New York-based Haudenosaunee Confederacy (not to mention the hurdle posed to U.S.-based historians by French-language sources), the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke simultaneously assumed the role of the “bad Indians” in Canadian historiography whose ancestors fought French-Canadian historical heroes like Jacques Cartier, Samuel de Champlain,

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 69.

<sup>9</sup> Bethel Saler and Carolyn Podruchny, “Glass Curtains and Storied Landscapes: The Fur Trade, National Boundaries and Historians,” in Benjamin H. Johnson and Andrew Graybill, eds., *Bridging National Borders in North America: Transnational and Comparative Histories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 288.

and Adam Dollard des Ormeaux, and who, by their persistent advocacy for sovereign nationhood down to contemporary times, posed a threat to the parallel aspirations of Québécois Separatists.<sup>10</sup>

The upshot of these national biases in the historiography is that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke appear neither to fit or belong anywhere – culturally, spiritually, politically, economically, they defied efforts to constrain their engagements - as Mohawks - with the intrusive presence of Europeans after 1667. Yet the key factor enabling their survival as a distinct nation - their movements (beginning in the mid-late seventeenth century) across an imaginary line separating the English colony of New York from New France - has ironically confounded their claims to Indigeneity in the contemporary era. Canadian historiography in particular, as we will see, remains heavily committed to a narrative of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke as “migrants” to the St. Lawrence Valley, downplaying, if not erasing entirely, the Mohawks’ longstanding, precontact use and occupancy of the region – particularly in the vicinity of Montréal Island.<sup>11</sup>

The late Akwesasne Mohawk scholar Salli M. Kawennotakie Benedict pointed out the stakes of this representational problem in 2004, noting how “the assertion that we [i.e., Mohawks residing in the St. Lawrence Valley] are recent interlopers” constitutes an argument employed by Canadian government authorities to “break down our unique tie to the land and our claims to Aboriginal title.”<sup>12</sup> Audra Simpson echoed this concern a decade later, citing the example of the High Court of Australia’s 1992 Mabo ruling, which overturned the notion of terra nullius (i.e.,

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<sup>10</sup> For an introduction to this issue, see Russel L. Barsh, “Aboriginal Peoples and Québec: Competing for Legitimacy as Emergent Nations,” American Indian Culture and Research Journal 21.1 (1997): 1-29.

<sup>11</sup> For a recent discussion, see Allan Greer, Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires, and Land in Early Modern North America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 152.

<sup>12</sup> “Made in Akwesasne,” in James V. Wright and Jean-Luc Pilon, ed., A Passion for the Past: Papers in Honour of James F. Pendergast, Canadian Museum of Civilization Mercury Series, Archaeological Paper 164 (Gatineau, QC, 2004), 447.

“nobody’s land) justifications for Indigenous dispossession in Australia and noting how it marked the beginning of an “historical perceptibility that empowered possibilities of self- and territorial possession in the present.” Extending the analogy to Canada, Simpson described how historical erasures of Indigeneity predicated on colonial accounts that represent the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke as originating outside the boundaries of modern Québec (or Canada) pose serious challenges to the recognition and apportionment of rights for the nation in contemporary courts of law.<sup>13</sup>

Armed with an understanding of the stakes of historical representations of the origins, identity, and practices of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, we may undertake a chronological review of professional historical treatments of the community.<sup>14</sup> John Gilmary Shea offered an extensive narration of Kahnawà:ke in his (1855) Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States. Hewing closely to the themes of his Jesuit sources, Shea characterized the community as a refuge for Haudenosaunee converts to Christianity, established by the Jesuits to facilitate an escape for the new believers from “persecution from their own kindred” and the “bad example and corrupting influence” of their “pagan countrymen.” Shea noted that many of the residents of the “new colony” were “Iroquois only by adoption,” but commented glowingly on the devotional character of Kahnawà:ke’s population: “Its annals display the same regularity

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<sup>13</sup> Mohawk Interruptus, 100.

<sup>14</sup> While narratives of the community’s history date to the Jesuit Claude Chauchetière’s (1686) “Narrative of the Mission of Sault St. Louis” [in Reuben G. Thwaites, ed. The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791. The Original French, Latin, and Italian Texts, with English Translations and Notes (73 vols., Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901) (hereafter JR) 63: 140-245] I confine myself here to scholarship originating after circa 1850, which is generally recognized as the advent of professional scholarship in the North American context. See Peter Novick, That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

and innocence of life [as those of Paraguay], the same fervor in the practice of religion, virtue carried to heroic acts, and a spirit of mortification and penance worthy of the primitive church.”<sup>15</sup>

A.M. Pope’s 1883 visit to Kahnawà:ke in 1883 opened with a description of a Mohawk pilot who guided boats over the St. Lawrence River’s notorious rapids at Lachine. He remarked on the “admixture of French and Scotch blood” among the community’s population and went so far as to claim that there were “very few pure Indians” at Kahnawà:ke and “descent from European races is plainly discernible in feature and complexion. Pope seemed unaware of the circa 1716 origins of the locality he visited, conflating a brief narrative of events prior to 1716 as though they all occurred at Kahnawà:ke’s present location. He referred to the community’s role in Canadian history as a “stronghold of Christian Indians” and lamented the practice he witnessed of French-Canadian men “who marry Indian women and get possession of a portion of the Indian reserve clearly usurp the birthright of those for whom the land was set apart.”<sup>16</sup>

J.N.B. Hewitt penned the entry on “Caughnawaga” for the Smithsonian Institution’s initial Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico in 1907. He described Kahnawà:ke’s origins as follows:

“When the hostility of the pagan Iroquois to the missions established in their territory frustrated the object of the French to attach the former to their interests, the Jesuits determined to draw their converts from the Confederacy and to establish them in a new mission village near the French settlements on the St. Lawrence, in accordance with which plans these Indians were finally induced to settle at La Prairie, near Montreal, in 1668. These converts were usually called ‘French Praying Indians’ or ‘French Mohawks’ by the English settlers, in contradistinction to the Iroquois who adhered to their own customs and to the English interest.”

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<sup>15</sup> New York: Edward Dunigan & Brother, 296-340 (quotes pp.296, 300).

<sup>16</sup> “At Caughnawaga, P.Q.,” Catholic World 36.221 (August 1883): 607-16.



Hewitt repeated an assertion from the published English-language version of the Jesuit Relations that the Haudenosaunee Confederacy “finally renounced” the “converts” in 1684 (which has recently been proven to be a mis-translation of the original French-language source) after repeated failed attempts to repatriate these “emigrants from the Oneida and Mohawk.”<sup>17</sup>

The first book-length study of Kahnawà:ke’s history, E.J. Devine S.J.’s Historic Caughnawaga, appeared in 1922 as a Catholic Church-approved publication. A sense of Devine’s perspective may be gained from the following passage in the book’s Preface:

“Its proximity to the great Canadian metropolis [i.e., Montréal] has not robbed this quaint Indian village of its aboriginal atmosphere; nor has intercourse with white neighbours deprived its citizens of many of their ancient racial traits. Angular features, piercing black eyes, the guttural accents of the native language, the swarthy bronze complexion in evidence everywhere – all betoken the survival of a remnant of the once-doughty Iroquois, who for nearly a hundred years spread terror and desolation among the early European settlers on this continent.”

Devine’s 443-page monograph made use of published primary sources and nearly sixty percent of its coverage pertains to a chronological narrative of the period prior to 1760 – organized largely around biographies of the Jesuit missionaries assigned to the community. While Devine recognized the “constant intercourse kept up between the [Haudenosaunee] cantons and the Praying Castle on the St. Lawrence,” for the most part his narrative replicated themes from preceding accounts, such as the origin of Kahnawà:ke as a refuge for Haudenosaunee converts to Christianity, the piety of its population, and the military services rendered by the community’s warriors to the French until nearly the end of the regime, when they opportunistically piloted British General Jeffery Amherst’s expeditionary force through the Lachine Rapids in September

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<sup>17</sup> In Frederick W. Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin No.30 (2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1907-10) 1: 220-21. Hewitt includes a useful synonymy of historical renderings of “Caughnawaga.” On the translation error in the Jesuit Relations that has supported erroneous claims of the renunciation of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke by the Confederacy in 1684, see Jean-François Lozier, Flesh Reborn: The Saint Lawrence Valley Mission Settlements through the Seventeenth Century (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2018), 15, 308n23.

1760. “[G]ratitude [i.e., toward the French] had never been a prominent virtue” of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, in Devine’s view.<sup>18</sup>

M.A. Peck composed a brief survey of Kahnawà:ke in 1935, describing its residents as “a remnant of the once-powerful confederacy of the Iroquois, who a few decades ago roamed their own wide hunting grounds and were a law unto themselves.” Peck depicted the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke as thoroughly dominated by the Catholic Church, noting in particular the devotion of the women and offering extensive descriptions of the religious relics in the St. Francis Xavier Mission church.<sup>19</sup>

Mary Rowell Carse’s frequently-overlooked 1949 ethnography of the Mohawks devoted a special section to the “Mohawks in Canada.” She identified “Caughnawaga” as the “oldest of the Mohawk settlements in Canada” and the location where the “first converts of the Jesuits came to escape the persecution of their own people in the Mohawk Valley.” She noted the “intermingling” of Indigenous nations at Kahnawà:ke but argued that the predominance of the Mohawk language secured it culturally as a Mohawk settlement. That said, Carse emphasized the “considerable bitterness” she believed to exist between Haudenosaunee nations in New York and their members who relocated to Kahnawà:ke and later to Akwesasne. Replicating Hewitt’s erroneous interpretation, Carse contended that these two “colonies were not granted membership in the League,” and noted that during the era of intercolonial North American warfare (1689-1763) “the two divisions of the Mohawk tribe [i.e., those who remained in the Mohawk Valley and those who relocated to the St. Lawrence Valley] were often on opposing sides.” For Carse,

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<sup>18</sup> Montréal: Messenger Press. Quotes pp.i, 132, 271.

<sup>19</sup> “Caughnawaga,” Canadian Geographical Journal 10.2 (1935): 92-100.

the establishment of Kahnawà:ke marked the beginning of a process of Mohawk cultural fragmentation that rendered the Nation unable to act “in concert” as a unified whole by 1815.<sup>20</sup>

In 1950 Canadian historian George F.G. Stanley included a discussion of Kahnawà:ke in his article on “The First Indian ‘Reserves’ in Canada.” Following an explanation of the community’s origins in the desire of the Jesuits to relocate the “praying” members of the Haudenosaunee to “a sedentary colony in Canada” to protect them prosecution by their non-believing kinfolk, Stanley offered a detailed discussion of the community’s movements after 1667 and the role of the Jesuits in securing the necessary land grants from French civil authorities to facilitate those moves. Offering a view divergent from that of Carse, Stanley also commented on the unwillingness of the “Canadian Iroquois” to go to war against the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and documented “the constant intercourse and trade between the pagan and Christian Iroquois which neither the French nor the English could prevent.” Citing Swedish botanist Pehr Kalm’s 1749 observation of extensive of “miscegenation” among the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, Stanley attributed the phenomenon to the Mohawks’ ongoing practice of adopting and integrating captives from the white settler population. For Stanley, Kahnawà:ke represented an early “reserve” that established a pattern adopted by the Canadian federal government after 1867: one in which “modified segregation” facilitated gradual assimilation to the dominant culture while simultaneously protecting Indigenous people “from the worst evils of the white man’s civilization.” Significantly, Stanley pointed out the absence of any recognition by the French of Indigenous proprietary “rights in the soil” to these “reserves,” emphasizing their status as lands set as for Indigenous people via government grants to religious orders.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> “The Mohawk Iroquois,” *Archeological Society of Connecticut Bulletin* 23 (June 1949): 41-43.

<sup>21</sup> *Revue d’Histoire de l’Amérique Française* 4 (September 1950): 196-203.

Anthropologist Fred W. Voget, writing in 1951, described the “Caughnawaga Iroquois Reserve” near Montréal as subject to “concentrated acculturation” for nearly three centuries since its founding as a “Catholic mission settlement” in 1667. Voget claimed that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke “were drawn into activities based on the economic and political interests of the contacting European societies” and drew a direct line between men’s involvement in the fur trade and warfare during the seventeenth century and their employment off-reserve as skilled ironworkers in the twentieth century. “Moreover,” Voget opined, “from its very inception, Caughnawaga was subject to dissensions which at times tore the community asunder and resulted a segmentation of the population.” This trend, in his view, persisted into the contemporary era, which he described as “characterized by political dissensions of high intensity, which are also linked with religious differences.”<sup>22</sup>

A brief overview of Kahnawà:ke by Fred Bruemmer published in 1965 identified a “penchant for adventure” as the core value manifested by members of their community over the previous three centuries. Bruemmer highlighted the Jesuit-driven founding of the community, after which its residents became “staunch military allies” of New France, employing a “spy system” to thwart English imperial designs against Canada from 1680 to 1760. Echoing Voget’s 1951 characterization, Bruemmer traced patterns in off-reserve male labor undertaken by the Kahnawà:ke population from the fur trade era to the mid-twentieth century.<sup>23</sup>

The essay on “Mohawk” authored by William N. Fenton and Elisabeth Tooker for the Smithsonian Institution’s updated Handbook of North American Indians in 1978 reinforced longstanding trends in scholarship to normalize the Mohawk Valley as national ancestral

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<sup>22</sup> “Acculturation at Caughnawaga: A Note on the Native-Modified Group,” American Anthropologist 53 (1951): 221.

<sup>23</sup> “The Caughnawagas,” Beaver 296 (Winter 1965): 4-11.

homelands and to frame the origins of Kahnawà:ke as a refuge for converts to Christianity. Fenton and Tooker offered a highly constrained representation of Mohawk territory at the time of European contact, referring to settlements confined to modern Montgomery County, New York and “hunting territories” extending vaguely north to the Adirondack Mountains and south down the East Branch of the Susquehanna River “nearly to Oneonta [i.e., modern Oneonta, New York].” Fenton and Tooker identify the Franco-Mohawk peace of 1667, which followed the French military invasion of Mohawk homelands in 1666, as the event triggering the permanent relocation of hundreds of Mohawks (although they claimed that adoptees from other Indigenous nations who had converted to Christianity as constituting the initial wave of persons moving north, circa 1667-1673) to the St. Lawrence River Valley. Although careful to cite documentary evidence indicating that a majority of Mohawk warriors resided in Canada by 1673, and that two-thirds of the entire Mohawk population lived there in 1700, Fenton and Tooker emphasized the influence of Catholic Christianity on St. Lawrence Valley Mohawk culture and the participation of these French-allied Haudenosaunee in military campaigns against English-allied Haudenosaunee who remained in their ancestral homelands. Fenton and Tooker blamed the influence of Christianity at Kahnawà:ke not only for the decline of “old Mohawk religious practice” but also for what they described as the delayed arrival of the teachings of Handsome Lake.<sup>24</sup>

Kahnawà:ke historiography received a fundamental reorientation in 1980 with the publication of David Blanchard’s Seven Generations: A History of the Kanienkehaka.<sup>25</sup> Situating his work in the context of contemporary political issues confronting the Mohawks of

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<sup>24</sup> In Bruce G. Trigger, ed., Northeast, Vol.15, Handbook of North American Indians (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 466-74. 478.

<sup>25</sup> Kahnawà:ke: Kahnawà:ke Survival School, 1980. Cf. an abbreviated version, Kahnawake: An Historical Sketch (Kahnawà:ke: Kanien’kehaka Raotitiohkwa Press, 1980).

Kahnawà:ke, Blanchard made the stakes of his project clear in his Preface: “unless Mohawk people fast become familiar with the chronology of events that have shaped their past, the very survival of the Mohawk Nation is at stake.”<sup>26</sup> For Blanchard, “an instinct for survival and ability to maintain dignity” constituted “the most typical characteristic of the Mohawk people,” and he described his textbook (intended for use in the Kahnawà:ke Survival School) as “a chronicle of a people’s struggle for survival” that emphasized “the Mohawk point of view of history” by using the words and thoughts of exemplary Mohawk “teachers and traditional leaders” recorded in written sources.”<sup>27</sup>

Blanchard’s Seven Generations is best described as a polemic that countered many of the extant mainstream academic understandings of Mohawk cultural history. Blanchard identified Hochelaga and Stadacona, the two St. Lawrence Valley Indigenous settlements encountered by Jacques Cartier circa 1534-1535, as Mohawk communities and asserted an expansive view of Mohawk traditional territory (“Kanienkeh”) encompassing nine million acres bordered by the St. Lawrence and Mohawk rivers.<sup>28</sup> This enabled Blanchard to depict the post-1667 movement of Mohawks to the St. Lawrence Valley as “the resettlement of northern Kanienkeh” – a reoccupation by Mohawks of a portion of their ancestral homelands. While acknowledging the religious motivations present in this resettlement initiative, Blanchard argued that the political and economic motivations were more important: the Mohawks were staking a claim to their

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<sup>26</sup> Seven Generations, vii. For discussion of the post-1970 political context at Kahnawà:ke that led to the establishment of the Survival School and other efforts to revive Haudenosaunee traditionalism informed by the Great Law of Peace, see J. Rick Ponting, Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 151-78; Janice Hamilton, “Caughnawaga Perseveres: Forging a Renewed Mohawk Nation in the Shadow of Montreal,” Canadian Geographic 105.6 (1986): 36-45; Larry Krotz, Indian Country: Inside Another Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), 70-99; E. Jane Dickson-Gilmore, “Iati-Onkwéhonwe: Blood Quantum, Membership, and the Politics of Exclusion in Kahnawake,” Citizenship Studies 3 (1999): 27-43; Dickson-Gilmore, “‘This is my history, I know who I am’: History, Factionalist Competition, and the Assumption of Imposition in the Kahnawake Mohawk Nation,” Ethnohistory 46.3 (1999): 429-50.

<sup>27</sup> Seven Generations, ix-x.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 86, 110-13.

extensive traditional territories and establishing themselves as key middlemen between pivotal centers of the northeastern fur trade at Montréal and Albany. The Oneida adoptees who founded the community near La Prairie in 1667 went there as “bargaining agents” sent by the Mohawks, who, having been invaded by the French just one year earlier, did not yet fully trust French civil authorities to conduct fair and open negotiations. By 1673 the Mohawks had established a traditional community government “based upon the way of the Great Law of Peace” at Kentaké. For Blanchard, the Mohawks’ reoccupation of their northern territory made the Mohawks the most powerful nation in the most influential Indigenous polity in North America.<sup>29</sup>

Blanchard’s 1982 doctoral dissertation reiterated much of the historical content of Seven Generations, albeit with stronger supporting citations. In this text, Blanchard identified the central problem in Kahnawà:ke historiography as scholars interpreting changes that occurred among the people of Kahnawà:ke as evidence of acculturation when in fact they were manifestations of cultural conservatism – or changes made as part of the growth essential for the survival of Kahnawà:ke as a Haudenosaunee community. “For the Kahnawakerronon,” Blanchard argued, “the spirit of traditional Iroquois culture was preserved at Kahnawake in new institutions while the form changed in certain respects.”<sup>30</sup> Blanchard acknowledged how the perspective of external documentary sources contributed to views associating the origins of Kahnawà:ke with wholesale Catholic conversion and exclusive military allegiance to the French, but noted that these characterizations were difficult to square with the historical record of much-more-independent Kahnawà:ke Mohawk behavior. The key to reorienting historical scholarship

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 152-58, 159-60. For a chronological narrative of events circa 1673-1760, see *ibid.*, 166-246. See also *ibid.*, 164 for a map and chronology of the four settlements along the St. Lawrence River that preceded (circa 1667-1715) the contemporary location of Kahnawà:ke established in 1716.

<sup>30</sup> “Patterns of Tradition and Change: The Re-Creation of Iroquois Culture at Kahnawake” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1982), 179.

on Kahnawà:ke, according to Blanchard, was to take seriously the well-documented claims of the “northern Mohawks” that their relocation to the St. Lawrence Valley after 1667 was not an abandonment of the Mohawk Valley for the “succor of the French” but rather “a return to a territory within their sovereign domain” – in other words, listening closely to the Kahnawà:ke Mohawks’ explication of their own history.<sup>31</sup>

Blanchard’s 1982 recommendation fell initially on deaf ears in the wider academic community. Larry Villeneuve’s brief discussion of Kahnawà:ke in a 1984 publication prepared for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada described the community’s origin as “a refuge for Iroquois converts” and offered a cursory summary of the village’s geographic movements and land tenure disputes down to 1762.<sup>32</sup> Writing in 1985, historian Robert J. Surtees argued that within the larger story of Franco-Iroquois conflict in early Canadian history lay the “secondary development” of “the evolution within Canada of permanent enclaves of Iroquois peoples” during the French regime. Surtees traced the origins of these communities, which included Kahnawà:ke, to Jesuit-encouraged relocations to the St. Lawrence Valley for reasons of security, closer spiritual “supervision” by the missionaries, and a desire to enter into the French “sphere of influence.” Once in Canada, the “Canadian Iroquois” retained some ties via trade to their “former villages” but gradually came to regard themselves as distinct and autonomous – as reflected by their formation (during the mid-eighteenth century) of the Seven Nations of Canada: “a confederacy of French mission Indians.” Following Stanley, Surtees noted that the French recognized no Native title to land but instead claimed total sovereignty over all land in New France through discovery and conquest – this meant that title to Kahnawà:ke was held by Crown

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 429. See also Section 2, below.

<sup>32</sup> The Historical Background of Indian Reserves and Settlements in the Province of Québec (Ottawa: Research Branch: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1984), 60-62.



grants to the Jesuits, who were charged with converting and “civilizing” the Native people living on the seigniory of La Prairie.<sup>33</sup>

The summer 1990 “Oka Crisis,” which witnessed the closure of Montréal’s Mercier Bridge by members of the Kahnawà:ke community as a gesture of solidarity with the resistance undertaken by Kanesatake Mohawks to the proposed expansion of a golf course into ancestral burial grounds, brought significant popular attention to these Mohawk communities.<sup>34</sup> In response to perceived deficiencies in the mainstream media’s coverage of their history, Gerald Rogers of the Chateaugay Valley Historical Society penned a brief summary overview of “The Mohawks of Quebec” in 1991. Rogers’s essay echoed standard themes: Jesuit-directed movement, inter-tribal cultural diversity among its early residents, Kahnawà:ke involvement in allied French military campaigns, and a tradition of integrating non-Native captives into the community that persisted into the mid-eighteenth century. Significantly, Rogers noted the persistence of negative attitudes toward the Mohawks in Québec based on historical misunderstandings, claiming that “even today many people blame the Indians at Caughnawaga” for the August 5, 1689 “massacre at Lachine.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “The Iroquois in Canada,” in 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), 67-71, 92.

<sup>34</sup> On the “Oka Crisis,” see Geoffrey York and Loreen Pindera, People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1991); Rick Hornung, One Nation Under the Gun: Inside the Mohawk Civil War (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991); Bruce E. Johansen, Life and Death in Mohawk Country (Golden, CO: North American Press, 1993), 133-58; Kahn-Tineta Horn, Mohawk Warriors Three: The Trial of Lasagna, Noriega, and 20-20 (Kahnawà:ke: Oweria Books, 1994); Donna K. Goodleaf, Entering the Warzone: A Mohawk Perspective on Resisting Invasions (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 1995); Linda Pertusati, In Defense of Mohawk Land: Ethnopolitical Conflict in Native North America (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); Timothy C. Winegard, Oka: A Convergence of Cultures and the Canadian Forces (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2008); Harry Swain, Oka: A Political Crisis and Its Legacy (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010); Isabelle St.Amand, Stories of Oka: Land, Film, and Literature, trans. S.E. Stewart (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2018).

<sup>35</sup> Loyalist Gazette 29.2 (Fall 1991): 40-44. The 1689 Haudenosaunee attack on Lachine represented retaliation for the Denonville invasion of Seneca homelands in 1687. The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke were not involved in the

Nancy Bonvillain's popular study of Mohawk cultural history, written in 1991, picked up the theme of cultural fragmentation established by Carse and Fenton and Tooker, describing Jesuit-led efforts to persuade "Catholic Mohawks" to leave ancestral homelands and relocate to missions in Montréal after 1667 as a "complication" in Mohawk-European relations. Writing from the perspective of Mohawks who did not relocate to Canada, Bonvillain described the impact of the departures at length:

"The Mohawk remaining in New York were alarmed by the departure of the Christians for several reasons. First, it was a sign of a deep rift in Mohawk unity. Because the Mohawk valued the principle of One Heart, One Mind, One Law, such a split was especially disturbing. Second, many Mohawk worried that the French would exercise political as well as religious influence over the converts. They feared the French would persuade the Christian Indians to fight against their kin. This worry was well-founded. Kahnawake Mohawks initially pledged neutrality in Iroquois-French conflicts, but they were often drawn into battles on the side of France. They also traveled as ambassadors to the Mohawk in New York, where they tried without success to convince their kin to stop fighting the French and instead take up arms against British forces."<sup>36</sup>

Bonvillain noted how the cultural changes wrought by the Jesuits at Kahnawà:ke (including bans on divorce, rigorous discipline of children, and curtailment of ceremonial practices like dream-guessing) made the "converts appear strange to the Mohawk remaining in New York."<sup>37</sup> Though Bonvillain acknowledged the demographic reality of a majority of Mohawks residing outside the Mohawk Valley after 1700, she attributed the flow of out-migration to disease, warfare, and land loss in the Mohawk Valley. Additionally, Bonvillain returned repeatedly to the theme of fragmentation, noting the "[d]eep divisions within the Mohawk Nation when relatives and former neighbors fought on different sides" in colonial wars, and how the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke chose loyalty to their "non-Indian protectors in Québec" over their "kin in New

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attack – instead, they sought shelter inside Montréal during and long after the attack. See Jon Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534-1701* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 206-9.

<sup>36</sup> *The Mohawk* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1991), 48.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

York” for “nearly 100 years” after 1667 – owing, in her view, to the nefarious influence of the Jesuits.<sup>38</sup>

Twelve years after Blanchard’s dissertation, Christopher R. Jocks’s study of “Relationship Structures in the Longhouse Tradition at Kahnawà:ke” engaged some of Blanchard’s findings from the perspective of a community-born anthropologist. Jocks pointed out that the community’s legacy as a “mission settlement” had led historians and anthropologists to treat the community as a “prime example of acculturation,” but he noted that such an interpretation stood at odds with the community’s post-1970 reputation as “one of the more vocal centers from which Longhouse people are working to understand, maintain, revive, and extend their traditional way of life.”<sup>39</sup>

Jocks turned to the community’s history in an effort to explain this apparent paradox. In doing so, he accepted some of Blanchard’s interventions and disputed others. Acknowledging the role of Christianity in the founding of the community, Jocks noted that it rapidly assumed a “much more complex identity” that involved “respectful relations” with the Catholic Church but also the retention of ties to non-Christian “Longhouse relations to the south” [i.e., the Mohawks remaining in the Mohawk Valley].<sup>40</sup> Accepting that some Mohawk conversions to Christianity at Kahnawà:ke were sincere, Jocks moved away from Blanchard’s more cynical reading of

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54, 74. Bonvillain published a chapter on the Mohawks in her textbook survey Native Nations: Cultures and Histories of Native North America (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2001), 66-92, in which she reprised her fragmentation argument and noted that contemporary Mohawk communities are “all situated in territory near to seventeenth century Mohawk lands, [but] none are in the heart of the aboriginal nation” (quote p.66). Bonvillain (p.68) accepted the definition of Mohawk ancestral homelands at the time of contact as a span of thirty-five miles East/West and fourteen miles North/South offered by anthropologist William Starna. See his “Mohawk Iroquois Populations: A Revision,” Ethnohistory 27 (1980): 372. This yields a defined homeland of approximately 313,600 acres and roughly accords with the analogy to contemporary Montgomery County, New York offered in Fenton and Tooker, “Mohawk,” 466.

<sup>39</sup> Ph.D. diss., University of California Santa Barbara, 1994 (quotes p.185).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

conversions as mostly feigned for the strategic purpose of territorial reclamation and argued that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke engaged in “sincere, selective acceptance and retention of elements of both Catholic and Longhouse complexes.”<sup>41</sup> For Jocks, the syncretic approach undertaken by the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke represented an effort to build a new way of life that was not a mere “imitation” of the colonial population surrounding them. Over the long term, this approach facilitated the success of community members in maintaining a diverse and successful economy while fostering a strong, distinct sense of cultural identity. Noting that the varied economic undertakings of the men and women of Kahnawà:ke earned them respect and “a certain entrance into the non-Native world that was not available to all other Native peoples,” Jocks hastened to add that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke did not take that as a cue to assimilate. Rather, the presence of a “surviving Longhouse ideology of relationship” after 1667 (which upheld important traditional practices such as mutual assistance, redistribution of resources, and common landholding/property management) enabled the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke to deal effectively with the pressures introduced from mainstream settler society.<sup>42</sup>

Gerald Alfred’s (1995) monograph, Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors: Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism argued that Kahnawà:ke’s history should be understood as being “shaped by waves of inter-cultural exchange and political adaptation.” Alfred described those waves as mediated by the inherited legacy of Mohawk traditionalism and that of “a group of people who rejected the political constraints of that tradition to stake out their own place between the native society and the new European society.”<sup>43</sup> Echoing Jocks’s perspective on syncretism, Alfred claimed that the people of Kahnawà:ke integrated new cultural

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 186-94 (quote p.194).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 198, 208, 222.

<sup>43</sup> Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1995, 24.

elements “according to a pragmatic evaluation of Mohawk interests and needs.” He also saw in the establishment of Kahnawà:ke the role played by Mohawks in the “virtual dissolution” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and its return to “independent national and later village-level” principles.<sup>44</sup>

Alfred largely followed Blanchard’s conceptions of traditional Mohawk “exploitation” territory encompassing the St. Lawrence Valley as far as modern Montréal, interpreting the Mohawk placename Tiohtià:ke (“the place where the people divide”) as indicating a place that constituted a boundary between the Mohawks and other Indigenous peoples. On the question of Christianity as a motivating factor in the reoccupation of land in the St. Lawrence Valley after 1667, Alfred acknowledged its impact on traditional factional politics within the Mohawk Nation owing to the significant number of adoptees from other tribal nations who had been exposed to Christianity and whose beliefs rendered the traditional framework of conflict resolution established by the Great Law of Peace unworkable. While willing to include religion as a motivating factor in the establishment of the Haudenosaunee settlement opposite La Prairie circa 1667-68, Alfred highlighted the enhanced economic opportunity the settlement provided for participation in the fur trade of both Montréal and Albany and represented Jesuit encouragement of Mohawk relocation as “coincidental” to internal Mohawk political processes that encouraged the resolution of internal political conflict by the creation of new settlements.<sup>45</sup>

Barbara J. Sivertsen emphasized the Mohawks who remained in the Mohawk Valley in her (1996) Turtles, Wolves, and Bears: A Mohawk Family History. Following the lead of many of her United States-based predecessors, Sivertsen represented the relocation of “Catholic

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 28-42, 51 (quotes pp.28, 41).

converts” among the Mohawks to the St. Lawrence Valley as a net loss to the Mohawk nation. Yet beneath the surface rhetoric her genealogical study offered substantial evidence of ongoing ties between the Valley Mohawks and “the praying Indians of Canada, their close kinsmen the Caughnawaga Mohawks” down to the mid-1760s.<sup>46</sup>

E. Jane Dickson-Gilmore stressed the abiding influence of stress and factionalism in the seventeenth-century establishment of the Mohawk community of Kahnawà:ke in her (1999) study of the role of history in contemporary Kahnawà:ke political disputes. Dickson-Gilmore offered a sophisticated assessment of the motivations for the Mohawks to relocate north, including the economic opportunities provided by the Montréal fur trade and a desire to escape the influence of alcohol in Mohawk Valley settlements along with Jesuit-facilitated religious concerns. Dickson-Gilmore also advocated for a more nuanced understanding of the factionalism so often cited as a factor in Kahnawà:ke’s origins, noting how the long shadow cast by Jesuit sources over the community’s history influenced overly simplistic dualist interpretations of factionalism (i.e., Christian/pagan, conservative/progressive) and foreclosed an understanding of factionalism that could encompass the notion of groups of people choosing to pursue the same end by different means. In other words, for Dickson-Gilmore the fundamental conflict informing early Kahnawà:ke was not so much a matter of pagans versus converts, but rather the relative openness of different Mohawk people to the power of new ways to ensure the survival of their traditional way of life. Far from a rejection of tradition, the larger tension underlying Kahnawà:ke Mohawk factionalism was “between those Mohawks who believed their culture could successfully adapt and incorporate alien elements without compromising itself or

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<sup>46</sup> Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1996, 18, 31, 69-70, 75, 88, 117, 140, 165, 175, 178 (quotes pp.18, 31). Sivertsen claimed (p.145) that the early mission records of Sault St. Louis were “lost or destroyed.”

its traditions, and those who opposed this view as underestimating the seductive nature and power of those elements.” In Dickson-Gilmore’s view the fundamental question of Kahnawà:ke’s political history since its inception has been how best to preserve the Mohawks as Mohawks (i.e., how to ensure the community’s survival as a distinct, sovereign legal entity intelligible to outsiders while also ensuring its survival as a living Indigenous nation and culture)?<sup>47</sup>

Doug George-Kanentiio, an Akwesasne Mohawk scholar writing in 2000, credited the influence of Ray Fadden (Tehanatorens) on his career. Fadden, a non-Native educator who married into the Akwesasne community in the mid-1930s, encouraged multiple generations of students to reject mainstream versions of Mohawk history and “conduct primary research about their families, community, and nation.” George-Kanentiio, as a student of Fadden’s, reported learning from Akwesasne community elders a traditional account of “the decision by some Mohawks to leave [the Mohawk Valley] because of European encroachment, to resettle upon ancient village sites next to the St. Lawrence, where they were followed by Catholic missionaries.”<sup>48</sup> George-Kanentiio portrayed the establishment of Kahnawà:ke circa 1669 (sic) as the Mohawks’ return to ancestral homelands in a subsequent study, offering the following interpretation of an extensive Mohawk homeland that encompassed the south shore of the St. Lawrence River in the vicinity of Montréal:

“There were also periods in Iroquois history when they expanded or retracted the areas under their control, depending on variances such as warfare, internal strife, or climactic changes. Towns would have been built far from the main communities in central New York when conditions warranted, but could be abandoned in times of stress. Such was the case with the Mohawks, who had, long before European contact, thriving villages in the St. Lawrence River and Lake Champlain valleys, which, although the people may have left for one reason

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<sup>47</sup> ““This is my history, I know who I am’,” 430-32.

<sup>48</sup> Iroquois Culture & Commentary (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers), 12-13.

or another, were remembered and affirmed as evidence the Mohawks never ceded jurisdiction in those regions.”<sup>49</sup>

Gerald Reid’s (2004) monograph, Kahnawà:ke: Factionalism, Traditionalism, and Nationalism in a Mohawk Community primarily concerned post-1800 developments but included a brief historiographical discussion of the scholarly debate to date regarding the depth of religious conversion and Catholic practice at Kahnawà:ke in its opening chapter. Reid unfortunately echoed the erroneous interpretation of the alleged expulsion of Kahnawà:ke from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in 1684, which may have influenced his subsequent argument that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke “increasingly became a distinct group [i.e., from the Haudenosaunee] charting its own course and relations with Europeans.” For Reid, that meant close ties to the French and the establishment during the 1750s of a new alliance outside the constraints of the Confederacy - the Seven Nations of Canada – which became, after 1760, a Kahnawà:ke-headed network of St. Lawrence Valley Christian Native communities that interfaced with British authorities.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Iroquois on Fire: A Voice from the Mohawk Nation (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 3-4 (quote), 13 For a discussion of Ray Fadden, see ibid, 39-49.

<sup>50</sup> Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 6-15. Recent scholarship by historian Jean-Pierre Sawaya has shed important new light on the hitherto poorly-known history of the Seven Nations of Canada, highlighting the character of the confederation as an trans-community organization for self-defense and the deployment of allied military services for French- (and later British-) Canadian authorities that arose in the era of the Seven Years' War in North America (circa 1754-1763). See La Fédération des Sept Feux de la Vallée du Saint-Laurent: XVIIe – XIXe Siècle (Sillery, QC: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 1998). See also Denys Delâge et Jean-Pierre Sawaya, Les Traités des Sept-Feux Avec Les Britanniques: Droits et Pièges d'un Héritage Colonial au Québec ((Sillery, QC: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 2001). Notwithstanding the scrupulous archival research conducted by Sawaya, it is this opinion of this report that his interpretation of the relationship between the Mohawk communities and the Seven Nations is misleading on three principal accounts. First, Sawaya depicts the Seven Nations of Canada as a replacement for the St. Lawrence River Valley Mohawk communities’ membership in the Haudenosaunee Confederacy or League when in fact the Seven Nations represented a supplemental, occasional alliance network that existed alongside the previously-established, longstanding ties between Mohawk communities in the St. Lawrence Valley and those of the Mohawks and other Haudenosaunee nations in the ancestral homelands of the League in modern upstate New York. Second, Sawaya overstates the religious character of these communities. His use of domiciliés as a blanket term to describe residents of these communities occludes the crucial distinction between a mission community established and controlled by colonial religious authorities and an indigenous community hosting missionaries. Third, Sawaya tends to inflate the significance of boundaries between constituent groups of the Seven Nations, yielding an inaccurate representation of indigenous territoriality and downplaying the shared usage of lands (particularly those on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River) among allies. The Seven Nations of Canada represented a vital means



Although not a mainstream academic publication, Darren Bonaparte's (2009) study of Káteri Tekakwí:tha originates from the perspective of an accomplished Akwesasne Mohawk community scholar and offers significant insights into the early history of Kahnawà:ke. Bonaparte, in his effort to "repatriate" Tekakwí:tha for the Mohawks, identified her as the "third prophet" (replacing Handsome Lake) whose role in manifesting Haudenosaunee tradition and symbolism had been obscured by Jesuit-dominated historiography that appropriated her history entirely for Christianity and, in his view, "turned off" many Mohawks from learning more about "a very crucial period in our history." Bonaparte added "the trauma of seeing their world set ablaze" by the French in 1666 to the standard list of motivations for Mohawk relocation to the St. Lawrence Valley after 1667, noting that their settlement at La Prairie could prove that they were no longer a threat to the French while also enabling the Mohawks to "keep an eye on future troop movements of an adversary who had already demonstrated the resolve to wipe us from the face of the earth forever." Although Bonaparte repeated the erroneous claim that the Confederacy "renounced" the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke in 1684, his reading of the late seventeenth-century conflicts between Confederacy and the residents of the St. Lawrence Valley challenges the Jesuit-authored "miraculous" interpretation of Tekakwí:tha protecting Kahnawà:ke from attack by "pagan" Haudenosaunee by pointing out "the strong family ties between the two groups." "No matter how bad things got between their respective European allies," Bonaparte maintained, "there were still people going back and forth on a regular basis" through the era of the American Revolutionary War. Bonaparte concluded his monograph with a

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of diplomatic recourse for the Mohawks of Akwesasne, Kahnawake, and Kanesatake during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but their ties to this novel Indigenous political entity never superseded their deep connections to the Mohawk Nation and/or the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Cf. Blanchard, "The Seven Nations of Canada: An Alliance and a Treaty," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 7.2 (1983): 10-12, 19; Lozier, "History, Historiography, and the Courts: The St. Lawrence Mission Villages and the Fall of New France," in Philip Buckner and John G. Reid, eds., *Remembering 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 117; Lozier, *Flesh Reborn*, 13-14, 307-8n21.

call to move beyond the devotional perspective on Kahnawà:ke's history (as embodied by Jesuit-dominated discourse on Tekakwí:tha) and to take a fresh look at the origins of the community in a Haudenosaunee cultural framework – as a means of subverting scholars' longstanding preference for the “last bastions of Iroquois traditionalism” alleged to be limited to Seneca and Onondaga homelands.<sup>51</sup>

Jean-François Lozier's (2018) monograph, Flesh Reborn: The Saint Lawrence Valley Mission Settlements through the Seventeenth Century folded the story of Kahnawà:ke into an original analysis of how the St. Lawrence Valley “became a space of renewal and regeneration for a range of Indigenous peoples who were experiencing great upheavals” during the seventeenth century. Opposing a standard narrative of Indigenous withdrawal from an advancing colonial frontier, Lozier showed how these communities drew closer to European settlement and carved out a place for themselves in its immediate vicinity at places like Kahnawà:ke, Lorette, Odanak, and La Montagne. Lozier's work is supported by fresh and comprehensive work in French-language sources (which enabled him to correct several critical errors found in nineteenth-century published translations). He offered a nuanced historiographical discussion that points out in particular the pivotal role of the Oka Crisis of 1990 and subsequent litigation concerning the rights of these descendant communities which yielded a consensus that while members of the St. Lawrence Valley mission settlements were subject to pressures from colonial authorities, they also received recognition with certain privileges and exemptions, notably in criminal law, owing to their considerable economic and military significance. Lozier conceded that even within the context of their status as French military

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<sup>51</sup> A Lily Among Thorns: The Mohawk Repatriation of Káteri Tekakwí:tha (Mohawk Territory of Akwesasne: Wampun Chronicles). Quotes pp.10, 118, 133, 246, 252, 261.

allies, the French “could not dictate the terms of these communities’ participation in intercolonial conflicts.” Yet he went on to make the following statement:

“Notwithstanding the realities of Indigenous autonomy and accommodation on the ground, as far as the mission settlements or any other contact zones are concerned, there should be no doubt that the French colonial project was aimed at political domination. That the French generally lacked the means to impose themselves must not make us lose sight of this fact.”<sup>52</sup>

Lozier’s assertion of the abiding colonial context of the St. Lawrence Valley removes agency from the Indigenous people he claims to represent as historical actors. If they were “never absorbed” by the French, it was not for lack of effort on the part of the latter. Echoing longstanding tropes of Indigenous migration as explaining the origins of these communities, Lozier accepts at face value contemporary French descriptions of them as “colonies” of individuals who left their “home territories” for French-sponsored mission settlements to form identities distinct from the communities “from which they had detached themselves.” Lozier also opted to emphasize what he viewed as the “very real,” though also very brief, “divisiveness and violence” manifested between the Haudenosaunee and the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke during the final two decades of the seventeenth century – in contradistinction to what he himself acknowledged as a consensus viewpoint suggesting the greater significance of “unity” between the two groups.<sup>53</sup>

In his account of the origins of Kahnawà:ke after 1667, Lozier proved unable to overcome the biases of his Jesuit sources – accepting at face value contemporary missionary narratives of the “old stock” Haudenosaunee becoming overwhelmed by adoptees from other Indigenous nations who had been exposed to Christian teachings and whose resistance to

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<sup>52</sup> Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press. Quotes pp.5, 13.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7, 21.

assimilation into Haudenosaunee nations provided a viable clientele for the Jesuit missions in the St. Lawrence Valley. Lozier emphasized how the northern movement of Haudenosaunee coincided with the then-reigning French colonial policy of francization – i.e., conversion to Christianity and gradual assimilation within colonial society by the means of intermarriage between Indigenous women and male habitants. Lozier acknowledged that the Jesuits’ recognition of Haudenosaunee women as the most ardent promoters of Kahnawà:ke could be understood in a Haudenosaunee cultural context, insofar as women had a special motivation to “reconstitute extended families” given their role in solidifying female lineages for purposes of community leadership, solidarity, and overall cohesion, but for the most part his interpretation hews closely to that of the Jesuits themselves. If Kahnawà:ke could be seen as an “extension of Iroquoia” given its retention of traditional matrilineal kinship structures, seasonal subsistence patterns, and use of the Mohawk language; if the residents of Kahnawà:ke moved extensively back and forth from the St. Lawrence to the Mohawk valleys to visit family and friends, participate in rituals and ceremonies, seek out marriage partners, and conduct trade – none of that mattered as much relative to “Christianity and the French alliance” which by circa 1700 emerged as “fundamental components of individual and collective identity” at Kahnawà:ke.<sup>54</sup>

The foreshortened chronology of Lozier’s study, ending in 1700, facilitates the author’s hypothesis that within the space of little more than a single generation, the residents of Kahnawà:ke “ceased to consider themselves Haudenosaunee (i.e., People of the Longhouse or members of the League).” Parroting the Jesuit Claude Chauchetière’s gleeful 1684 remark that Christianity had persuaded the people of Kahnawà:ke to take up arms against their own nation, Lozier dwells on evidence of Kahnawà:ke participation as “staunch allies of the French” in

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 154-55, 166-67, 176, 194.

military campaigns against the Senecas (1684, 1687), Mohawks (1693) and Onondagas and Oneidas (1696). Notwithstanding his own refutation of the longstanding erroneous claim that the Haudenosaunee “renounced” the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke in 1684, Lozier maintained that on balance, the latter grew “closer to the French” and cultivated an increasingly distinct religious and political identity from the “‘infidel Iroquois’ of the Five Nations” by 1700.<sup>55</sup>

The few details concerning the eighteenth century in Lozier’s study give the reader pause when considering the credibility of his interpretation of the seventeenth century. The persistence of multifamily longhouses and the Mohawk language at Kahnawà:ke beyond 1750, along with the exclusive use of the Wendat language for Catholic religious practice suggested that the missionary goal of assimilation fell short. Mohawk individuals continued to make frequent movements to and from communities in the Mohawk and St. Lawrence river valleys after 1700. Yet for Lozier, it ultimately came down to French colonial attitudes. The critical role played by Kahnawà:ke warriors in the defense of New France “contributed to amplifying colonial expectations of subservience” by the end of the French regime, and those expectations clashed with any sense of “Indigenous self-determination” that the people of Kahnawà:ke might have carried with them from “foundational years of the seventeenth century.”<sup>56</sup>

Our review of general overviews of Kahnawà:ke history to 1760 ends with consideration of Daniel Rück’s (2021) The Laws and the Land: The Settler Colonial Invasion of Kahnawà:ke in Nineteenth Century Canada. In his Introduction, Rück made the salient point that many of the prior historians, anthropologists, and journalists writing about Kahnawà:ke approached the community as “storytellers” who came with their minds made up, saw what they wanted to see,

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 195-97. For Lozier’s extended discussion of these conflicts, see ibid., 201-73.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 295-303.

and reported their “findings” to their respective audiences. In his effort to move beyond that longstanding problem, Rück used his first chapter to lay the groundwork for a treatment of Kahnawà:ke history that accounted for its residents’ perspectives on their own past. In his discussion of the origins of Kahnawà:ke, Rück noted the presence of positive economic motives alongside the “negatives” of flight from religious persecution, war, and disease. He argued that the Mohawks saw themselves as “moving into a different part of their own national territories and they formed a political and military alliance with the French in exchange for political independence, economic opportunity, and land security.” Concerned primarily with the question of settler intrusion into the seigneurie of Sault St. Louis, Rück offered a discussion of the 1680 deed from the French Crown granting the seigneurie to the Jesuits to manage for the people of Kahnawà:ke and outlined how the Jesuits’ concessions of lands within the seigneurie to French settlers circa 1704-1759 set in motion a history of dispossession with which the community continues to struggle.<sup>57</sup>

### Summary and Assessment

Over nearly 170 years of professional scholarship much has changed in representations of Kahnawà:ke’s history to 1760. Thanks largely to researchers either originating in the community, or who worked closely with its members, we now have a much richer understanding of Kahnawà:ke’s origins and place in northeastern North America circa 1667-1760. That said, there remains an abiding tendency among many mainstream non-Indigenous academic historians to overstate the power and influence of European colonizers over Kahnawà:ke prior to the British Conquest. These perspectives rely on the utilization of historical vantage points and analytical

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<sup>57</sup> Vancouver: UBC Press, 5, 28, 42-45.

scales that privilege Europeans, assumptions that equate contact with Europeans as “colonialism,” and an emphasis on linear models of inquiry that yield predetermined outcomes of inevitable European domination.

Cornell University archaeologist Kurt Jordan offers important guidance for “prun[ing] back” the concept of colonialism as a structuring inquiry into Indigenous peoples’ histories that have particular applicability to the history of Kahnawà:ke. Jordan points out the ways in which broad-brush political and economic perspectives can obscure Indigenous agency and autonomy, and recommends assessing the possibility Indigenous peoples incorporating some externally-derived influences outside of an assumed context of colonial domination. Similarly, Jordan calls for close attention to the particular vantage point from which inquiry into an Indigenous community’s past proceeds – choices made regarding vantage point influence the representation of values, meanings, and degrees of relevance: within a given perspective some processes or connections will appear more significant than others, and some may be invisible. This can be as straightforward as a simple “turning the tables” approach that offers a counterpoint to acculturationist thinking. “Choices about spatial and temporal scales,” notes Jordan, “have dramatic effects on scholars’ ability to perceive Indigenous autonomy, assess the intercultural balance of power, and specify the modes and motivations for social interaction.” He cites the example of anticipatory arguments that rely on cherry-picked early evidence to foretell the eventual triumph of settlers as key problem in many studies of colonial-era Indigenous communities. Finally, Jordan urges avoiding the label of “colonialism” for describing engagements in which impacted Indigenous groups remained politically and economically autonomous. Instead, to represent contexts involving long-term, gradual, and non-directed processes of interaction, he advocates the framework of “cultural entanglement,” reserving

“colonialism” for times and places when colonizers truly held the upper hand (i.e., unchallenged military domination, truncation of the Indigenous land base, or rendering Indigenous settlement and subsistence systems impossible). For Jordan, systematic adoption of Indigenous structural vantage points, locality-based spatial scales, and narrow swaths of time will often reveal evidence of significant Native autonomy hitherto obscured by broad-brush applications of colonialism.<sup>58</sup>

Subsequent sections of this literature review will place these recommendations into conversation with historical scholarship on key themes of Kahnawà:ke’s pre-1760 past to identify what has been done, what is missing, and where there is need for revision of current scholarly understandings. It is vital to note the very real stakes of representation of Kahnawà:ke’s past in academic historiography given the translation of these perspectives into Canadian mainstream media and court decisions regarding Indigenous and treaty rights.

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<sup>58</sup> “Pruning Colonialism: Vantage Point, Local Political Economy, and Cultural Entanglement in the Archaeology of Post-1415 Indigenous Peoples,” in Neal Ferris, Rodney Harrison, and Michael V. Wilcox, eds., Rethinking Colonial Past through Archaeology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 104-21.



## 2) Oral Traditions Associating the Mohawks with the St. Lawrence Valley Prior to Contact

The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke understood their ancestral rights to the St. Lawrence River valley, particularly in the vicinity of Montréal, and related traditional accounts of their claims to this region to European audiences on five different occasions between 1766 and 1796. These documented oral accounts are especially significant given the early dates at which they appear in the record, which not only locates them much closer in time to the events they describe than traditions collected after 1800, but also greatly reduces complications from the so-called “feedback effect” by which Indigenous oral accounts are alleged to incorporate information from European-authored texts, thereby contaminating their validity.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, recognition by contemporary Indigenous and European observers of the validity of the Mohawks' ancestral rights of occupancy and use of lands in the St. Lawrence River Valley, both north and south of the modern U.S.-Canada border (which necessarily implies their right to move back and forth across that subsequently-drawn line) may be documented over a long period of time prior to 1760.

Following the British conquest of Canada in 1760, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke found themselves in need of asserting their rights of ownership to lands north of the St. Lawrence River. Mohawk residents of Kahnawà:ke (along with delegates from Akwesasne and Kanehsatake disputed an interpretation of their hunting grounds by Crown Superintendent of Indian Affairs Sir William Johnson in 1765 as limited to an area bounded by “Skaniadarowane,

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<sup>59</sup> Alexander von Gernet, “What My Elders Taught Me: Oral Tradition as Evidence in Aboriginal Litigation,” in Owen Lippert, ed., Beyond the Nass Valley: National Implications of the Supreme Court’s Delgamuukw Decision (Vancouver: The Fraser Institute, 2000), 108-9.

near Crown Point” (i.e., Lake George) and the south shore of the St. Lawrence River.<sup>60</sup> At a September 8, 1766 conference with British colonial officials on Isle La Motte in Lake Champlain, called to resolve a hunting boundary dispute between the Haudenosaunee and Abenakis, a Kahnawà:ke Mohawk speaker described the upper St. Lawrence River Valley lands in the following terms:

"As to the original Owners thereof any one that knows the history of this Country before that period [i.e., since the arrival of Europeans] will testify it to have been ye undisputed Right of the 6 Nations and their Allies, & was chiefly occupied in the hunting seasons by the Antient Mohawks whose Descendants we are. And our Forefathers going to hunt mostly in this Neighbourhood was one of the principal reasons of our Settling upon the River St. Lawrence near Montreal. Since whenever they killed any Game nearest that market they brought it there, and being well rec[eive]d, & flattered by the French (on the Contrary were slighted by the Dutch who then possessed the Prov[inc]e of N[ew] York) families after families settled & remained in Canada w[hi]ch occasioned the Establishment of what to this day is called the French Mohawks & our present habitation."<sup>61</sup>

Three years later, still seeking redress from British officials for trespasses by Abenakis on their hunting grounds (including a number of Abenaki individuals who had resided as refugees at Akwesasne since the destruction of their home settlement of Odanak by Robert Rogers's Rangers on 6 October 1759), Akwesasne speaker Adighwadooni pointed out that the Mohawks originally settled at Akwesasne in full confidence of their exclusive claim to the area, noting that “anyone that knows about our ways & Customs” would realize that:

“we never would have settled here, had we known that Strangers might mix and settle amongst us whenever they pleased. And no Nation of Ind[ia]ns would attempt it of themselves, without being set on & encouraged to it by whites.”<sup>62</sup>

In February 1770, leaders from Akwesasne and Kahnawà:ke demanded that the Abenakis and a troublesome Canadian trader named Hertel depart Akwesasne on the authority of the “Iroquois

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<sup>60</sup> James Sullivan et al, eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (14 vols., Albany, NY, 1921-65, hereafter *WJP*) 11: 876. Cf. Delàge et Sawaya, *Les Traités des Sept-Feux Avec Les Britanniques*, 229.

<sup>61</sup> *WJP* 12: 172.

<sup>62</sup> *WJP* 7: 111.

of St. Regis as the proprietors of the place” as determined by the “agreements” of 1760 (i.e., the treaties of Oswegatchie and Kahnawake, discussed below) and the Royal Proclamation of 1763.<sup>63</sup>

On October 7, 1791, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke related a traditional narrative that illustrated the ancestral ties of their community to the “six nations [i.e., Haudenosaunee] who were warring with the Hurons [i.e., Wendats] who were north of Lake Ontario, who were forced to cede their lands to us,” and noted that the Wendats' cession of territory north of the St. Lawrence River to the Haudenosaunee occurred “before a white man came to Canada.” The recitation also stated that the defeated Wendats sought refuge “beneath Québec” where they became “one” with the Algonquins and Nipissings.<sup>64</sup>

Five years later, in another gathering of the Seven Nations of Canada (hosted at Kahnawà:ke) on August 13, 1796, the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk speaker for the Seven Nations of Canada met with General Robert Prescott to protest a newly-imposed colonial restriction against their hunting northeast of modern Québec - the British intended at that time to make the area into a hunting reserve for the Innu. The Kahnawà:ke speaker asserted the rights of his nation and their allies to unhindered travel for hunting and fishing in the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, referring to a peace agreement negotiated among Native peoples prior to the arrival of Europeans that had been sanctioned during the French regime:

“we are the true Natives of this country, and God put us first on these lands; it is here that our ancestors, in order to conserve the peace, had resolved to use only one plate [and one spoon], and that we should eat all together...when the King of France put foot on our lands, he did not conquer us, he came as a brother who wants to protect the children. We

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<sup>63</sup> WJP 7: 923.

<sup>64</sup> “Conseil adressé à Mr. le Colonel Campbell, Sault St. Louis, 7 octobre 1791,” LAC, RG10, 8: 8202 (reel C-10999).

informed him of this tradition of the plate and the spoon, he approved it and encouraged us to continue.”<sup>65</sup>

This speech prompted some questions from British officials, who reached out to Indian Department staff for an explanation of the statements made in the speech. On August 26, 1786, Charles Lorimier, an interpreter based at Kahnawà:ke, gave his opinion on the “part of the Council addressed to [Prescott] by the Indians of Sault St. Louis [i.e., Kahnawà:ke] in the name of the other nations who were present.” According to Lorimier:

“The Indians from below Quebec call the Indians of Sault St. Louis their fathers, on this consideration they requested them to beseech their Father to take back his Belt or Word, that they say He forbids them to hunt or fish in all the Lower part of the River St. Lawrence North and South, without any reserve they even say firther that the whole [sic – i.e., white] people in their neighborhood prevent them making use of the Maple and plain Trees of which they make their sugar; as this discourse did not appear probable, I interrogated them in the presence of Mr. Rinfret the Missionary & of Mr. Brougier and they persisted in it. The second explanation asked me is Why the Indians of Sault St. Louis assume the stile and Title of the first Indians, I answer that the first Indians known on the discovery of Canada were the Algonquins & Nipissings who were long considered as first among the Indians and afterwards as the Indians of Sault St. Louis were more in the proximity of government, the French for that reason judged it necessary with the Approbation of all the Indian Nations to establish a great Council Fire at Sault St. Louis and since that time they have been considered as such by all the Indian subjects to the King of France. There is also a Great Council Fire at Michilimackinac, the Courte Oreilles, Ottawas are the Chiefs of it, but they look upon the Indians of Sault St. Louis as their elder Brothers, there is another Fire among the Hurons of Detroit, for all the Indians of the Southern Parts, which is also subject to the Great Fire of the Sault St. Louis. I see no Nation that does not consider the Village of the Sault St. Louis as the first, except the Six Nations, having never been subject to the French is the Reason why they were not associated to this Fire.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> LAC, MG 19, F35, Ser.2, Lot 711. On the pre-contact agreement between the Algonquins and Wendats to share hunting grounds between modern Trois-Rivières and Québec, see Jean Tanguay, “Les Règles d’alliance et l’occupation huronne de territoire,” *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 30.3 (2000): 21-34.

<sup>66</sup> *Collections and Researches of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society* (40 vols., Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1877-1929) 20 (1892): 467-68. In an August 13, 1705 speech, the “sauvages de St. Louis” [i.e., Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke] reminded the Abenaki of the latter’s junior standing in the alliance with New France: “Il y a longtemps que tu dois me connoitre. Tu n’as pas oublié qu’avant que tu arrives à Québec on te disoit a Laccadie qu’il y avait de veritables chrestiens au sault, tu à suivy mon exemple et a cause de cela tu me regards comme ton ainé.” See LAC, C11A, vol.22: f.264v (reel F-22). Cf. the 1671 statement of Canadian Governor Daniel de Rémy de Courcelles that the initial French settlement of Canada (at Québec) was established in 1608 at a “canton of the Algonquins who welcomed us” in Pierre Margry, éd., *Découvertes et Établissements des Français dans l’Ouest et dans le Sud de l’Amérique Septentrionale* (6 vols., Paris: Maisonneuve Frères et Ch. Leclerc, 1879-88) 1: 174.

Notwithstanding Lorimier's effort to associate the tendency of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke to "assume the stile and Title" of "the first Indians known upon the discovery of Canada" as originating with French colonial recognition of a "great Council Fire" there (most likely a reference to Kahnawà:ke's hosting of the Treaty of Montréal in 1701<sup>67</sup>), the September 8, 1766, October 7, 1791 and August 13, 1796 documented Kahnawà:ke Mohawk recitations, considered together, represent critical pieces of evidence linking the precontact actions of the Haudenosaunee to their subsequent proprietorship of lands in the St. Lawrence River Valley north of the modern international boundary between Canada and the United States. Two additional Haudenosaunee recitations of oral tradition in 1795 also recount the precontact origins of hostilities between the Algonquins and the Iroquois and the two nations agreeing subsequently to rely on the St. Lawrence River as a general boundary for hunting purposes while agreeing to share the area between the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers.<sup>68</sup> In 1835, Algonquin leaders corroborated the validity of Haudenosaunee use of hunting grounds between the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers, noting in a petition to officials of the government of Upper Canada that Haudenosaunee hunting lands were bounded "to the southward" of the Ottawa River "by a range of land separating the waters which fall into the St. Lawrence."<sup>69</sup>

In addition to these transcriptions of oral tradition related by Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and other Indigenous people regarding the nature of the former's historical relationship to lands in the St. Lawrence River Valley, we find further evidence in the records of French and English

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<sup>67</sup> Lozier, *Flesh Reborn*, 285-89, 301-2.

<sup>68</sup> "Paroles des Sauvages des Sept villages du Bas Canada, adressée à Mons. Le Colonel McKi [sic-i.e., Alexander McKee]...", Sault St. Louis, July 1795 (LAC, RG8, 248: 230 [reel C-2848]); "Council of Indians of Oswegatchie to His Excellency Governor Simcoe the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1795," LAC, MG11-CO42, 319: 189 (reel B-282).

<sup>69</sup> François Kaontinoketch et al. to John Colborne, Montréal, 6 June 1835, LAC, RG10, 96: 39562 (reel C-11469).

colonial officials corroborating the notion that Mohawk territory at the time of contact spanned the current U.S.-Canada border and that prior to and after first contact, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and their Mohawk ancestors traveled freely back and forth across that subsequently-imposed line within their territory as part of the routine practice of daily life, for purposes related to the maintenance of community social and ceremonial ties, and for purposes of trade, diplomacy, and warfare. Although relatively few Europeans ventured into Mohawk homelands west of today's Montréal Island prior to the era of the Seven Years' War (circa 1754-1760), the sources indicate the consistent presence of Haudenosaunee people in the St. Lawrence River Valley.

In 1669, a Jesuit observer referred to "many savages who lived on the banks of the St. Lawrence in the direction of the outawak."<sup>70</sup> Four years later Charles Le Moyne encountered Haudenosaunee people near the mouth of the Grasse River (in contemporary St. Lawrence County, New York), and in 1695 another French official mentioned the Haudenosaunee hunting in that same area.<sup>71</sup> In 1696, French authorities described what is now eastern Ontario (between the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers) as the "usual hunting grounds" of the Haudenosaunee.<sup>72</sup> In May 1721, Jesuit Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix reported the presence of a Haudenosaunee man known as "the Quaker" and a settlement of "eighteen or twenty families of his own nation" on "Tonihata" [i.e., modern Grenadier] Island in the St. Lawrence River.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> JR 63: 159.

<sup>71</sup> E.B. O'Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, eds., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (15 vols., Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1853-87) (hereafter NYCD) 9: 99, 596.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid 9: 641.

<sup>73</sup> Charlevoix, Journal of a Voyage to North America, Undertaken by the Direction of the French King, Containing the Geographical Description and Natural History of that Country, Particularly Canada, Together with an Account of the Customs, Character, Religion, Manners, and Traditions of the Original Inhabitants, in a Series of Letters to the Duchess of Lesdiguières (2 vols., London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1761), 1: 296-97 (quotes); NYCD 9: 77n.

The seriousness with which French and British colonial officials regarded the validity of Haudenosaunee possession of these lands appears in a May 15, 1752 assertion by the French Ministry of the Marine that no settlement upriver from Montréal could be undertaken without the permission of the Haudenosaunee, "who have always considered as being theirs most of the lands that surround the said Lake [Ontario], and it is only with their consent that the Fort at Niagara was ever established in the northern part of that region."<sup>74</sup> Two years later a delegation of Haudenosaunee leaders in Montréal reminded French officials that the forts erected by the French in the St. Lawrence River valley and drainage basin after 1720 (e.g. Forts Frontenac, Niagara, and La Présentation) had been built to accommodate Haudenosaunee needs (i.e., as trading posts) and that the lands surrounding them remained Haudenosaunee hunting territory.<sup>75</sup> In 1757 French military officer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville referred to the "excellent hunting grounds of the Iroquois" as extending beyond the north shore of the St. Lawrence River.<sup>76</sup> In August 1760, British Army Captain John Knox cast a longing gaze on the "country north and south" of the St. Lawrence River in the vicinity of Akwesasne as:

"even, rich, and capable of great improvement, inhabited principally by Indians, which, with the uncommon fertility of the circumjacent islands, producing Indian and other corn in great abundance, and the prospect of an immense fur-trade."<sup>77</sup>

Writing in 1765, Sir William Johnson, British Superintendent of Indian Affairs in North America, reflected on the security context that compelled the French to recognize

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<sup>74</sup> "Mémoire du Roy pour servir d'instructions au Sr. M. Duquesne..." Marly, 15 mai 1752, LAC, AC, B, 95: f.19v (reel F-298).

<sup>75</sup> "Conseil secret tenu a Montréal par les Onneyouts, Kaskaronens, Goyog8ins adressé aux domiciliés," Montréal, 23 October 1754, LAC, AC, C11A, 99: f.391v (reel F-99).

<sup>76</sup> Margry, éd., *Relations et mémoires inédits pour servir a l'histoire de la France dans les pays d'outre-mer tires des archives au Ministère de la Marine et des colonies* (Paris: Challamel, 1867), 80.

<sup>77</sup> John Knox, *An Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America for the Years 1757, 1758, 1759, and 1760* [1769; rpt., 3 vols., ed. Arthur G. Doughty (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1914-16), 2: 548.

Haudenosaunee control over the upper St. Lawrence River Valley, suggesting that their doing otherwise "might have ended in the ruin of their whole colony."<sup>78</sup>

### Summary and Assessment

The preponderance of early Kahnawà:ke Mohawk oral tradition supports an understanding of the origins of the community as a reclamation or reoccupation of ancestral territory in the St. Lawrence Valley – particularly that portion of the St. Lawrence Valley in the vicinity of contemporary Montréal. This is a crucial, and nearly universally overlooked body of evidence that warrants careful consideration in light of the more frequently-cited archaeological evidence and documentary sources. Possessed of an enhanced understanding of how the residents of Kahnawà:ke understood and represented their origins to colonial authorities during the eighteenth century, we may move to an in-depth assessment of trends in how the community has been represented in archaeological and historical scholarship.

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<sup>78</sup> WJP 12: 118.



### 3) First Contact, Dispersal of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians and Implications for the Mohawk Nation

The period between Jacques Cartier's departure from North America in 1543 and the arrival of Samuel de Champlain sixty years later has received little attention from historians to date, owing primarily to a perceived lack of evidence, especially written records. Far from representing an historical vacuum, however, the second half of the sixteenth century witnessed a number of crucial developments in northeastern North America, comprehension of which is essential for understanding the indigenous political landscape that Champlain first intruded upon in 1603. Integrative analysis of archaeological research, Native oral sources, and fragments of documentary evidence reveals the ways in which indigenous conflicts over access to exchange routes engendered massive rearrangements of the human geography of northeastern North America from 1550 to the turn of the seventeenth century. These vital developments enabled Native people to refine pre-existing processes of political and economic alliance formation before they engaged with French, Dutch, and English colonizers on the borders of their homelands after 1608. This essay reverses the standard trope of contact-era historiography, in which Europeans arrive and exert "influence" of various kinds on indigenous nations, by emphasizing the degree to which Champlain and the early settlers of Québec found themselves entangled in pre-existing indigenous political, military, and economic contexts long after their arrival in North America.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> The standard trope is most recently articulated in Christophe Boucher, "'Mobilis in mobili': Samuel de Champlain et le monde géopolitique amérindien dans l'axe Grands Lacs – Saint Laurent," in Guy Martinière and Didier Poton, eds., *Le Nouveau Monde et Champlain* (Paris: Les Indes savants, 2008), 63-74. In this respect, much of the scholarship on Champlain's interactions with Native people still retains echoes of the celebratory "Indian Pageants" incorporated into the Champlain Tercentenary commemorations of 1909 [see Henry W. Hill, *The Champlain Tercentenary: Report of the New York Lake Champlain Tercentenary Commission* (Albany: J.B. Lyon, 1911), 86-90, 425-63].

Standard historical accounts aver the "disappearance" of the Iroquoian peoples of the St. Lawrence valley at some point between Jacques Cartier's departure in 1543, leaving the region in an "abandoned" state at the time of Champlain's first visit six decades later. Yet we know that the Laurentian Iroquois (the Hochelagans, Stadaconans, and others encountered by Cartier) maintained long-distance contacts with Europeans (primarily Basque whalers and fishermen) in waters off Newfoundland long after Cartier's last voyage. Basque whalers and fishermen from Spain and France constituted the dominant European presence in this region between 1540 and 1580. Archaeological and linguistic evidence helps to flesh out the picture of Basque-Iroquois interaction in Newfoundland during the middle decades of the sixteenth century. The discovery of a potsherd with diagnostic Laurentian Iroquois stylistic markings in a collapsed Basque structure on Red Bay in the Strait of Belle Isle, dating to approximately 1550, strongly suggests the presence of Laurentian Iroquois people. Recent excavations have also established the cooperative, even seasonally coresident nature of Basque relations with Laurentian Iroquois (and other native) inhabitants of the St. Lawrence River valley, with the Basques providing payment (in the form of trade goods, and possibly foodstuffs) in exchange for indigenous expertise and assistance with whale-oil rendering. In addition, important new linguistic research indicates that the long-assumed Basque origin of the word "Iroquois" is much more likely to have derived from direct Basque contact with Iroquoian-speaking peoples, rather than having been obtained indirectly via Algonquian-speaking peoples.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> S. Barkham, "Documentary Evidence for 16<sup>th</sup> Century Basque Whaling Ships in the Strait of Belle Isle," in G.M. Story, ed., *Early European Settlement and Exploitation in Atlantic Canada: Selected Essays* (St. John's, Newfoundland: Memorial University, 1982), 53-62; James Tuck, "A Sixteenth Century Whaling Station at Red Bay, Labrador," in *ibid*, 47; William A. Douglass and Jon Bilbao, *Amerikanuak: Basques in the New World* (1975; reprint, Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 54-55, 70-73; Claude Chapdelaine and Gregory G. Kennedy, "The Origin of the Iroquoian Rim Sherd from Red Bay," *Man in the Northeast* 40 (1990): 41-43; Charles A. Martijn, "The Iroquoian Presence in the Estuary and Gulf of the Saint Lawrence Valley: A Reevaluation," *Man in the Northeast* 40 (1990): 57; Laurier Turgeon, "Basque-Amerindian Trade in the St. Lawrence during the Sixteenth Century: New

The mutually-beneficial nature of Laurentian Iroquois-Basque exchanges encouraged regular visits by increasing numbers of western European vessels to Tadoussac after 1550. As the only place on the St. Lawrence River that offered Europeans an opportunity to combine whaling, inshore cod- and salmon-fishing, and trade with Native peoples, Tadoussac attracted a regular, multinational European presence (estimated at approximately one hundred ships per year) during the latter half of the sixteenth century. The annual summer commerce at Tadoussac intensified Native movements to and from the St. Lawrence River valley, one of the two key indigenous axes of human, material, and informational movement during the latter half of the sixteenth century in eastern North America; the other axis extended into the continental interior from Chesapeake Bay, where Europeans engaged in direct trade with neighboring Algonquian peoples after 1546. The flow of trade goods along the Laurentian and Mid-Atlantic axes is reflected in archaeological evidence of increasing amounts of marine shell beads (of both North American and European origin), as well as European copper and iron on Mohawk, Onondaga, and Seneca sites between approximately 1500 and 1540. The rough parity in volume of these exotic items in the material record appears to shift after approximately 1560, with a continued presence of copper, brass, shell, and iron objects on Seneca, Onondaga, and Susquehannock sites

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Documents, *New Perspectives*, "Man in the Northeast" 40 (1990): 81-87; *idem*, "French Fishers, Fur Traders, and Amerindians during the Sixteenth Century: History and Archaeology," *William and Mary Quarterly* 55 (1998): 608; Martijn, S. Barkham, and Michael M. Barkham, "Basques? Beothuk? Inuit? or St. Lawrence Iroquoians? The Whalers on the 1546 Desceliers Map, Seen through the Eyes of Different Beholders," *Newfoundland Studies* 19 (2003): 198-99; William Sayers, "The etymology of *iroquois*: 'killer people' in a Basque-Algonquian pidgin or an echo of Norse *Irland et mikla*: 'Greater Ireland'?" *Onomastica Canadiana* 88 (2006): 43-56. See also James A. Tuck, "European-Native Contacts in the Strait of Belle Isle," in Louwrens Hacquebord and Richard Vaughan, eds., *Between Greenland and America: Cross-Cultural Contacts and the Environment in the Baffin Bay Area* (The Netherlands: University of Groningen Arctic Center, 1987), 66, who asserts the possibility of the Red Bay rim sherd's association with Agona's Stadaconan party at Belle Isle in 1542. The authenticity of this rim sherd has been disputed on the basis of trace element analysis indicating its production from clay outside known Laurentian Iroquois settlement sites. On the limits of trace element analysis for determining exchange patterns in the archaeological record, see Cheryl Claassen and Samuella Sigmann, "Sourcing Busycon Artifacts of the Eastern United States," *American Antiquity* 58 (1993): 346.

and a relative scarcity of similar inventories on Mohawk sites until approximately 1580. These changing patterns of material evidence suggest the greater vitality of the Mid-Atlantic exchange axis vis-à-vis the Laurentian axis, and the increasing isolation of the Mohawks from the former. Evidence of this crucial shift in the material record, analyzed in conjunction with fragmentary documentary evidence from European voyagers and native oral histories recorded by Europeans in the seventeenth century, facilitates historical reconstruction of the series of large-scale regional population shifts in northeastern North America after circa 1570.<sup>81</sup>

Innovative patterns of indigenous movement related to exchange, resource procurement, and the assimilation of captives taken on distant military campaigns resulted in dispersals, assimilations, and relocations of indigenous nations throughout a vast arc of territory spanning

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<sup>81</sup> Samuel de Champlain, The Works of Samuel de Champlain (6 vols., ed. H.P. Biggar, Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1922-36) (hereafter Champlain, Works) 2:117; D.B. Quinn, ed., New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612 (5 vols., NY: Arno Press, 1979), 1: 217-18; Milton J. Wright, The Walker Site, National Museum of Man Mercury Series No.103 (Ottawa, 1981), 111; William R. Fitzgerald, Lest the Beaver Run Loose: The Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century Christianson Site and Trends in Historic Neutral Archaeology, National Museum of Man Mercury Series No.111 (Ottawa, 1982), 273; John A. Dickinson, "Old Routes and New Wares: The Advent of European Goods in the St. Lawrence Valley," in Bruce Trigger, Toby Morantz, and Louise Dechêne, eds., Le Castor Fait Tout: Selected Papers of the Fifth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1985 (Montréal: Lake St. Louis Historical Society, 1987), 31-41; James Bradley, Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois: Accommodating Change, 1500-1655 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 58-60, 90-97; J.V. Wright and Roy L. Carlson, "Prehistoric Trade," in R. Cole Harris, ed., The Historical Atlas of Canada, vol.1, From the Beginnings to 1800 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), Plate 14; David B. Guldenzopf, "The Colonial Transformation of Mohawk Iroquois Society" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Albany, 1987), 3; Herbert C. Kraft, "Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Indian/White Trade Relations in the Middle Atlantic and Northeast Regions," Archaeology of Eastern North America 17 (1989): 1-29; Dean Snow, Mohawk Valley Archaeology: The Sites, Matson Museum of Anthropology Occasional Papers in Anthropology No.23 (University Park, PA, 1995), 197; James F. Pendergast, "The Introduction of European Goods into the Native Community in the Sixteenth Century," in C.F. Hayes III, Connie Cox Bodmer, and Lorraine P. Saunders, eds., Proceedings of the 1992 People to People Conference: Selected Papers, Rochester Museum and Science Center Research Records No.23 (Rochester, NY, 1994), 12-15; Jacqueline E.M. Crerar, "Assets and Assemblages: The Neutral Economic Approach to Inter-Cultural Relations," in *ibid*, 46; Martha L. Sempowski, "Early Historic Exchange between the Seneca and the Susquehannock," in *ibid*, 60-61; Turgeon, "French Beads in France and Northeastern North America During the Sixteenth Century," Historical Archaeology 35.4 (2001): 72-77; Penelope B. Drooker, "Two Noded Pipes from West Virginia," West Virginia Archaeologist 54 (1-2) (2002): 47-50. See also Bernard Allaire, "L'arrivée des fourrures d'origine Canadienne à Paris (XVIe –XVIIe siècles)," in Frank Lestringant, ed., La France-Amérique (XVIe-XVIIe siècles: Actes du XXXVe colloque internationale d'études humanistes (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1998), 246-47, who argues that no substantial amounts of Canadian peltry reached Paris markets prior to 1580.

the St. Lawrence valley, Georgian Bay on Lake Huron, the Ohio River valley, and the Susquehanna River valley (in modern Pennsylvania).<sup>82</sup> The external spatial initiatives of the Haudenosaunee nations of present-day upstate New York are of particular concern to our story. Mohawk efforts to gain direct access to European fishermen and traders in the St. Lawrence River Valley (over four hundred miles from their home villages) during the 1570s offer one glimpse into the new patterns of Native movement during the early contact era. Tadoussac, located in Montagnais homelands, represented a crucial node in the Laurentian exchange axis. The local Montagnais allowed their Algonquin neighbors to trade there freely in exchange for defensive cooperation against the increasingly aggressive Mohawk presence in the St. Lawrence valley at this time.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791 (73 vols., Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901) (hereafter JR) 15:33; Jean-Baptiste Antoine Ferland, Cours d'Histoire du Canada (2 vols., Québec: A. Coté, 1861-65) 1 (1861): 387; Bradley and S. Terry Childs, "Basque Earrings and Panther's Tails: The Form of Cross-Cultural Contact in Sixteenth Century Iroquoia," in Robert M. Ehrenreich, ed., Metals in Society: Theory Beyond Analysis, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Research Papers in Science and Archaeology 8, Part II (Philadelphia, 1991), 7-18; Fitzgerald, "Contact, Neutral Iroquoian Transformation, and the Little Ice Age," in David S. Brose, C. Wesley Cowan, and Robert C. Mainfort Jr., eds., Societies in Eclipse: Archaeology of the Eastern Woodlands Indians, A.D. 1400-1700 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 38-39.

<sup>83</sup> Robert Le Blant and René Beaudry, eds., Nouveau Documents sur Champlain et son époque, Volume I (1560-1622), Public Archives of Canada Publication No.15 (Ottawa, 1967), 246-47; D.B. Quinn and A.M. Quinn, The English New England Voyages, 1602-1608 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 177; D.B. Quinn, ed., New American World 4: 305; James P. Baxter, ed., A Memoir of Jacques Cartier, Sieur de Limoilou (NY: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1906), 377-78; Champlain, Works 1:188; 5: 78; JR 4:207-9, 6:151, 8:27-29; Donald Lenig, "Of Dutchmen, Beaver Hats, and Iroquois," in Robert E. Funk and C.F. Hayes III, eds., Current Perspectives in Northeastern Archaeology: Essays in Honor of William A. Ritchie, New York State Archaeological Association Researches and Transactions 17 (1977): 73; Pendergast, "Were the French on Lake Ontario in the Sixteenth Century?" Man in the Northeast 29 (1985): 71-85; Trigger and Gordon M. Day, "Southern Algonquian Middlemen: Algonquin, Nipissing, and Ottawa, 1550-1780," in Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith, eds., Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), 68; Turgeon, "Basque-Amerindian Trade," 83; Snow, Mohawk Valley Archaeology, 143; Trigger, Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 144-48; Fitzgerald, "A Late Sixteenth Century European Trade Assemblage from Northeastern North America," in Duncan R. Hook and David R.M. Gaimster, eds., Trade and Discovery: The Scientific Study of Artefacts from Post-Medieval Europe and Beyond, British Museum Occasional Paper No.109 (London, 1995), 29-32; Daniel F. Cassidy, Paul A. Webb, and J. Bradley, "The Vanderwerken Site: A Potohistoric Iroquois Occupation on Schoharie Creek," Bulletin: Journal of the New York State Archaeological Association 111/112 (1996): 21-34; Gary Warrick, "The Precontact Iroquoian Occupation of Southern Ontario," Journal of World Prehistory 14 (2000): 456.

The northward movements of Mohawks during the last three decades of the sixteenth century, motivated by their increasing marginalization from the Mid-Atlantic exchange axis and possibly also by social repercussions stemming from severe drought and famine in northeastern North America during the late 1560s, impacted not only the Montagnais and Algonquins near Tadoussac but also as many as ten thousand Laurentian Iroquois people residing in settlements spanning from modern Jefferson County, New York to Québec City. No Laurentian Iroquois communities survived as discrete entities after 1600. Scholars have advanced numerous explanations for their dispersal, all stressing to some degree escalated indigenous warfare associated with the intensification of European fur-trading activity in the St. Lawrence Valley after 1580.<sup>84</sup>

Determining the fate of the indigenous Iroquoian population of the St. Lawrence River valley demands an imaginative and integrative treatment of the available evidence. An Iroquois oral history, which exists in several published eighteenth-century versions, describes the experience of a joint Haudenosaunee-Algonquin hunting party during the latter half of the sixteenth century, prior to direct contact between the Haudenosaunee nations that would later form the League and Europeans. The Haudenosaunee in this story are taken to represent Mohawks; they are depicted in a subaltern role, as visitors accompanying the Algonquins in

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<sup>84</sup> D.B. Quinn, North America from the Earliest Discovery to First Settlements: The Norse Voyages to 1612 (NY: Harper & Row, 1977), 577 (1560s drought and famine); Gilles Havard et Cécile Vidal, Histoire de l'Amérique Française (Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 2003), 37-39; Allaire, "The European Fur Trade and the Context of Champlain's Arrival," in Raymonde Litalien and Denis Vaugeois, eds., Champlain: The Birth of French America, trans. Käthe Roth (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 50-52; Roland Tremblay, ed., The St. Lawrence Iroquoians: Corn People (Pointe-à-Callière: Montréal Museum of Archaeology, 2006), 118-25. For eyewitness descriptions of abandoned former Laurentian Iroquois settlements in documentary sources circa 1611 to 1676, see Champlain, Works 2:176, 3: 59, 63; JR 9:59; François Du Creux, The History of Canada or New France (1664; reprint, 2 vols., trans. Percy J. Robinson, Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1951-52) 1:370; Collection de Manuscrits contenant Lettres, Mémoires, et autres Documents Historiques Relatifs a la Nouvelle-France (4 vols., Québec: A. Coté, 1883-85) (hereafter CMRNF) 1:253.

order to carry provisions and haul back the Algonquins' kill in exchange for a portion of it. But the hunters fared poorly, and the Algonquins permitted the Mohawks to go off on their own in search of game. Reconnoitering some time later, the Mohawk hunters reported great success, while the Algonquins remained empty-handed. In gratitude for the opportunity to partake in the hunt, the Mohawks shared "the best pieces" of their meat with their Algonquin hosts, but notwithstanding this gesture, jealous Algonquins murdered the Mohawk hunters. Upon their return to their home village, the Algonquins claimed that their Mohawk companions had disappeared. Suspicious Mohawk relatives of the deceased investigated the Algonquins' account by retracing the hunters' tracks. Upon discovery of the corpses of the hunters, which had been exhumed by animals, the Mohawks realized that the Algonquins had murdered their countrymen. They subsequently terminated their association with the Algonquins, retreated southward, and commenced a mourning-war that continued intermittently into the latter half of the seventeenth century.<sup>85</sup>

Even allowing for the possibility of pro-Haudenosaunee (or pro-Mohawk) bias in this account, it offers a remarkable insight into the character of precolonial inter-indigenous relations, providing a plausible explanation for how the Laurentian Iroquois became enmeshed in the anti-Algonquin advances of the Mohawks (and other) Haudenosaunee nations into the St. Lawrence River valley, eventually finding common cause (whether as allies or adoptees) of the latter. More importantly, it aligns well with other lines of available evidence about events in the late

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<sup>85</sup> Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations Depending on the Province of New-York in America (1727; reprint, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), 3-6 (quotes); Pendergast, "The Ottawa River Algonquin Bands in a St. Lawrence Iroquoian Context," Canadian Journal of Archaeology 23 (1999): 80-96. Cf. versions of the story in Emma H. Blair, ed., The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes (1911; reprint, 2 vols. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996) 1:146-47; Claude-Charles Le Roy, dit Bacqueville de la Potherie, Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale: Relation d'un Séjour en Nouvelle-France (1722; reprint, 2 vols., Monaco: Éditions de Rocher, 1997) 1:175-76.

sixteenth century St. Lawrence valley. The earliest documentary evidence ascribes responsibility for the sixteenth-century destruction of the Laurentian Iroquois settlement of Hochelaga to the "Iroquois," which in French accounts prior to 1640 almost always meant "Mohawks." Other transcribed Native accounts, most notably an extensive and detailed narrative related by an Indigenous nation (known to the French as Iroquets)<sup>86</sup> in 1642, claimed that the Wendats (a.k.a. Hurons) had dispersed the Hochelagans. We need not necessarily regard these versions of events as mutually exclusive. Archaeological evidence indicates a widespread movement of Laurentian Iroquois peoples throughout Algonquian- and Iroquoian-speaking communities throughout the Northeast -- in voluntary, captive, and refugee contexts. Such evidence suggests that the Laurentian Iroquois either dispersed on their own and/or were gradually absorbed by multiple adversaries rather than being decimated in a one-time event traceable to a specific perpetrator.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> The identity of the Iroquets is currently a matter of debate. Academic scholarship has consistently identified this nation as "Algonquin" and synonymous with the "Onontcharonons" recorded in seventeenth-century French sources. See Pendergast, "Ottawa River Valley Algonquins," 72-73, 78-80, 110-11; Mark Bourrie, "Canada's First Recorded Arbitration: *Iroquet v. Atironta*, Cahiague, Huron-Wendat First Nation, 1616," Canadian Journal of Commercial Arbitration 2.2 (2021): 1-13; William Fox, "'It's not personal, it's strictly business': Historical Accounts and Archaeological Evidence Concerning an Early Seventeenth Century Partnership," Ontario History 115.1 (Spring 2023): 103-4. Cf. a 1646 Jesuit statement (JR 29: 145-47) that describes the leader of the Iroquets as originating from present-day Montréal Island prior to 1580, which would imply the possibility of a Laurentian Iroquoian or possibly Kanienkeha'ka identity for the so-called Iroquets. It is noteworthy that this information appeared two decades after that leader (Iroquet) last appeared in documentary sources. In essence, the debate boils down to whether the Iroquets/Onontcharonons were direct descendants of Laurentian Iroquoians resident on Montréal Island during the late 16<sup>th</sup> century or whether they were an extant, external Algonquin community who incorporated Laurentian Iroquoian survivors/refugees following a post-1580 dispersal by another Indigenous nation (possibly the Wendats or Haudenosaunee). At the present time resolution of this debate awaits further research.

<sup>87</sup> JR 5:288-90n52, 22:215-17, 29:173; Lucien Campeau, ed., Monumenta Novae Franciae (9 vols. to date, Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1966--) (hereafter MNF) 5:815; Arthur T. Adams, ed., The Explorations of Pierre Esprit Radisson, From the Original Manuscript in the Bodleian Library and the British Museum (Minneapolis, MN: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1961), 45-48; Pierre F.X de Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France (trans. John Gilmary Shea, 1870; reprint, 6 vols., Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962) 2:127-28; Pendergast and Trigger, Cartier's Hochelaga and the Dawson Site (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), 72-84; Peter P. Pratt, Archaeology of the Oneida Iroquois, vol. 1, Occasional Publications in Northeastern Anthropology, No.1 (George's Mills, NH: Man in the Northeast, Inc., 1976), 172-75; Bradley, Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois, 56-64, 83-87; Conrad Heidenreich, "History of the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes Area to A.D. 1650," in Chris J. Ellis and Neal Ferris, eds., The Archaeology of Southern Ontario to A.D. 1650, Ontario Archaeological Society, London Chapter Occasional Publications No.5 (London, ONT, 1990), 482-83; Robert D.



Such an interpretation accommodates other evidence of the Laurentian Iroquois presence among the Ottawa River Valley Algonquins, Wendats, and Abenakis in the latter decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>88</sup> The lack of documentary or archaeological evidence of large-scale

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Kuhn, Robert E. Funk, and Pendergast, "The Evidence for a Saint Lawrence Iroquoian Presence on Sixteenth Century Mohawk Sites," Man in the Northeast 45 (1993): 78-86; Snow, Mohawk Valley Archaeology, 180, 198-99, 216; *idem*, "Mohawk Demography and the Effects of Exogeneous Epidemics on American Indian Populations," Journal of Anthropological Archaeology 15 (1996): 163, 171-72; Maurice Ratelle, "Location of the Algonquins from 1534 to 1650," in Daniel Clément, ed., The Algonquins, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Mercury Series No. 130 (Ottawa, 1996), 43; Warrick, "Precontact Iroquoian Occupation of Southern Ontario," 456; Wayne Lenig, "In Situ Thought in Eastern Iroquois Development: A History," Bulletin: Journal of the New York State Archaeological Association 116 (2000): 66-67; Funk and Kuhn, Three Sixteenth Century Mohawk Iroquois Village Sites, New York State Museum Bulletin No.503 (Albany: University of the State of New York, State Education Department, 2003), 157; Chapdelaine, "A Review of the Latest Developments in St. Lawrence Iroquoian Archaeology," in James V. Wright and Jean-Luc Pilon, eds., A Passion for the Past: Papers in Honour of James F. Pendergast, Canadian Museum of Civilization Mercury Series No.164 (Gatineau, QC, 2004), 63-75; Anthony Wonderley, "Effigy Pipes, Diplomacy, and Myth: Exploring Interaction between St. Lawrence Iroquoians and Eastern Iroquois in New York State," American Antiquity 70.2 (2005): 215-34. For Mohawk oral tradition of a movement led by a woman named Gaihonariosk from the vicinity of modern Québec (Stadacona?) to the Mohawk River valley, "where the climate seemed to her more temperate and the lands more suitable for cultivation," see Joseph-François Lafitau, Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times (1724; reprint, 2 vols., ed. William N. Fenton, trans. Elizabeth L. Moore, Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1974-77) 1:86. This tradition aligns well with evidence of the St. Lawrence River valley as the northern limit of maize agriculture in North America [see Bernard Hoffman, Cabot to Cartier: Sources for a Historical Ethnography of Northeastern North America, 1497-1550 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 202] and the primary role accorded to Iroquois women in decisions regarding village relocation, see William J. Engelbrecht, Iroquoia: The Development of a Native World (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 92-106. For "Iroquois" as "Mohawks" in French sources, see Marc Lescarbot, The History of New France (1609; reprint, 3 vols., ed. H.P. Biggar, trans. W.L. Grant, Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1907-14) 3:114, 117, 267-68; Du Creux, History of Canada 1: 370; Le Blant and Beaudry, eds., Nouveau Documents sur Champlain, 350-51.

<sup>88</sup> For the Ottawa River Valley Algonquins, see Frank G. Speck, "Boundaries and Hunting Groups of the River Desert Algonquin," Heye Foundation Indian Notes 6.2 (1929): 107; Pendergast, "Ottawa River Algonquin Bands," 107-10. For the Wendats, see Peter Ramsden, "The Hurons: Archaeology and Culture History," in Ellis and Ferris, eds., Archaeology of Southern Ontario, 382-83; Georges Sioui, Huron-Wendat: The Heritage of the Circle, trans. Jane Brierley (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 70, 87-88; Timothy J. Abel, "Recent Research on the Saint Lawrence Iroquoians of Northern New York," Archaeology of Eastern North America 30 (2002): 137-39. For the Abenakis, see Silas T. Rand, Legends of the Micmacs (1894; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), 137-41, 169-78, 200-22; JR 62: 265-67; Daniel K. Richter, ed., "Rediscovered Links in the Covenant Chain: Previously Unpublished Transcripts of New York Indian Treaty Minutes, 1677-1691," American Antiquarian Society Proceedings 92 (1982): 82; Edward P. Hamilton, ed., Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760 (1964; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 83-84; Marjorie K. Pratt, "The St. Lawrence Iroquoians of Northern New York," Bulletin: Journal of the New York State Archaeological Association 102 (1991): 43-44; Pendergast, "Native Encounters with Europeans in the Sixteenth Century in the Region Now Known as Vermont," Vermont History 58 (1990): 100-2; Chapdelaine, Richard Boisvert and Greg Kennedy, "Les Iroquoiens du Saint-Laurent et le bassin de la rivière Connecticut," in Chapdelaine, Norman Clermont, and Robert Marquis, eds., Étude du réseau d'interactions des Iroquoiens préhistoriques du Québec méridional par les analyses physiochimiques (Montréal: Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec, 1995), 49-58; Frederick Wiseman, The Voice of the Dawn: An Autohistory of the Abenaki Nation (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001), 59-60, 66; James B. Peterson et al, "St. Lawrence Iroquoians in Northern New England: Pendergast was 'Right' and More," in Wright and Pilon, eds., A Passion for the Past, 88-117; *idem*, "St. Lawrence Iroquoians in Northern New England: Intruders in the 'Dawnland'?" in Lisa Rankin and Ramsden, eds., From the

massacres in the St. Lawrence valley and the considerable spatial extent over which Laurentian Iroquois people moved as captives and refugees at that time suggests that host communities strongly desired their presence as live adoptees or allies. In addition to providing replacements for deceased relatives, Laurentian Iroquois adoptees brought many other potential benefits to host communities: longstanding experience with Europeans, knowledge of travel routes and resource areas in the St. Lawrence valley, a capacity for long-distance mobility, kin-based connections with other Native communities, and possibly some linguistic expertise and novel subsistence practices (most notably an expertise in eel-fishing). The similarities between Laurentian Iroquois cultural patterns and those of their Iroquoian-speaking neighbors would certainly have eased their transition into Iroquois and/or Wendat clans, especially given the latter groups' exogamous marital arrangements, which one scholar has identified as the "quickest way to cement" a core human group and newcomers together.<sup>89</sup>

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Arctic to Avalon: Papers in Honour of Jim Tuck, British Archaeological Reports International Series No. 1507 (Oxford: John and Erica Hedges, Ltd., 2006), 109-28. Cf. Day, "The Eastern Boundary of Iroquoia: Abenaki Evidence," in 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), 117-19.

<sup>89</sup> Champlain, Works 1:153-61, 2: 186, 196; Gabriel Sagard, Histoire du Canada et Voyages que les Frères Mineurs Recollects y Ont Faicts Pour la Conversion des Infidèles, Depuis l'An 1615 (4 vols., Paris: Edwin Tross, 1866) 3:803; JR 16:227-29, 35:251, 43:261, 53:243; Blair, ed., Indian Tribes 1:84-85; Patricia Galloway, "Confederacy as a Solution to Chiefdom Dissolution: Historical Evidence in the Choctaw Case," in Charles Hudson and Carmen Chaves Tesser, eds., The Forgotten Centuries: Indians and Europeans in the American South, 1521-1704 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 414 (quote); Trigger, "Sixteenth Century Ontario: History, Ethnohistory, and Archaeology," Ontario History 71 (1979): 208-10; John Steckley, "The Clans and Phratries of the Hurons," Ontario Archaeology 37 (1982): 29-34; James B. Jamieson, "An Examination of Prisoner Sacrifice and Cannibalism at the St. Lawrence Iroquoian Roebuck Site," Canadian Journal of Archaeology 7 (1983): 159-75; *idem*, "Place Royale: A Prehistoric Site from the Island of Montreal," Ontario Archaeology 47 (1987): 59-71; Mary A. Druke, "Linking Arms: The Structure of Iroquois Intertribal Diplomacy," in 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), 29-39; Michael K. Foster, "Iroquois Interaction in Historical Perspective," in Regna Darnell and Foster, eds., Native North American Interaction Patterns, Canadian Museum of Civilization Mercury Series No.112 (Ottawa, 1988), 25, 35-36; Chapdelaine, "The Mandeville Site and the Definition of a New Regional Group within the Saint Lawrence Iroquoian World," Man in the Northeast 39 (1990): 43-63; Frances L. Stewart, "Faunal Findings from Three Longhouses of the McKeown Site (BeFv-1), A St. Lawrence Iroquoian Village," Ontario Archaeology 54 (1992): 17-36; Sioui, Huron-Wendat, 87; David M. Stothers, "The Protohistoric Time Period in the Southwestern Lake Erie Region: European-Derived Trade Material, Population Movement, and Cultural Realignment," in Robert A. Genheimer, ed., Cultures Before Contact: The Late Prehistory of Ohio and Surrounding

From approximately 1570 to 1600, intense competition between the Haudenosaunee, the Wendats, and northeastern Algonquians for Laurentian Iroquois adoptees had important geopolitical consequences for Native peoples throughout northeastern North America.<sup>90</sup> At the time these indigenous nations commenced direct contact with Champlain and other Europeans during the first decade of the seventeenth century, they possessed long experience of intense competition for access to trade routes and Laurentian Iroquois adoptees over the previous three decades. These indigenous struggles also "prewired" the Haudenosaunee for their overarching spatial objective after 1614 (when Dutch traders began appearing regularly in the Hudson River valley): secure and regular access to key sections of two exchange axes: 1) the Laurentian route into the Great Lakes, and 2) the Lake Champlain – Richelieu River corridor.

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Regions (Columbus: Ohio Archaeological Council, 2000), 70; C. Junker-Anderson, "The Eel Fisheries of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians," North American Archaeologist 9.2 (1988): 106-9; Victor P. Lytwyn, "Torchlight Prey: Night Hunting and Fishing by Aboriginal People in the Great Lakes Region," in John W. Nichols, ed., Actes du Trente-Deuxième Congrès des Algonquinistes (Winnipeg: L'Université du Manitoba, 2001), 304-17; Kuhn, "Reconstructing Patterns of Interaction and Warfare," in Wright and Pilon, eds., A Passion for the Past, 148-50; Janet Young, "Bilateral Differences in Femoral Torsion: Identifying Reasons for Its High Incidence Amongst the St. Lawrence Iroquoians of the Roebuck Site," in *ibid*, 167-77; Bradley, "Change and Survival among the Onondaga Iroquois since 1500," in Brose, Cowan, and Mainfort, Jr., eds., Societies in Eclipse, 31; Rony Blum, Ghost Brothers: Adoption of a French Tribe by Bereaved North America: A Transdisciplinary, Longitudinal, Multilateral Analysis (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 216-24. Cf. James Brooks, Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 98-101. For evidence of cross-cultural linguistic capacity among Iroquoian and Algonquian populations, see Champlain, Works 2:94; JR 5:113-15, 227, 233, 9:65, 14:15, 125, 33:109, 43:297-99.

<sup>90</sup> JR 10:11, 16:227-29, 19:1-7, 135, 20:43; MNF 5:816; Heidenreich, Hurononia: A History and Geography of the Huron Indians, 1600-1650 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 84-85; Trigger, The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660 (1976; reprint, Kingston and Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 30, 156-57, 174, 587; Elisabeth Tooker, "Wyandot," in Trigger, ed., Northeast, vol.15, Handbook of North American Indians (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 404-5; Ramsden, "The Hurons," 361-63, 382; Richard E. Sutton, "New Approaches for Identifying Prehistoric Iroquoian Migrations," in André Bekerman and Warrick, eds., Origins of the People of the Longhouse: Proceedings of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Symposium of the Ontario Archaeological Society (North York: Ontario Archaeological Society, 1994), 75-83; William Arthur Allen, "Wanant-git-che-ang: Canoe Route to Lake Huron through Southern Huronia," Ontario Archaeology 73 (2002): 38-68; Charles Garrad, "Commemorating the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dispersal of the Wyandots from Ontario, and Celebrating Their Return," Petun Research Institute Bulletin 36 (June 2003): 3 (<http://www.wyandot.org/petun>).

Documentary and material sources provide occasional glimpses into the nature and duration of these "protohistoric" (i.e., the period between an indigenous nation's first exposure to European goods and direct contact with European people) hostilities. In 1640, for example, an elderly Algonquin "widow" appeared at the French settlement of Trois-Rivières and related her life story to Jesuit missionaries. Captured by the Onondagas as a child, she was raised among them to adulthood and recognized as one of their "women." Iroquet warriors recaptured her from the Onondagas in 1615; she subsequently raised another family among the Algonquins only to lose them all to epidemic disease during the 1630s. She settled near Trois-Rivières in 1640 with five Algonquin orphans, intending to use her knowledge of Onondaga agricultural techniques to clear land and plant crops for her youthful charges. Four years later, Mohawk leaders gave Jesuit captive François-Joseph Bressani "to a poor old woman whose grandfather had been killed in battle by the Hurons." Pierre Esprit Radisson, a French adventurer held captive by Mohawks during the early 1650s described his adoptive Mohawk "mother" as an ethnic Wendat who had been captured in her youth and fully integrated into Mohawk society. All of these fragmentary human stories testify to the dynamic, intensely personal, occasionally violent, and ultimately far-reaching consequences of inter-indigenous conflict during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Such conflicts simultaneously forged close ties between different Native nations yet also sharpened consciousness of distinct indigenous national identities. Awareness of these early precolonial events helps us to better understand how the Native nations of northeastern North America came to fit European intruders into their patterns of inter-group relationships after 1600.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> JR 13:39, 139, 17:195-201, 18:217-19 ("widow", "women", p.217); Du Creux, *History of Canada* 1:395 ("to a poor old woman"); Snow, Charles T. Gehring, and William A. Starna, eds., *In Mohawk Country: Early Narratives about a Native People* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 81 ("mother"); C.C. Willoughby, "A Mohawk (Caughnawaga) Halter for Leading Captives," *American Anthropologist* 40 (1938): 48-50. For general comments

Pre-existing indigenous rivalries shaped the parameters of Champlain's experience in North America after 1603. Officially granted freedom to cross the Atlantic to the Americas by the 1598 Treaty of Vervins with Spain, French traders affiliated with Protestant merchant Pierre Chauvin erected a trading post at Tadoussac in 1600 and returned there on voyages for the next two summers. In 1602, French traders brought two Montagnais men to the court of King Henri IV, where they discussed the possibility of an alliance to drive Mohawk competitors out of the St. Lawrence valley. Achieving the defeat of the Mohawks would enable the allied French and Algonquins to assert control over the Laurentian exchange axis with the nations of the continental interior, known for the remainder of the French colonial period as the pays d'en haut, or upper Great Lakes country. The two Montagnais diplomats traveled back to Canada with Samuel de Champlain in 1603 to communicate news of the French Crown's intention to assist in brokering a peace between the Algonquins and the Mohawks. In the event such negotiations failed, however, the French pledged to "send forces to vanquish" the Algonquins' "Iroquois" enemies.<sup>92</sup>

On May 27, 1603, Champlain witnessed a victory celebration of "Etchemins" (eastern Abenakis, likely Maliseets or Penobscots), Algonquins, and Montagnais people at Tadoussac. Warriors from these nations reported having surprised and killed 100 members of a 1,000-man

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on late sixteenth and early seventeenth century warfare, see Roger Schlesinger and Arthur Stabler, eds., André Thevet's North America: A Sixteenth Century View (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 38; Champlain Works 1:103, 137, 2:50-51, 267-68, 300-3, 306-7, 3:59; Colden, History, 8; Charlevoix, Journal of a Voyage to North-America (1744; reprint, 2 vols., Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), 1:288.

<sup>92</sup> Champlain, Works, 1:100 (quotes); MNF 1:667; D.B. Quinn, "Henri Quatre and New France," Terrae Incognitae 22 (1990): 13-28; Eric Thierry, "La paix de Vervins et les ambitions françaises en Amérique," in Jean-François Labourdette, Jean-Pierre Possou, and Marie-Catherine Vignal, eds., Le Traité de Vervins (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2000), 373-86; Trigger and Day, "Southern Algonquian Middlemen," 68; Heidenreich, "The Changing Role of Natives in the Exploration of Canada: Cartier (1534) to Mackenzie (1793)," Terrae Incognitae 37 (2005): 31. On the pays d'en haut, see Claiborne Skinner, The Upper Country: French Colonial Enterprise in the Great Lakes (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

Iroquois war party near the mouth of the Richelieu River. This celebration inaugurated nearly two weeks of French negotiations with an estimated 1,000 members of these three nations, which resulted in the conclusion of a formal treaty of alliance. Champlain's 1603 promise of allied military assistance to Montagnais headman Anadabijou and Algonquin headman Besouat at once secured locally unhindered French settlement at Tadoussac and placed the French in a posture of hostility toward all Haudenosaunee nations.<sup>93</sup>

Champlain perceived the Algonquians' 1603 offensive in terms of indigenous competition for access to European traders. The Haudenosaunee, reportedly "in greater number" than their Algonquian neighbors, regularly "infest[ed] the banks all along the said River of Canada [the St. Lawrence]" and hindered direct Algonquian access to Tadoussac. Given the evidence of Laurentian Iroquois dispersal described above, however, we cannot rule out the possibility of ongoing competitive efforts between the Mohawks and their rivals for Laurentian Iroquois personnel as a potential motivating factor explaining their presence in the St. Lawrence River valley. In any event, Champlain devoted the remainder of his summer 1603 sojourn in Canada to collecting geographic information from his new allies, much of which pertained to descriptions of military routes between their homelands and those of the Haudenosaunee, and witnessing the return of Algonquian war parties with Haudenosaunee "heads" and prisoners, as

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<sup>93</sup> Champlain, *Works*, 1:99–103 (quote 103); Lescarbot, *History of New France*, 2:86–87; Edmund B. O'Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (15 vols., Albany: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1853-87) (hereafter NYCD) 4:352, 9:78; Le Roy de la Potherie, *Histoire*, 2:446; Camil Girard and Édith Gagné, "Première Alliance Interculturelle," *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 25.3 (1995): 7–11; Havard and Vidal, *Histoire de l'Amérique Française*, 47; Alain Beaulieu, "The Birth of the Franco-American Alliance," in Litalien and Vaugeois, *Champlain*, 153–61. See also Marcek Moussette, "An Encounter in the Baroque Age: French and Amerindians in North America," *Historical Archaeology* 37.4 (2003): 29-39; Blum, *Ghost Brothers*, 3–10.

well as preparations for other anti-Iroquois military expeditions. Champlain returned to France in August 1603.<sup>94</sup>

After several years of exploration in what is now Nova Scotia and New England, Champlain returned to the St. Lawrence valley in 1608. He established Québec at a highly defensible location near the former site of the Laurentian Iroquois settlement of Stadacona in an effort to protect a Crown-authorized fur trade monopoly from Basque, Dutch, and illicit French competition. Champlain also pledged in 1608 to join the Iroquets in an expedition against their Haudenosaunee enemies, with whom "they had long been at war, on account of many cruelties practised against their tribe under the colour of friendship."<sup>95</sup>

Champlain's expeditionary force departed from Québec with a number of Montagnais warriors in June 1609. En route, a mixed body of 200 to 300 Ahrendahronons (a member nation of the Wendat Confederacy) under Ochasteguin and Iroquets under their eponymously named leader Iroquet joined the expedition, which traveled down the Richelieu River to Lake Champlain. On July 29, 1609, the allied Native-French force encountered a Mohawk war party

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<sup>94</sup> Champlain, Works, 1:103 ("greater number"), 137 ("infest[ed]"), 141–43, 159–64, 170, 178–80 (all other quotes), 188; Ralph T. Pastore, "The Sixteenth Century," in Philip A. Buckner and John G. Reid, eds., The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 29; Bruce J. Bourque and Ruth H. Whitehead, "Trade and Alliances in the Contact Period," in Emerson Baker et al, eds., American Beginnings: Exploration, Culture, and Cartography in the Land of Norumbega (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 136.

<sup>95</sup> Champlain, Works, 2:69 (quotes); T.W.E. Sowter, "Algonkin and Huron Occupation of the Ottawa Valley," Ottawa Naturalist 23 (1909): 65–66, 92–94; William J. Eccles, "Sovereignty-Association, 1500–1783," in Eccles, Essays on New France (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), 160; Gilbert A. Stelter, "Military Considerations and Colonial Town Planning: France and New France in the Seventeenth Century," in Ralph Bennett, ed., Settlements in the Americas: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 218. For evidence of concerted Dutch competition in the St. Lawrence valley after 1605, see Jean Murray, "The Early Fur Trade in New France and New Netherland," Canadian Historical Review 19 (1938): 367; Howard Vernon, "The Dutch, the Indians, and the Fur Trade in the Hudson Valley, 1609–1664," in Laurence Hauptman and Jack Campisi, eds., Neighbors and Intruders: An Ethnohistorical Exploration of the Indians of Hudson's River, National Museum of Man Mercury Series No.39 (Ottawa, 1978), 200; Jan Kupp, "Dutch Influences in Canada, III," De Halve Maen 56.3 (1982): 15; Cornelius Jaenen, "Champlain and the Dutch," in Litalien and Vaugeois, Champlain, 241; Gehring, "The Dutch among the People of the Long River," Annals of New Netherland (2001): 4 (<http://www.nnp.org>).

on Lake Champlain near present-day Ticonderoga, two or three days' journey out from the latter's home villages. Following an exchange of shouted threats, the two Native armies erected barricades, and the Mohawks sent an advance embassy of two canoes to the Wendat and Algonquian encampment to ask if they would be ready to fight at dawn. Having concealed the presence of Champlain and twelve other Frenchmen in their party, the Wendats and Algonquians readily accepted the invitation, and both sides spent the night dancing, singing, and exchanging verbal insults.

On the morning of July 30, 1609, Champlain remained hidden in a Montagnais canoe while an estimated 200 Mohawks, led by three headmen wearing headdresses with "three big plumes," approached. According to Champlain's account, the Mohawks "caught sight of me, halted and gazed at me, and I at them." Following this momentary pause, the Mohawks drew their bows, and Champlain opened fire. The four balls that flew from his musket killed two of the headmen on the spot and mortally wounded the third. The Mohawks, however "astonished" by the impact of Champlain's gun, nevertheless returned their own volley of arrows until another musket shot from one of Champlain's French companions scattered them. Pursuing Montagnais and Algonquin warriors secured ten or twelve Mohawk prisoners, killed several more, and collected the supplies and weapons the Mohawks had abandoned in their flight.<sup>96</sup>

Champlain hoped to use the diplomatic leverage gained from the 1609 victory over the Mohawks to secure Native assistance and escorts for explorations of the upper St. Lawrence valley and Great Lakes. However, he faced significant resistance to these plans from those he aimed to employ as guides. They, like their Stadaconan predecessors, also sought to restrict

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<sup>96</sup> Champlain, *Works*, 2:67–105 (quotes 97–100); Charlevoix, *History*, 2:12–19; David Hackett Fischer, *Champlain's Dream: The European Founding of North America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008) 264, 614–15.



French freedom of movement. Additionally, Champlain had inherited a legacy of broken promises by Basque fishermen to assist the Montagnais and Algonquins against the Haudenosaunee (presumably with firearms). He would have to prove himself again.<sup>97</sup>

Champlain departed Québec on June 14, 1610, to reconnoiter with Wendat, Montagnais, and Algonquin warriors at the mouth of the Richelieu River for another attack on the Mohawks. Five days later, an advance scout reported an "Iroquois" force of 100 men "who had barricaded themselves well" on the banks of the Richelieu near present-day Sorel, Québec. The Algonquins and Montagnais chose to attack the "Iroquois barricade" without waiting for Champlain and were beaten back with losses. Champlain and his French companions then fired into the enclosure, but the Mohawks retaliated in spirited fashion, sending "arrows flying on all sides as thick as hail," one of which lodged in Champlain's neck. They also dodged volleys of gunshot by "throw[ing] themselves upon the ground." The Mohawks held out long enough for Champlain's ammunition to run low, but the arrival of a relief force of French gunmen permitted the allied Natives to open a breach in the Mohawk fort, through which "some twenty or thirty, both Indians and whites, went in, sword in hand." The Montagnais captured fifteen Mohawks while the French dispatched the rest with "arquebuses, arrows, and swords." The Montagnais carried off their prisoners (the Algonquins and Wendats had arrived too late to participate) and a "small" booty of "some beaver-skins" from the Mohawks, giving the French "much praise" for their valuable military assistance.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Champlain, *Works*, 2:121; Barkham, "Documentary Evidence," 56. For evidence of Native peoples' desire to limit French spatial mobility, see Champlain, *Works*, 2:19, 286–88, 3:100; Sagard, *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons* (1632; reprint, ed. George M. Wrong, trans. H.H. Langton, Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1939), 51, 75, 257, 260; *JR* 6:19, 8:41, 81, 9:247, 10:77, 223–25, 12:247, 15:151, 20:19, 56:171–73; Heidenreich, "Changing Role of Natives," 31–32.

<sup>98</sup> Champlain, *Works*, 2:122–34 (quotes); Fischer, *Champlain's Dream*, 264.

Champlain's role in this second defeat of the Mohawks had convinced his Native allies to grant some limited, supervised French movement west of Québec. Étienne Brûlé, a young French settler, spent the winter of 1610–11 learning the skills of a truchement (interpreter/intermediary) with the Iroquets and Ahrendahronon Wendats. Between 1611 and 1613, Iroquets escorted Algonquins, Nipissings, Ahrendahronon Wendats, and Neutrals to the Lachine Rapids to trade with the French, and in 1613 Champlain made an escorted journey to the Ottawa River valley. These movements did not go unnoticed by the Haudenosaunee, who appeared regularly in canoes in the vicinity of the Lachine Rapids to intercept Native groups seeking to trade with the French. By 1613, the frequency of these Haudenosaunee incursions generated fears that invaded the dreams of Algonquian and Wendat traders, leading some to make propitiatory offerings of tobacco in hopes of obtaining supernatural assistance against the Haudenosaunee, and others, more prosaically, to seek alternate routes to the French. Increasing Wendat complaints of their "ancient" Haudenosaunee enemies' interference with their journeys from Wendake (i.e., Wendat homelands) to the St. Lawrence valley, combined with confirmed news of the presence of Dutch traders on the Hudson River, obliged Champlain to honor his earlier pledge of military assistance by undertaking a third anti-Haudenosaunee expedition in 1615.<sup>99</sup>

On September 1, 1615, Champlain departed the Wendat settlement of Cahiagué with allied Ahrendahronon Wendats, Iroquets, and a number of Montagnais warriors. Champlain dispatched Brûlé with advance Wendat canoes to the Wendat-allied Susquehannock nation to

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<sup>99</sup> Champlain, Works, 2:138–42, 186–89, 193–98, 205, 217, 239–309, 3: 31 ("ancient"), 4:118–19; JR 20:19; NYCD 1:13–14; Trigger, Children of Aataentsic, 367; William C. Noble, "Tsouharissen's Chiefdom: An Early Historic 17<sup>th</sup> Century Neutral Iroquoian Ranked Society," Canadian Journal of Archaeology 9.2 (1985): 133–35; idem, "Frenchmen in Neutralia: Inter-Ethnic and Inter-Tribal Policies, Politics, and Practices of Contact," in Hayes, Bodmer, and Saunders, Proceedings, 26; Jaap Jacobs, "Truffle Hunting with an Iron Hog: The First Dutch Voyage up the Delaware River" (Paper presented at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, April 20, 2007).

make arrangements for a rendezvous of warriors near the intended target of the expedition: Kaneenda, a palisaded Onondaga installation (possibly a fishing station or a small satellite community of Onondaga adoptees) located at the head of Onondaga Lake.<sup>100</sup> After crossing Lake Ontario, Wendat scouts captured eleven Onondagas (four women, three men, three boys, and a girl) at a fishing camp on the Oswego River on October 9, 1615. One day later, an unplanned Wendat-Onondaga skirmish thwarted Champlain's plan for a surprise attack on Kaneenda.

Confronted by a thirty-foot-high palisade and defenders abundantly "stocked" with provisions and stones to hurl, Champlain decided to attack the occupants of Kaneenda with musket fire from an elevated platform (or *cavalier*). On October 11, 1615, Champlain advanced the *cavalier* to "within a pike's length" of the palisade. Three or four French musketeers then launched volleys into the fort, but the Onondagas responded with a shower of arrows and thrown stones, and used their "waterspouts" to douse Wendat-set fires along the palisade's walls. After a three-hour siege, several Wendat leaders had incurred serious arrow wounds, and the allied force withdrew. Although severely wounded himself, Champlain opposed this withdrawal, and he later remarked bitterly on the lack of military valor demonstrated by his allies. But considered in light of the identity of the particular Wendats and Algonquins on the campaign, and the likely presence of Laurentian Iroquois people or their first-generation descendants among them, their conduct appears much more understandable. Banking on the arrival of allied Susquehannocks to assist their efforts to flush the Onondagas from the fort for hand-to-hand combat, which increased the likelihood of enemy captures, the Ahrendahronons and Iroquets had no interest in Champlain's demands for an all-out assault on the Onondagas' palisaded stronghold. Champlain

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<sup>100</sup> Bradley, *Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois*, 113, 116, 223n3; William S. Beauchamp, *Indian Names in New York* (Fayetteville, NY: Recorder Office, 1893), 52; Fischer, *Champlain's Dream*, 615-16. Kaneenda was located near the present site of the Carousel Mall in Syracuse, New York.

remained encamped in proximity to Kaneenda until October 16, 1615, long enough to hear Onondagas berate him for interfering in their battles and mocking their Wendat and Iroquet enemies for their lack of courage in employing French assistance in the attack.<sup>101</sup>

The 1615 expedition represented a near-complete failure for Champlain and his allies. Forced to retire "with loss and shame" to Wendake, Champlain spent the winter of 1615-16 recuperating from his wounds. He sailed for France in 1616, and did not return to North America until 1618. The 1615 expedition marked the effective end of Champlain's exploration of the continental interior in search of the Northwest Passage; henceforth, he directed his efforts toward consolidating the French settlers' toehold at Québec. The struggle for access to or control of the pays d'en haut would remain in the hands of indigenous people for decades to come, and the French began to distance themselves from direct, aggressive involvement in Native conflicts to offering their services as mediators. Étienne Brûlé, captured by Senecas while recruiting Susquehannock allies for the 1615 attack on Kaneenda, secured his release only by promising the Senecas that he would "make them friends with the French and their enemies."<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Champlain, Works, 3:56–81 (quotes), 105–14; Sixte Le Tac, Histoire Chronologique de la Nouvelle France ou Canada (1689; reprint, ed. Eugene Révillaud, Paris: G. Fischbacher, 1888), 95–97; NYCD 9:702; "Champlain's Expedition Against the Onondagas in 1615," in Orsamus H. Marshall, Historical Writings of the Late Orsamus H. Marshall Relating to the Early History of the West (Albany: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1887), 19–66; Pratt, Archaeology of the Oneida Iroquois, 50–66, 91–93; Stothers, "Protohistoric Time Period," 68–69. Cf. arguments identifying the Oneidas as Champlain's target in 1615 in Trigger, Children of Aataentsic, 306, 312–15; Snow, Mohawk Valley Archaeology, 239. See also Fenton, The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 243, who identifies the targeted group simply as "Iroquois."

<sup>102</sup> Charlevoix, History, 2:27–29 ("with loss and shame," 29); Sagard, Histoire du Canada, 2:417, 429–31; Champlain, Works, 3:99–100, 213–24 ("make them friends...", p.224); JR 21:211; Morris Bishop, Champlain: The Life of Fortitude (1948; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), 218–29; Marcel Trudel, "Champlain, Samuel," in Frances Halpenny et al, eds., Dictionary of Canadian Biography (15 vols. to date, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966–) (hereafter DCB) 1:193–95; Francine Legaré, Samuel de Champlain: Père de la Nouvelle-France (Montréal: XYZ éditeur, 2003), 122–24; Maxime Gohier, Ontario le Médiateur: La Gestion des Conflits Amérindiens en Nouvelle-France, 1603-1717 (Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 2008), 50–63.

Étienne Brûlé's promise, fulfilled in part by a 1620 peace embassy of some 400 Iroquets escorted to Iroquoia by French interpreter Jean Nicollet de Belleborne, may have opened the Haudenosaunee to the possibility of negotiations with the French and their Algonquian and Wendat allies in 1622. On June 6, 1622, two unidentified "Iroquois" (likely Mohawks) appeared at the mixed Montagnais and Algonquin settlement near the Recollét mission station/French trading outpost at Trois-Rivières. These visitors wanted "to see their relatives and friends who had been kept prisoners amongst [the Montagnais and Algonquins] a long time," and offered to discuss terms of peace. Upon learning of their presence, Champlain encouraged the Montagnais and Algonquins to enter into negotiations with the Mohawks. French authorities hoped that such a peace would yield an "increase in traffic, greater facility for discovery, safety for our savages who go in quest of beavers, but do not [now] dare go into certain parts where these abound, because they are afraid of their [Haudenosaunee] enemies."<sup>103</sup>

French-dispatched canoes escorted the two Haudenosaunee delegates to Québec, where they offered condolence presents of 100 beaver skins to the French and Algonquins prior to a formal meeting with Champlain and the Algonquin headman Mahigan Aticq, the son of Algonquin headman Anadabijou. Champlain had first met Mahigan Aticq while the latter's father was celebrating victory over the Iroquois at Tadoussac in 1603. Now, Mahigan Aticq claimed to be "sick and tired of the wars they had had [with the Haudenosaunee], which had lasted over fifty years." After reaching a preliminary mutual agreement that granted the Haudenosaunee free access to hunting in the St. Lawrence River valley, the Algonquin headman urged the Haudenosaunee delegates to report this "good understanding" back to their people. The two delegates then engaged in a dance with three Algonquins, after which each dancer "kissed

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<sup>103</sup> Champlain, Works, 5:74–75 (quotes)

his [Anadabijou's] hand and came and placed it in [Champlain's], in token of peace and goodwill." These symbolic acts served to integrate the French into the nascent Haudenosaunee-Algonquin pact, which emphasized Indigenous nations' freedom of movement as the primary condition of peace.<sup>104</sup>

Four Algonquins bearing thirty-eight beaver skins sent as a peace offering by Champlain departed from Québec with the two Iroquois men in June 1622. Yet the murder of a Mohawk man by a member of the Algonquin embassy during the party's subsequent return journey from successful peace negotiations in Mohawk country rendered the proceedings moot. On July 25, 1622, Champlain noted the arrival of six more Haudenosaunee delegates at Québec seeking to "confirm peace with all the savages," notwithstanding the murder, which they were willing to consider as an individually motivated act. This Haudenosaunee delegation appeared to be offering Champlain another opportunity to mediate relations in the aftermath of their comrade's death, but Champlain failed to recognize the cues underlying this overture, and took no action. Haudenosaunee discontent with Champlain's failure to provide redress for treacherous behavior of his Algonquin allies did not take long to manifest itself.<sup>105</sup>

Late in the summer of 1622, the Haudenosaunee, according to the Jesuit historian Pierre F.X. de Charlevoix, "raised three large parties to attack us separately." The first of the two parties whose activities Charlevoix described targeted a group of Frenchmen "guarding the passage" at the Lachine Rapids. The Haudenosaunee captured a Récollet priest named Guillaume Poulain in this attack, but several of their own men were killed or captured in the effort. Unable to overtake the retreating Iroquois war party, the French released a captive Haudenosaunee

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 76–80 (quotes); Sagard, *Histoire du Canada*, 4:846; *JR* 4:171, 261n24; Elsie M. Jury, "Miristou," *DCB* 1:508–9; *MNF* 2:840–41. Cf. *NYCD* 9:702.

<sup>105</sup> Champlain, *Works*, 5:117–18, 130–33 (quotes).

"chief" in exchange for Poulain, and notwithstanding the arrival of this man among his compatriots "at the moment when all preparations were made to burn" Poulain, the Haudenosaunee honored the exchange and released him. The second Haudenosaunee party "embarked in thirty canoes" toward Québec. Upon arrival, they used a small fort on the St. Charles River to "invest" the nearby Récollet convent. The Haudenosaunee warriors then "ravaged the neighborhood of the country and retired."<sup>106</sup>

These attacks, which represented the commencement of direct Haudenosaunee hostilities against the French settler presence in the St. Lawrence valley, demonstrated to French eyes the Haudenosaunee capacity for long-range, coordinated offensive actions against high-profile targets. Wendats and Algonquians, who of course had longer familiarity with such attacks, also experienced escalated Haudenosaunee aggression at the same time. Recollét lay brother Gabriel Sagard noted in 1623 the ease with which Haudenosaunee raiders penetrated eastern Wendake and the portage at Rideau Falls on the Ottawa River for surprise attacks on Wendat personnel. Sagard also described similar retaliatory expeditions by "five or six hundred young [Wendat] men, or more, [who] go and scatter themselves over some Iroquois territory, five or six in one place, five or six in another," in search of victims "whether man, woman, or child," to attack by surprise, and either kill and scalp them on the spot or "carry them off to their own country to put them to death over a slow fire."<sup>107</sup>

In 1623, Wendat warriors seeking revenge for the murder of two of their men near Québec the previous year captured sixty Haudenosaunee south of Lake Ontario. The Wendats

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<sup>106</sup> Charlevoix, *History*, 2:32–33 (quotes); Frédéric Gingras, "Poulain, Guillaume," *DCB* 1:552; Goldstein, *French-Iroquois Diplomatic and Military Relations*, 57; Martijn, "The 'Fort Des Hiroquois' of Brother Sagard in 1623," in Pendergast and Chapdelaine, *Essays in St. Lawrence Iroquoian Archaeology Dedicated to James V. Wright* (Dundas, ON: Copetown Press, 1993), 139–61. Cf. Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic*, 349.

<sup>107</sup> Sagard, *Long Journey*, 74, 152–53 (quotes); Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic*, 417–18.

killed most of the prisoners at the battle site, but brought several captives back for distribution among the Wendat towns that had contributed warriors for the expedition. This offensive may have been responsible for a reported 1624 Haudenosaunee-Wendat truce, likely negotiated in the nonaligned homelands of the Iroquoian-speaking Neutrals (straddling the Niagara River), where neither the Five Nations nor the Wendats "dare[d] to utter or do anything displeasing to one another," and "often would even sit together as if they had been friends."<sup>108</sup>

Following the negotiated détente with the Wendats, an embassy of six Mohawk headman, accompanied by a flotilla of twenty-five canoes "loaded with furs," arrived at Trois-Rivières in July 1624. The Mohawks planned to participate in the annual French trade fair and to resume the abortive peace conversations of 1622 with the Algonquins, the Montagnais, and French colonial authorities. Champlain, having learned from his prior neglect of Haudenosaunee concerns, now seized the opportunity to mediate an indigenous peace accord. The governor ensured full French participation in the attendant ceremonies, including "the kettle of peace, presents, feasts, dances." Following the successful negotiations, a number of Iroquois reportedly took up temporary residency in Montagnais settlements in the St. Lawrence valley.<sup>109</sup>

The fragile peace would prove short-lived, however. In May 1627, Champlain reminded Algonquin and Montagnais leaders that peace with the Iroquois had enabled them to "travel

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<sup>108</sup> Sagard, Long Journey, 158 (quotes), 261; Champlain, Works, 3:227; JR 8:151, 21:193; Blair, ed., Indian Tribes 1:148; Abraham Rotstein, "The Mystery of the Neutral Indians," in Roger Hall, William Westfall, and Laurel S. McDowell, eds., Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario's History (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1988), 19–20; Noble, "Frenchmen in Neutralia," 27; Sioui, Huron-Wendat, 170.

<sup>109</sup> Christian Le Clercq, First Establishment of the Faith in New France (1691; reprint, 2 vols., ed. John G. Shea, New York: John G. Shea, 1881), 1:212 ("all the ordinary . . ."); E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documentary History of the State of New York (4 vols., Albany: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1849-51) 3:35; Trudel, The Beginnings of New France, 1524-1663 (trans. Patricia Claxton, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 148. For discussion of the trade fair in New France, held at Quebec in 1624, after being held at Trois-Rivières from 1620 to 1622, then at Cap-de-la-Victoire (near the mouth of the Richelieu River) in 1623 and again from 1625 to 1629, see André Vachon, "L'avoilette," DCB 1:432.



freely up the Great River [the St. Lawrence], and to other places, instead of being in terror from day to day of being massacred and taken prisoners, they and their wives and children, as had been the case in the past." But Champlain's words did not prevent a small party of Montagnais "hot-heads" from departing Trois-Rivières with hostile intent. On June 9, 1627, "under pretence of still being friends," the Montagnais captured three Mohawks on Lake Champlain. One Mohawk escaped, but the Montagnais brought the other two to Trois-Rivières, where they underwent preliminary torture before the arrival of Champlain and Mahigan Aticq at Trois-Rivières put a stop to those proceedings.<sup>110</sup>

Hoping to defuse a volatile situation, Champlain reiterated his argument before Montagnais and Algonquin listeners that "once war [with the Haudenosaunee] was begun, the whole river would be closed to them, and they would neither be able to hunt nor to fish without incurring great danger, and being in constant fear and anxiety." He urged his Native audience at Trois-Rivières to preserve their security and freedom of movement (which, of course, also benefited French fur traders) by sending "presents" to the "chiefs" of the Mohawk towns "to compensate, according to custom, for the wrong done in the capture of the two men—which, they should declare, had not been sanctioned by their Captains or Head-men, but was entirely the work of some rash young fools, and had caused them all great indignation." The conversation resulted in a Montagnais leader named Cherououny agreeing to escort one of the two Mohawk prisoners back to his home settlement with condolence presents. Champlain detailed a French

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<sup>110</sup> Champlain, *Works*, 5:214–22 (quotes), 227–28; MNF 2:814; A.J.F. Van Laer, *Documents Relating to New Netherland, 1624-1626, in the Henry E. Huntington Library* (San Marino, CA: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1924), 52–55, 109, 192. Cf. Donna Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow: Dutch-Amerindian Encounters in New Netherland* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 122–23.

settler, one Pierre Magnan, to join the embassy, and the group departed for Mohawk country on July 24, 1627.<sup>111</sup>

Neither Magnan nor Cherououny returned alive to Trois-Rivières. Champlain learned later that the entire Montagnais-French prisoner escort been slain upon arrival in Mohawk country, save for one individual, "an Iroquois by birth, who had been captured when a little boy" by the Montagnais and raised among them. Although initially "tied" and prepared for ritual torture and execution, the Mohawks eventually "resolved to keep him, hoping that time would cause him to lose the memory of our Québec savages, and the affection he had for them." The murders of Cherououny and Magnan convinced Champlain that further diplomacy with the Haudenosaunee was futile, but the troubling presence of English privateers in the St. Lawrence estuary attempting to seize control of the regional fur trade, combined with deteriorating French relationships with allied indigenous nations, prevented Champlain from taking direct action against the Haudenosaunee before he was forced to surrender the town to an English naval force under Admiral David Kirke on July 19, 1629.<sup>112</sup>

The return of the French to Québec in July 1632 after the conclusion of peace with England in the 1632 Treaty of St.Germain-en-Laye enmeshed renewed Franco-Haudenosaunee hostilities into the ongoing Five Nations' offensives against the Native peoples of the St. Lawrence valley. On June 2, 1633, eighteen Haudenosaunee warriors ambushed a group of Frenchmen landing a ship on the shore of the St. Lawrence River near Trois-Rivières. This ship had been sent down to provide security for the approaching Wendat fur convoy. Hatchet blows

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<sup>111</sup> Champlain, *Works*, 5:222–26 (quotes).

<sup>112</sup> Du Creux, *History of Canada*, 1:46–47, 52–53; Champlain, *Works*, 5:304–5, 308–12 (quotes); Le Tac, *Histoire Chronologique*, 142; John S. Moir, "Kirke, Sir David," *DCB* 1:405; Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic*, 445–62; Beaulieu, "L'on n'a point d'ennemis plus grands que ces sauvages': L'alliance franco-innue revisitée," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française* 61 (3-4)(2008): 365-95.

and a "storm of arrows" killed two Frenchmen immediately, and a third died later of his wounds. The Iroquois raiding party scattered after a French sailor aimed an "arquebus" in their direction.<sup>113</sup>

An infuriated Champlain advised metropolitan officials in July 1633 of the urgent need to eliminate the ability of the Haudenosaunee to "give trouble" to the "free movement" of Native populations allied with New France. Amazed, frustrated, and humiliated that the Haudenosaunee could "hold more than four hundred leagues" of territory in "subjection" and thereby attack French colonists with impunity, his 1633 request for 100 armed men to march against the Haudenosaunee restored the fundamental French posture of hostility toward the Five Nations that persisted (albeit with intermittent periods of peace) for the remainder of the seventeenth century.<sup>114</sup>

The indigenous power struggles that developed in Cartier's wake during the sixteenth century governed Champlain's experience in North America from 1603 to 1635: who he allied with against whom, what sources of information he could rely upon, and when and where he was free to move.<sup>115</sup> Champlain struggled to learn the skills of mediation that would earn later governors of New France great respect among indigenous nations, but all of the alliances he crafted over three decades in New France (save for a short-lived peace treaty concluded in 1624) had a common theme of pitting different indigenous nations against one another. Indeed, the legitimacy of the French settler presence in the St. Lawrence River valley, however minimal in

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<sup>113</sup> JR 5:215 ("storm of arrows," "arquebus"), 251, 6:145.

<sup>114</sup> MNE 2:367–68, 371, 381–82 ("give trouble," "free movement"); CMRNF 1:113 ("more than four thousand leagues," "subjection"); Champlain, *Works*, 6:376, 378–79.

<sup>115</sup> A point made graphically clear in *"They Would Not Take Me There": People, Places, and Stories from Champlain's Travels in Canada* (Orono: Canadian-American Center, University of Maine, 2008).

terms of absolute numbers prior to 1635, was predicated upon an officially-sanctioned French commitment to pursue hostilities against the Haudenosaunee, whose own political agenda threatened the security of Québec's immediate indigenous neighbors. Ultimately, Champlain reached the conclusion that only a French-led war of extermination against the Haudenosaunee could solve his colony's problems. That stark and bloody reasoning goes far beyond what Champlain's most recent biographer misleadingly describes as Champlain's abiding interest in the "controlled use of force for the sake of peace," and represents a critical, if frequently overlooked, aspect of Champlain's legacy. Fuller appreciation of Champlain's mindset regarding Native peoples, particularly the Haudenosaunee, helps explain why the settlers of New France (who would eventually undertake direct, large-scale campaigns against four of the five constituent nations of the League on four separate occasions after 1666) found themselves in a death-struggle with the Haudenosaunee for much of the seventeenth century.<sup>116</sup>

### Summary and Assessment

Fuller appreciation of the degree of Champlain's entanglement in indigenous North American political, economic, and military contexts also offers a fresh perspective on broader patterns of the continent's historiography. Much of early North American history has been written with a particular view of space as a surface: mere territory to be traversed, mapped,

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<sup>116</sup> Fischer, quoted in Donald A. Yerxa, "Champlain's Dream: An Interview with David Hackett Fischer," Historically Speaking 10 (April 2009): 20. See also Trudel, "Champlain," 197; Gordon M. Sayre, Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 63-78; Nancy Marcotte, "Was Champlain a Man of his Time?" in Litalien and Vaugois, Champlain, 349-50; Litalien, "Samuel Champlain, fondateur du Canada, sa présence dans la mémoire," in Martinière and Poton, eds., Le Nouveau Monde et Champlain, 23-24; Jonathan C. Lainey, "Le prétendu wampunn offert à Champlain et l'interprétation des objets muséifiés," Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française 61 (3-4)(2008): 397-424; John Allemang, "Sam the Sham: The Myth of Champlain," Globe and Mail, March 14, 2008. On subsequent seventeenth-century French invasions of Iroquois homelands, see Samuel Mourin, "Porter la Guerre Chez Les Iroquois: Les Expéditions Françaises Contre Les Villages des Cinq Nations à la Fin du XVIIe Siècle," Études Canadiennes 63 (2007): 7-26.

conquered, and integrated by Europeans into various systems of imperial governance. Yet such a passive conception of space is not, as geographer Doreen Massey has argued, an "innocent manoeuvre." It promotes an understanding of non-European peoples, places, or cultures "simply as phenomena 'on' this surface" and thereby deprives them of their histories. Previous treatments of precolonial Native American history have held their indigenous subjects largely immobile, "on space, in place," awaiting the arrival of mobile, "civilized" European colonizers for "history" to begin. Succeeding generations of ethnographers and historians fall easily into narratives of inevitable postcontact Native decline. Such accounts obscure what Massey usefully describes as the contemporaneous temporalities and heterogeneities of space and thereby fail to acknowledge the coeval, yet vastly different experiences of indigenous peoples.<sup>117</sup>

Recognizing that contemporary North American settler colonialism has imposed severe restrictions on Native nations need not translate into the assumption that such was the case from the moment Europeans arrived. Future scholars of Champlain's time in New France would do well to attend to the varied and dynamic indigenous context of northeastern North America during the second half of the sixteenth century and instead of contenting themselves with cataloguing the failed French colonization attempts that spanned from Cartier's time to that of Champlain.<sup>118</sup> Reconstructing the complex indigenous context of Champlain's experience in North America provides a window into the entangled state of cross-cultural engagements at that time, and facilitates an appreciation of history-as-lived for all parties concerned. That appreciation is the first step toward an escape from the persistent colonial mindset that

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<sup>117</sup> Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 4-5 (quotes). See also Denys Delàge, "Uneasy Allies," *Beaver* 88 (February-March 2008): 14-20; Michael Warner, "What's Colonial about Colonial America?" in Robert B. St. George, ed., *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 55; Trevor Burnard, "A Passion for Places: The Geographic Turn in Early American History," *Common-place* 8.4 (July 2008) <http://www.common-place.org>.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Fischer, *Champlain's Dream*, 112-19.

emphasizes the effects of colonization on indigenous peoples to the exclusion of any consideration of the ways in which Native polities shaped the experience of settler colonies in early North America.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> See James D. Rice's important comments to this effect in "Escape from Tsennacomacah: Chesapeake Algonquians and the Powhatan Menace," in Peter C. Mancall, ed., The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550-1624 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 139-40; and in Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 9-10. For an incisive commentary on the ways in which commemorations of the Champlain Quadricentennial have omitted consideration not only of the historic role of Native people but also their postcolonial circumstances, see Bill Curry, "Champlain's Abandoned Allies," Globe and Mail, July 25, 2008. An unflinching contemporary Mohawk perspective on the Quadricentennial is articulated by Kahentinehta Horn in "Québec City Wants to Celebrate 400 Years (sic) Anniversary of Carnage, Genocide, and Death of Indigenous People," Mohawk Nation News, April 1, 2008.

## 4) The Economy of Kahnawà:ke's Fur Trade with New York

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the colonial government of New York, then the official Crown-recognized diplomatic entity with responsibility for conducting treaties with the Haudenosaunee,<sup>120</sup> opted to extend formal trade and diplomatic arrangements to the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke. This treaty relationship provided security for Albany (and the colony of New York more generally) from French colonial military expeditions involving allied Mohawk warriors from Kahnawà:ke during an era of escalating intercolonial warfare – they targeted Anglo-American colonial settlements in New England instead, with the classic example being the February 29, 1704 raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts.<sup>121</sup> More significantly, the treaty represented official sanction granted to the de facto arrangements surrounding the so-called “illegal fur trade” conducted by the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke between Montréal and Albany since the 1670s.

The establishment of Haudenosaunee settlements in the St. Lawrence Valley (including precursors of today's Kahnawà:ke), which began in 1667, followed a longstanding cultural tradition of individuals diversifying their economic opportunities by settling along existing trade routes, exploiting comparatively untapped hunting grounds, and preserving or extending their land base through effective occupation (the only criteria that European colonizers would recognize). These voluntary relocations of growing numbers of Haudenosaunee people to the

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<sup>120</sup> Parmenter, "Onenwahatirighsi Sa Genthó Skaghnuhtudigh': Reassessing Iroquois Relations with the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1723-1755," in Nancy Rhoden, ed., English Atlantics Revisited: Essays Honouring Professor Ian K. Steele (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 235-83.

<sup>121</sup> John Demos, The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 131-34; Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 37, 68, 196-97.

"settler communities"<sup>122</sup> that eventually became Kahnawà:ke, Kanésatake, and Akwesasne between 1667 and 1760 stemmed from innumerable decisions made by individuals, families, or clusters of kin to pursue new social, economic, political, and religious opportunities. While scholars often emphasize the presence of Catholic Jesuit missionaries in these communities, it is critical to note that in the case of Kahnawà:ke the establishment of the community preceded that of the mission.<sup>123</sup>

As early as 1681, the governor of New France, Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, noted that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke had been involved in trade between Canada and Albany for "some years."<sup>124</sup> This so-called "illegal" fur trade also attracted the attention of

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<sup>122</sup> I derive this term from a conversation with Ms. Salli Benedict of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne on April 20, 2000, at St. Lawrence University. Discussing the origins of the Mohawk community of Akwesasne as a "community government" within the Mohawk nation, with its own aboriginal territory, Ms. Benedict explained the traditional Haudenosaunee perception of settler communities as "children" or "offspring" of their "parent" nations, yet with their own system of community governance. This description applies to the origins of Kahnawà:ke and Kanésatake in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. On Kahnawà:ke, see John G. Shea, History of the Catholic Missions Among Indian Tribes of the United States (NY, 1851), 295-347; L. Villeneuve, "The Historical Background of Indian Reserves and Settlements in the Province of Quebec" (unpublished paper on file at the Claims and Historical Research Center, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada, Hull, PQ, 1975); E.J. Devine, S.J., Historic Caughnawaga (Montréal, PQ, 1922), 17-37; David S. Blanchard, "Patterns of Tradition and Change: The Re-Creation of Iroquois Culture at Kahnawake" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1982), ch.6; *idem*, "'To the Other Side of the Sky': Catholicism at Kahnawake, 1667-1700," Anthropologica 24 (1982): 77-102; Denys Delâge, "Les iroquois chrétiens des 'reductions,' 1667-1770: Migration et rapports avec les français," Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec 21 (1-2)(1991): 59-70; *idem*, "Les iroquois chrétiens des 'reductions,' 1667-1770: Rapports avec la Ligue Iroquoise, les Britanniques, et les autres nations autochtones," Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec 21.3 (1991): 39-50; Gretchen L. Green, "A New People in an Age of War: The Kahnawake Iroquois" (Ph.D. dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1991), ch.2; Jan Grabowski, "The Common Ground: Settled Natives and French in Montréal, 1667-1760" (Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Montréal, 1993), chs.2-3; John P. Demos, The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America (NY, 1994), 121-29; Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism (NY, 1995), ch.2. On Kanésatake, see Frank Speck, "Algonkian Influence on Iroquois Social Organization," American Anthropologist 25 (1923): 219-27; Olivier Maurault, "Oka: Les vicissitudes d'une mission sauvage," extrait de la Revue Trimestrielle Canadienne (Montréal, PQ, 1930): 1-29; *idem*, "Quand Saint-Sulpice Allait en Guerre," Les Cahiers des Dix 5 (1940): 11-30; Louise Tremblay, "La Politique Missionnaire des Sulpiciens au XVIIe et début de XVIIIe siècle, 1668-1735" (M.A. thèse, Université de Montréal, 1981); Brenda Katlatont Gabriel-Doxtator and Arlette Kawanatatie Van Den Hende, eds., At the Woods' Edge: An Anthology of the History of the People of Kanésatake (Kanésatake, PQ, 1995), 22-33.

<sup>123</sup> Lozier, Flesh Reborn: The St. Lawrence Valley Mission Settlements through the Seventeenth Century (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), 162-64.

<sup>124</sup> P.-G. Roy, éd., Rapport de l'Archiviste du Province de Québec 1 (1926-27): 126; Alisa V. Petrovich, "Actors in the Politics of Fur: The Iroquois League and Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, 1672-1682," UCLA Historical Journal 16 (1996): 1-23.



contemporary Anglo-American observers. Cadwallader Colden characterized the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and Kanesatake as delinquent or tainted individuals; exiles, renegades, or "black sheep" who had been led away from their supposedly natural affiliation with the English of New York by the wiles of black-robed Jesuit priests to live on the ill-gotten gains of fur-smuggling.<sup>125</sup>

Colden's volume was not objective history in the sense with which we are familiar today.

Rather, it was an anti-French polemic designed to generate support for then New York Governor William Burnet's legislative initiatives against the lucrative, Mohawk-facilitated, free-market-oriented trade in furs then flourishing between Dutch traders in Albany and their French counterparts in Montréal. Colden knew that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke were responsible for facilitating this trade, and he criticized the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs' policy of sanctioning its existence.

Participation in this intercolonial fur trade represented a primary means by which the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke supported themselves economically and maintained their political self-determination. By making themselves intermediaries in a lucrative intercolonial trading network, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke generated economic profit "out of their individual political immunity and special legal status as Mohawk people in the colonial balance of power."<sup>126</sup> Originating in gift exchanges of furs between visitors to and from Kahnawà:ke and Mohawk villages in what is now upstate New York, the so-called "illegal" fur trade quickly came to center on Albany. Eager for the high-quality northern pelts that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke

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<sup>125</sup> Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations Depending on the Province of New York in America (2 vols., 1727-47; rpt. 2 vols in one, Ithaca, NY, 1994), xx.

<sup>126</sup> Gerald R. Alfred, Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1995), 44. For more on the "history of self-starting entrepreneurship" in the Mohawk community of Kahnawà:ke, see Morden C. Lazarus, Edwin D. Monzon, and Richard D. Wodnicki, "The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and the Case for an Aboriginal Right to Gaming under the Constitution Act, 1982," in Yale D. Belanger, ed., First Nations Gaming in Canada (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 35-51 (quote p.35).

trapped and obtained in exchange with other Indigenous nations from the pays d'en haut (upper Great Lakes region) visiting the French in Montréal, the Dutch merchants of Albany paid the Mohawks good prices and offered them high-quality, inexpensive trade goods unavailable in New France, including liquor.<sup>127</sup> By the time Colden wrote his tract in 1727, the "illegal" fur trade had been refined into a smoothly-running series of commercial transactions.

Kahnawà:ke porteurs (i.e., porters or carriers, many of them women) began the circuit by loading up canoes with furs in their village. Kahnawà:ke hunters traditionally supplied a portion of their cargo of peltry, but by the 1720s the majority of their merchandise came from Montréal traders, who had obtained them in exchange with other French-allied Indigenous nations, or from the activities of Canadian coureurs de bois. Paid by the trip, the Kahnawà:ke carriers usually removed a few of the choicest furs from their packs to trade for themselves, soaking the remainder with water or packing the bales with sand to make up for lost weight. Once they arrived in Albany, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke sold their furs to the local Dutch merchants, who paid immediately upon receipt of the peltry (unlike the French-Canadian merchants, who deferred their payments to the following year). The Albany traders then transported the pelts down the Hudson River to New York City where wholesalers shipped them on to England. In exchange for their furs, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke received high-quality English woollen "stroud" blankets, loose wampum beads, and other trade goods which they carried back to their home settlement. The 708km (or 440 mile) round trip (mostly by canoe) between Montréal and

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<sup>127</sup> Green, "A New People in an Age of War", 229-31. On the Jesuit-influenced ban on alcohol in the fur trade with Native peoples in colonial Canada, see George F.G. Stanley, "The Indians and the Brandy Trade during the Ancien Regime," Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française 6 (1953): 489-505; André Vachon, "L'eau-de-vie dans la Société Indienne," Canadian Historical Association Annual Report (1960): 22-32; R.C. Dailey, "The Role of Alcohol Among North American Indian Tribes as Reported in the Jesuit Relations," Anthropologica 10 (1968): 45-59.

Albany typically took between five and six weeks to complete, and the trading season generally lasted from April to October.<sup>128</sup>

The traditional assessment of the economics of this transnational fur trade asserts that over the long term, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke received higher prices for their pelts, and paid lower prices for trade goods in Albany than would have been the case in Montréal. This viewpoint stresses the negative effects of the monopoly over the Canadian fur trade held by the French Compagnie des Indes, which limited the prices that Montréal traders could offer Indigenous people for their pelts.<sup>129</sup> Several historians have challenged this interpretation, asserting that the French could compete economically with the Albany traders,<sup>130</sup> but the fragmentary nature of the surviving evidence, which is not surprising given the clandestine nature of the business, has seriously compromised the prospect of dispassionate analysis of the precise dynamics of the "illegal" fur trade economy.<sup>131</sup> We may state with confidence, however,

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<sup>128</sup> This description is based on Demos, Unredeemed Captive, 132-33. See also William I. Roberts III, "Samuel Storke: An Eighteenth Century London Merchant Trading to the American Colonies," Business History Review 39 (1965): 147-70.

<sup>129</sup> Guy Frégault, "La Compagnie de la Colonie," in Frégault, Le XVIIIème siècle Canadien: Études (Montréal, PQ, 1968), 243-48; Lunn, "Illegal Fur Trade," 61-76; Norton, Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 121-26; Yves Zoltvany, Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil: Governor of New France, 1703-1725 (Toronto, ON, 1974), 90n24; Green, "New People in an Age of War", 233; Grabowski, "Les Amérindiens Domiciliés," 45-52. For a general overview of Native peoples' economic acumen in the fur trade, see Arthur J. Ray, "Indians as Consumers in the Eighteenth Century," in Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray, eds., Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference (Toronto, 1980), 255-71.

<sup>130</sup> Eccles, "Belated Review of Harold Adams Innis's Fur Trade in Canada," 61-78; *idem*, The French in North America, 1500-1783 (3rd ed., East Lansing, MI, 1998), 110-11; Wien, "Selling Beaver Skins," 293-317; Laird, "Price of Empire", *passim*.

<sup>131</sup> Estimates of the volume of peltry collected in Canada and ferried to Albany by the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke vary widely, which probably reflects normal economic peaks and valleys in a business conducted over the better part of a century. They range from Denys Delàge's low estimate of 10-20% of all French peltry redirected to Albany during the last eight decades of the French regime [see "Les Iroquois chrétiens des 'reductions'," Recherches Amérindiennes du Québec 21.1-2 (1995): 65], to 50-60% [see Lunn, "Illegal Fur Trade," 65; Norton, Fur Trade of Colonial New York, 56; David S. Blanchard, "Patterns of Tradition and Change: The Re-Creation of Iroquois Culture at Kahnawà:ke" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1982), 162], to 66% during the "long peace" *circa* 1713-1744 [see Jacques Mathieu, La Nouvelle-France: Les Français en Amérique du Nord, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle (Laval, QC: Les Presses de l'Université du Laval, 1991), 149], to as much as 90% at particular times (particularly the first decade of the eighteenth century [see David Armour, The Merchants of Albany, New York, 1686-1760 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), 90].

that bitter controversy certainly raged in political circles in both New France and New York over the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk-facilitated "neutral" business conducted between Montréal and Albany, even when the furs themselves may have been of less economic than political consequence.<sup>132</sup>

Estimates of the volume of furs diverted to New York from Canada during this period range widely from ten to sixty-six percent of all peltry brought to Montréal,<sup>133</sup> despite the strict mandate enjoined upon Canadian colonial officials by the French Ministry of the Marine to stop the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke from taking furs out of the colony. Yet rigorous enforcement of colonial trade laws occurred infrequently in New France, owing to the authorities' fear of offending the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, whom they regarded as valued military allies. French officials tried to monitor the contents of canoes leaving Kahnawà:ke for Albany, to ensure that the Mohawks did not "trade more pelts than might be the result of their own hunting,"<sup>134</sup> but they eventually ended up spending more time and energy on prosecuting colonists, such as the "Demoiselles Desauniers," two French-Canadian sisters who ran a trading post at Kahnawà:ke that was widely suspected to be a key hub in the illicit fur economy.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Wien, "Castor, Peaux, et Pelletries dans le Commerce Canadien des Fourrures, 1720-1760," in Bruce G. Trigger, Toby Morantz, and Louise Dechêne, eds., Le Castor Fait Tout: Selected Papers of the Fifth North American Fur Trade Conference (Montréal, PQ, 1987), 72-92; Gratien Allaire, "Le Commerce de Fourrures a Montréal: Documentation et Methode d'Analyse," *ibid.*, 93-121; Wien, "Exchange Patterns in the European Market for North American Furs and Skins, 1720-1760," in Jennifer S.H. Brown, W.J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman, eds., The Fur Trade Revisited: Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference (East Lansing, MI, 1994), 19-37; Cathy Matson, Merchants and Empire: Trading in Colonial New York (Baltimore, 1998), 222-27.

<sup>133</sup> "Mémoire du roi au Vaudreuil et Bégon [2 June 1720]," Archives Coloniales (Microfilm copy in LAC of originals in Archives Nationales, Paris), Série B [Lettres envoyées, 1663-1774, 189 vols. (hereafter cited as AC, B)] ff.423v-433; "Mémoire du roi au Vaudreuil et Bégon [8 June 1721]," AC, Série F3 [Collection Moreau de St. Méry, 1750-1819, 287 vols. (hereafter cited as AC, F3)] 10: ff.136-146v; Grabowski, "The Common Ground", 247.

<sup>134</sup> Maurepas à Beauharnois, [21 April 1739], AC, B, 68: ff.287-287v.

<sup>135</sup> Maurepas à Hocquart, [27 March 1741], AC, B, 72: ff.340-340v; "Ordre du roi, [28 April 1745]," AC, B, 81: f.284v; Rouillé à La Jonquière, [25 June 1751], AC, B, 93: ff.383-85; Rouillé à Duquesne, [30 June 1753], AC, B, 97: ff.266-266v; Devine, Historic Caughnawaga, 236-37, 247-49; Lanctot, History of Canada 3: 81-83; Blanchard, "Patterns of Tradition and Change", 161-63; Green, "New People in an Age of War", 273-74. A popular account of the activities of the Desauniers sisters appears in E.P. Hamilton, "Unrest at Caughnawaga, or, the Lady Fur Traders

The French soon realized that despite their efforts to direct the behavior of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, the latter considered themselves allies, not subjects. The large population of the Kahnawà:ke community (two-thirds of all Mohawks resided there by 1700),<sup>136</sup> their proximity to French settlements, and the precarious political and military situation of French Canada in colonial North America all combined to allow the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke to assert their economic interests through their trade with Albany. The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke insisted on their right to conduct business without French or English official interference. They suggested that French authorities police the actions of their own subjects, who continued to employ them in trading with Albany, rather than obstructing their commercial enterprise.<sup>137</sup>

The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke further manipulated the French by threatening to withdraw from their villages and abandoning the alliance if the French encroached upon what they considered to be their legitimate trading rights as an independent nation. In the end, the French could do little but accede to the request of Onondaga headman Onon8arogon, whom, on behalf of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke requested in 1741 that the French "leave everyone at liberty to go and trade at the cheapest mart."<sup>138</sup> The inability of the French to impose legal jurisdiction over the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke (a condition often cited as clear evidence of a group's status as

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of Sault St. Louis," Fort Ticonderoga Museum Bulletin 11.3 (1963): 155-60. See also Marc Guévin, "Le commerce Montréal-Albany sous le Regime français: histoire d'un phénomène commercial" (Mémoire, Maître des arts, Université de Montréal, 1995); Gilles Roy, "Ce qui échappe à la Raison d'État: stratégies discursives des intendants de la Nouvelle France confrontés à le contrebande des fourrures, 1715-1750" (Mémoire, Maître des arts, Université de Montréal, 2018).

<sup>136</sup> William B. Hart, "For the Good of Their Souls": Performing Christianity in Eighteenth Century Mohawk Country (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020), 24.

<sup>137</sup> "Paroles des Beauharnois aux Iroquois du Sault St. Louis et Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes [12 June 1741]," AC, Sèrie C11A [Correspondence générale, Canada, 1458-1784, 122 vols. (hereafter cited as AC, C11A) 75: ff.93-93v.

<sup>138</sup> "Paroles des Nontagués, Goyoguins, Onneiouts, et Tuscarorens à Beauharnois, [17 August 1741]," et "Réponse de Beauharnois aux paroles des Iroquois, [20 August 1741]," AC, C11A, 75: ff.100-104.

"colonized"), enabled the latter to exercise a significant measure of political and cultural independence.<sup>139</sup>

### Summary and Assessment

Beyond the economic and diplomatic neutrality which the trans-national fur trade afforded the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, it served another important purpose within the broader Mohawk Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy: it cemented bonds among the national villages in modern upstate New York and the Laurentian settler communities. Although the Confederacy Mohawks complained occasionally about the "illegal" fur trade cutting into their "middleman" role between the western Indian nations of the pays d'en haut and Albany,<sup>140</sup> the regular presence of Kahnawà:ke traders in Albany came to represent a vital link in northeastern North American diplomacy after their incorporation into the Covenant Chain alliance in 1700. Residents of Kahnawà:ke and Kanesatake alike regularly undertook visits to Mohawk Valley communities, recruited Mohawk warriors to join them in French-sponsored military expeditions against other Native groups in the interior of North America, accompanied their kinfolk from the Confederacy on winter hunts, and hosted Confederacy visitors in their villages. The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke did not, as one historian claims, "exile themselves from their kinsmen and communities."<sup>141</sup> Instead, the trans-national fur trade went a long way toward maintaining Mohawk and broader Haudenosaunee social, economic, and political links that transcended European colonial geopolitical borders.

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<sup>139</sup> James Axtell, After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America (NY, 1988), 103; Grabowski, "French Criminal Justice and the Indians in Montréal," Ethnohistory 43 (1996): 405-29.

<sup>140</sup> Allen W. Trelease, "The Iroquois and the Western Fur Trade: A Problem in Interpretation," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 49 (1962): 31-51; Richard Aquila, "The Iroquois as 'Geographic' Middlemen: A Research Note," Indiana Magazine of History 80 (1984): 51-60.

<sup>141</sup> Axtell, The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America (NY, 1985), 277.

## 5) Kahnawà:ke Treaty Relations with the French and English Crowns to 1760

Following an initial agreement between Crown representatives and the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke at Albany in 1700, a comprehensive documentary record of Covenant Chain treaty diplomacy between these two nations persists to 1760. On at least twenty occasions after 1700, the Crown and the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke concluded treaties in which “a consistent rhetoric of peace, friendship, and commerce was deployed.”<sup>142</sup> This evidence unsettles longstanding assumptions regarding the nature of the Covenant Chain as an exclusively Anglo-Haudenosaunee Confederacy<sup>143</sup> treaty alliance by demonstrating its extension to the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, who have resided on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River opposite Montréal since 1667.<sup>144</sup> The treaty record also indicates a need to revise our understanding of the so-called “illegal fur trade”<sup>145</sup> brokered by the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke between Albany and Montréal circa 1680-1760. The Covenant Chain treaties negotiated by the English Crown with the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke protected the rights of the latter to acquire, transport, exchange and trade all manner

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<sup>142</sup> Jean-François Lozier, “History, Historiography, and the Courts: The St. Lawrence Mission Villages and the Fall of New France,” in Philip Buckner and John G. Reid, eds., Remembering 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Memory (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 118.

<sup>143</sup> Also known as the Iroquois League, a confederation that originated prior to European contact and originally included five Indigenous nations (Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas). A sixth nation, the Tuscaroras, joined the Confederacy by 1722. See “Five Nations,” in Bruce E. Johansen and Barbara A. Mann, eds., Encyclopedia of the Haudenosaunee (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 97.

<sup>144</sup> Daniel Rueck, “Kahnawà:ke Timeline: Some Key Events Related to Land and Resources to 1957” (2012) <http://kahnawakeclaims.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/KahnawakeTimeline2012.pdf>, accessed November 28, 2021.

<sup>145</sup> Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History (1930; rpt.ed. Toronto, 1999), 84-88; Jean Lunn, “The Illegal Fur Trade Out of New France, 1713-1760,” Canadian Historical Association Annual Report (1939): 61-76; Thomas E. Norton, The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776 (Madison, WI, 1974), 121-26; William J. Eccles, “A Belated Review of Harold Adams Innis’s The Fur Trade in Canada,” in Eccles, ed., Essays on New France (Toronto, 1987); Thomas Wien, “Selling Beaver Skins in North America and Europe, 1720-1760: The Uses of Fur Trade Imperialism,” Journal of the Canadian Historical Association 1 (1990): 293-317; Jan Grabowski, “Les Amérindiens Domiciliés et la ‘Contrabande’ des Fourrures en Nouvelle-France,” Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec 24.3 (1994): 45-52; Matthew Laird, “The Price of Empire: Anglo-French Rivalry for the Great Lakes Fur Trade, 1700-1760” (Ph.D. dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1995).

of goods free of any regulation or constraint. While colonial authorities on either side of the intercolonial boundary described the trade as “illegal,” the only parties sanctioned for involvement were members of their respective settler populations. The Mohawks of Kahnawá:ke conducted this treaty-protected trade at the scale of a market economy after 1700, the criteria for which include: specialization in production, defined trading networks used for imports and exports, public infrastructure to support trade, commercial laws, standards, and dispute resolution processes, a medium of exchange, and recognition of property rights.<sup>146</sup> These findings have substantial implications for our understanding of the practices of travel and trade in Mohawk daily life during the colonial era, the historic relationship between the Mohawk community of Kahnawá:ke, the Mohawk Nation, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and how these treaty rights may be mobilized in the contemporary era.

In June 1700, the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs – the local administrators of New York/Crown relations with the Haudenosaunee - offered the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke (identified in the original source as the “Canada Praying Indians”) “goods cheap and reasonable,” and “the same freedom of trade...the same protection” as enjoyed by other members of the Mohawk Nation residing in New York’s Mohawk Valley.<sup>147</sup> Two years later, in July 1702, New York Governor Edward Hyde, the Third Earl of Clarendon, also known by his noble title of Lord Cornbury, assured the “Canada Maquase Praying Indians” at Albany that they would have “the same Priviledge of Trade with us [i.e., the English] as ye Brethren [i.e.,

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<sup>146</sup> Andrée Le Dressay, Normand Lavallee, and Jason Reeves, “First Nations Trade, Specialization, and Market Institutions: A Historical Survey of First Nations Market Culture,” in Jerry P. White, Erik Anderson, Jean-Pierre Morin, and Dan Beavon, eds., *Aboriginal Policy Research*, Vol.7, *A History of Treaties and Policies* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 2010), 109-10; Gail Danvers, “‘Red’ Labor: Iroquois Participation in the Atlantic Economy,” *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas* 1.4 (2004): 75.

<sup>147</sup> *NYCD* 4: 692.



Mohawks] of the 5 nations have.”<sup>148</sup> From these beginnings emerged the regular conduct of direct Crown diplomacy with the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke that persisted until 1760.

A key primary source documenting diplomatic exchanges between the Mohawks of Kahnawá:ke and the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs prior to 1723, Peter Wraxall’s Abridgment of the Indian Affairs Contained on Four Folio Volumes (written in 1754 and published in 1915 by Harvard) must be understood as a highly expurgated, fragmentary, and substantially biased record.<sup>149</sup> While the level of detail provided by Wraxall’s capsule summaries of the original records (some now lost) often leave much to be desired, there is clear evidence of diplomatic proceedings represented. On June 6, 1705, “Six Chiefs of the Cacknawaga Castles [sic] in Canada” appeared at Albany and made a speech attesting to their coming in a “friendly and Peaceable Manner,” attended by “Strings of Wampum.” Their speech was “civilly answered” by the Commissioners.<sup>150</sup>

Three years later, on May 22, 1708, “Five Sachems of Canada Cacknawaga Indians” responded to a belt of wampum sent as an invitation to Albany by the Commissioners, and appeared personally in Albany to announce that they would henceforth “bury the Hatchet” against the people of New England. They also expressed their desire to “have goods Cheap and a good price for their Bever [sic],” a rhetorical renewal of their right to trade at Albany. The Commissioners responded solicitously, encouraging the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke to steer clear of traders attempting to pre-empt their cargoes by traveling to meet them en route to Albany (and

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.: 984-85.

<sup>149</sup> Parmenter, “‘Onenwahatirighsi Sa Gentho Skaghnughtudigh’,” 236-37.

<sup>150</sup> WA, 44.

allegedly overcharging for their wares) and recommending instead that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke “come directly into the City & see where they can buy cheapest.”<sup>151</sup>

The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke exchanged messages and wampum belts with the Albany Commissioners via Five Nations Iroquois intermediaries in October 1710 and January 1711.<sup>152</sup> On May 19, 1712, “a sachem of Caughnawaga” appeared before the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs to acknowledge the pending cessation of Anglo-French hostilities in Queen Anne’s War and to renew treaty-based trading rights via a formal request that “the path be open between Albany and Canada.”<sup>153</sup>

Eleven years passed until the next documented mention of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke in official English records. After April 1723, we are fortunate to have the full original records of the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs – as opposed to the selective capsule summaries in Wraxall’s Abridgment – and these more comprehensive records shed important light on the nature of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke’s diplomatic relations with Crown officials in New York down to the mid-1750s.

On April 23, 1723, the Albany Commissioners wrote an advisory letter to New York Governor Robert Burnet in which they recommended against his plans to interdict the flourishing treaty-protected Mohawk fur trade between Montréal and Albany due to the anticipated effects

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>153</sup> “Speech of a Sachem of Caughnawaga to the N.Y. Commissioners of Indian Affairs,” May 19, 1712, New York Colonial Manuscripts vol.57, p.152, New York State Archives (Albany) (hereafter NYSA). See also New York Council Minutes, May 23, 1712, vol.11, pp.87-88, NYSA. These documents are reproduced in Francis Jennings, ed., Iroquois Indians: A Documentary History of the Diplomacy of the Six Nations and Their League (50 reels microfilm, Woodbridge, CT: Research Publications, 1985), reel 7.

of such a policy shift on New York's (and, by extension, the Crown's) relationship with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy as a whole:

“The Indians who live at Canada, at least those of Cachnewage, are part of the Five Nations, and whatever Rough Treatment they receive will be resented by the five nations, perhaps not in so publick a manner as to leave their bread and Cloathing, which we are satisfied they receive at Albany, but underhand, to the great detriment of many of the subjects living in the remotest part of the Government.”<sup>154</sup>

British colonial efforts to regulate the “illegal” fur trade differed from those of the French, but were equally ineffectual. While French metropolitan authorities sought to curb the economic activity of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke only to have colonial officials pursue a policy of toleration (to the extent that some were involved in the trade themselves), in the Anglo-American context colonial authorities tried occasionally to restrict the trade, only to find their efforts thwarted by metropolitan officials. A provincial law passed in New York in 1720 officially banned the sale of goods associated with the fur trade to the French – an indirect means of suppressing the trade conducted by Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke in Albany.<sup>155</sup> A 1721 report indicated how the Albany handlaers (fur traders) evaded the legislation by:

“sending off their Goods to the Mohacks Country & placing them amongst the Indians in their houses. The way that it is done they send the Indians with their goods from Albany to the Indian Country & then it is out of the Power of any Officer to Discover them.”<sup>156</sup>

Tasked with the administration of the New York Government's imposed restrictions on the trade of “Christian goods” with people from Canada in 1723, the Albany Commissioners reluctantly required traders to swear out an oath stating they would not engage in such trade,

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<sup>154</sup> MACIA-LAC, RG10, vol.1819: 11a (reel C-1220).

<sup>155</sup> Philip Ranlet, Cadwallader Colden, 1688-1776: A Life Between Revolutions (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 32-33.

<sup>156</sup> Lawrence H. Leder, ed., The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1723 (Gettysburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1956), 229.

issued warrants for the arrest of colonial traders found with cargo (usually peltry) obtained in Canada, and occasionally confiscated such cargoes. The Commissioners' enforcement was haphazard - several of the Commissioners refused to take the oath themselves, and they made no effort to proscribe the activities of other traders who also refused. Several New York traders were charged and fined in October 1724 for the crime of "being a trader for Indian goods with the French,"<sup>157</sup> but despite substantial lobbying by New York colonial authorities, the British Board of Trade voided the New York law in 1725.<sup>158</sup>

In late May 1724, a Mohawk "sachem" from Kahnawà:ke, accompanied by another reportedly from "Skawennadie" (i.e., Kanesatake)<sup>159</sup> arrived at Albany and delivered a formal speech accompanied by "seven hands of wampum."<sup>160</sup> The Commissioners reported the purpose of the visit as effort to enlist them as intermediaries in peace negotiations between the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and the New England colonies.<sup>161</sup> Wraxall, in his summary of the original document, opined that trade was the true purpose of the visit:

"I shrewedly suspect that as the prohibition of ye Trade to Canada had occasioned a great scarcity of Goods there, the real Intent of the Indians Journey to Albany was to purchase Goods and that this laying down the Hatchet was but a specious pretense for the Govr. of Canada has them so absolutely under his command that without his Consent their making Peace or a Neutrality would not signifie. These Indians are the Brokers or Factors & Carriers for the French and the Albany People in their Neutral Trade."<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 45, 101-101a, 103a-104a, 105-105a (quote p.105). Cf. WA, 156.

<sup>158</sup> NYCD 5: 760-63; Ranlet, Cadwallader Colden, 34-35.

<sup>159</sup> William N. Fenton and Elisabeth Tooker, "Mohawk," in Bruce G. Trigger, ed., Northeast, Vol.15 of Handbook of North American Indians (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 479.

<sup>160</sup> The phrase "seven hands of wampum" denotes a formal use of strung shell wampum beads to signify the legitimacy and sincerity of the speaker's words. One "hand" of wampum typically represented approximately forty strung beads of wampum, which measured about 25cm (or 10 inches). See Gilbert Hagerty, Wampum, War, and Trade Goods West of the Hudson (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1985), 114-16.

<sup>161</sup> MACIA-LAC, RG10, vol.1819: 73-73a, 74a-75a (reel C-1220).

<sup>162</sup> WA, 151.

The two leaders remained in Albany until June 26, 1724, when the Albany Commissioners bade them farewell with a modest request that they discourage the young men of their communities from encouraging African slaves from New York to flee to Canada.<sup>163</sup>

In March 1725 another legation of five leaders from Kahnawà:ke and “Scawanadie” (i.e., Kanesatake) arrived at Albany to offer a warning about the possible consequences of Governor Burnet’s ongoing effort to reorient the fur trade from its historic north-south axis connecting Montréal and Albany to an east-west axis linking Albany to a planned English trading post to be erected at Oswego (modern Oswego, New York). Burnet intended to use Oswego to intercept the flow of pelts from the Upper Great Lakes prior to their reaching the French (and, subsequently, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke) in the St. Lawrence valley. The Kahnawà:ke speaker, whose name was recorded as “D’Carihogo” (i.e., Tekarihogen, the hereditary Mohawk Turtle clan chief)<sup>164</sup> reported that the Governor of Canada, Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, had threatened to destroy the planned British fort at Oswego, New York, which risked a renewed state of war between the English and the French. To avert that prospect, D’Carihogo recommended that the Albany Commissioners “keep ye trade within your walls [i.e., the City of Albany] as formerly and then you may gett some Bevers, for otherwise you may get none.” D’Carihogo then renewed the Covenant Chain with the Albany Commissioners and included a belt of wampum acknowledging the manner in which that agreement also bound together the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke with their kin in the Mohawk Valley.<sup>165</sup>

Concern among the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke for the maintenance of good ties with the English Crown via the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs led them to return at the head of

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<sup>163</sup> MACIA-LAC, RG10, vol.1819: 78 (reel C-1220).

<sup>164</sup> Tooker, “The League of the Iroquois: Its History, Politics, and Ritual,” Trigger, ed., *Northeast*, 424.

<sup>165</sup> MACIA-LAC, vol.1819: 111a-112a (quote p.112a) (reel C-1220). Cf. *WA*, 156-57.

another legation from St. Lawrence valley settlements to Albany in late September 1725. Their purpose was to offer condolences for the murder of a New York provincial soldier at the hands of “some of their vilest people” earlier that summer at Saratoga. To “make up the breach,” which threatened to disrupt normal peaceful arrangements conducive to trade, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke offered the Albany Commissioners “an Indian woman to give to you in lieu of the man you lost.” The Commissioners accepted the woman (who was likely a captive or enslaved Panis woman from one of the St. Lawrence Valley Haudenosaunee communities)<sup>166</sup> as a token of their alliance partners’ repentance (her subsequent fate is not recorded), and pledged to recommend to Governor Burnet that the crime be forgiven.<sup>167</sup>

Two canoes of traders from Kahnawà:ke arrived at Albany on August 3, 1727 and reported that the Governor of Canada, Charles de la Boische, the Marquis de Beauharnois, had attempted to intercept their trip to Albany but relented after the Mohawks asked him “where in Canada they could obtain goods as cheaply as at Albany?” The Kahnawà:ke traders also urged some Onondagas then present at Albany not to give their consent for the construction of Oswego, reminding them that “the English had built in the Moaks [sic; i.e., Mohawks’] country above Saraghtoge [i.e., Saratoga] and that all the land in the Moaks country was gone.” This was an exaggeration, to be sure, but the statement offers an important insight into the broader significance of Kahnawà:ke and other St. Lawrence valley settlements as sites of refuge within claimed homelands for Mohawk people confronted with pressures of settler encroachment.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Brett Rushforth, Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 165-73.

<sup>167</sup> MACIA-LAC, RG10, vol.1819: 113-113a, 148, 151a-152 (quotes) (reel C-1220).

<sup>168</sup> Ibid: 195-195a. Cf. WA, 170, where the entry is mis-dated as July 26, 1726. On September 21, 1730, Mohawk leaders from the two Mohawk “castles” (i.e., settlements) in the Mohawk Valley complained of settler encroachment and requested that the Albany Commissioners ban all future purchase of Mohawk lands. See MACIA-LAC, RG10, vol.1819: 327-327a (reel C-1220). Cf. WA, 179-80.

On May 28, 1735, the “Chief of the Cagnawaga Castle,” appeared before the Albany Commissioners “with 4 other Indians from his village” to discuss an invitation to “treat on some important affairs” with “the Governor of New England [sic – this likely meant then-Governor of Massachusetts Jonathan Belcher]. After encouraging the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke to meet with New England authorities, they took the opportunity to renew their “covenant” with the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke “that in case a warr should break out between the crowns of Great Brittain and France they might remain neuter.” The Albany Commissioners delivered a wampum belt to underscore the emphasis of their words and provided the Kahnawà:ke leader with “a silver laced hat, a blanket, shirt, and pair of stockings, and gave a cagg of rum amongst them.” The symbolic significance of the “present” offered by the Albany Commissioners must be emphasized: it consisted of many of the goods the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke obtained in trade with Albany merchants as a result of their political “covenant.”<sup>169</sup>

The late May 1735 renewal of the “covenant” between the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and Albany represented a preliminary overture that yielded a much more formal treaty negotiated at Albany from July 31 to August 2, 1735. “Sundry sachems of the Cachnewage in Canada” arrived in Albany on July 31, 1735. With the mediation of Mohawk Valley Mohawk leaders (from Canajoharie and/or Tiononderoge), they stated their intent to renew their diplomatic engagements to Crown representatives in New York. The treaty included a calumet ceremony,<sup>170</sup> in which each member of the Albany Commissioners “took a Whiffe” of tobacco from a circulating ceremonial pipe, followed by an exchange of wampum belts that stated the mutual intent of all parties to keep open the “road” (i.e., secure travel and trade) between the St.

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<sup>169</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 61a (reel C-1220). Cf. *WA*, 191.

<sup>170</sup> Donald Blakeslee, “The Origin and Spread of the Calumet Ceremony,” *American Antiquity* 46 (1981): 759-68.

Lawrence Valley Mohawk settlements (Kahnawà:ke and Kanesatake) and Albany.<sup>171</sup> In their formal reply to the Kahnawà:ke leaders, the Albany Commissioners stated their understanding of the terms of the agreement for the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and other St. Lawrence Valley Indigenous communities:

“you and all Indians Resideing in Canada Should live with all ye Subjects of y. Great King of Great Brittain in a perfect friendship and neutrality in case their should happen to be a war between ye King of Great Brittain and ye King of France, and in Case you do keep Strickly to that agreement and treaty we should then forever live in good unity together and have free Recourse to & from your habitations at all times as well on acct. of trade as otherwise and be treated & Received by us as friends and fellow Subjects to ye best of kings and yt. on yr. Side & in behalf of sd. Nations whom you Represent Shall not molest nor any any of ye. English Subjects give a belt.”<sup>172</sup>

Even Wraxall, who held nothing but contempt for the “Canada Trading Faction at Albany,” was forced to admit in his 1751 Abridgment that this 1735 treaty constituted “one of the most formal and carried on with the greatest solemnity of any I have met in the Records.” For Wraxall, the main purpose of the treaty was obvious: it ensured that “the Canada trade was opened and freed from all Obstructions.”<sup>173</sup>

The Albany Commissioners’ records subsequent to the 1735 treaty are peppered with brief references that illustrate the manner in which the terms of the 1735 treaty were renewed and sustained by face-to-face interactions between Crown officials and the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke. On October 9, 1738, three Kahnawà:ke “sachems” appeared before the Albany Commissioners to “smoak a Pipe” (a possible informal renewal of the 1735 treaty calumet ceremony). Each received one stroud blanket, a keg of rum, and some tobacco from Colonel John Schuyler.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 65-67a (reel C-1220). Cf. WA, 193-96.

<sup>172</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 66a (reel C-1220).

<sup>173</sup> WA, 193-94n.

<sup>174</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 143 (reel C-1220).



Less than a year later, in early September 1739, the Albany Commissioners advised New York Governor George Clarke that they had treated with “some of the Principall Sachems of Cachnewage who came hither on account of trade” and reported that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke were eager to renew the 1735 “treaty of peace and neutrality” and had even intimated that the “Governor of Canada is inclined that a state of neutrality should be kept up between us” (i.e., between New York and New France).<sup>175</sup> On November 28, 1739, “Ondatsogo, a sachem of the Cachnewages” appeared before the Albany Commissioners on unspecified “private business” and received customary symbolic gifts of a blanket, clothing, and rum.<sup>176</sup> On July 23, 1740, the Albany Commissioners presented to some visiting “Cachnewage sachems” a present of two black stroud blankets, one pair of black stockings, a keg of rum, one shirt “and about 6/ worth Linnen [sic]” to “bewail [i.e., condole or mourn] the death of Casagichte one of their sachems who was drowned last spring above Saraghtoge [i.e., present Saratoga, NY].”<sup>177</sup> On September 3, 1740, a Kahnawà:ke leader named “Adrinagindiage” reported to the Albany Commissioners on the efforts of people of his village and Kanesatake alike to bring an end to the dispute between the “Onnagungos” [i.e., Abenakis]<sup>178</sup> and the New England colonies.<sup>179</sup>

The arrangements embodied in the 1735 Albany treaty with the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke adhered to Haudenosaunee understandings of their “Covenant Chain” alliance with the English Crown. Speaking before the Albany Commissioners on March 5, 1741, a Haudenosaunee delegation from Onondaga noted that their understanding of the alliance included an obligation on their part:

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*: 173.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*: 177a.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*: 187.

<sup>178</sup> Dean Snow, “Western Abenaki,” in Trigger, ed., *Northeast*, 147.

<sup>179</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 197a (reel C-1220).

“to bring into our Covenant as many of the nations of Indians as we could, and which we have always endeavoured to do and have perswaded severall nations who are children of the Govr. of Canada to enter into the Covenant with us.”<sup>180</sup>

They then reminded the Commissioners that “a good trade and a good peace go hand in hand.”<sup>180</sup> Wraxall, despite his political bias against the Albany Commissioners’ policies and his unwillingness or inability to recognize Indigenous agency in diplomatic affairs, recognized that the neutrality agreement involving the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, English Crown representatives at Albany, and the Six Nations ensured not only a degree of mutual security among all parties but also that the “Trade flourished” at Albany.<sup>181</sup>

The Albany Commissioners’ records reported a visit from five Mohawks from Kahnawà:ke on August 30, 1741, among whom was “Osorongoghte, one of the Six Principal Sachems.” They stated their intention of coming to Albany to “smoak a pipe,” by which they voiced complaints about “the low prices being paid for beaver” at Albany. The Commissioners, evidently disappointed by this message, noted nevertheless that the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke combined business with diplomacy, carrying “bevers” to trade while on “publick business.”<sup>182</sup>

The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke returned in a formal manner to Albany to renew the terms of the 1735 treaty on September 27, 1742. The Albany Commissioners made the following speech the next day:

“We are glad to see you Her with Chearfull Countenancy to renew the Covenant so Long since made between our forefathers and so frequently renewed between Us and you, particularly Seven years ago. We shall now repeat the Substances of this Covenant which is as follow That you and all the Indians living in Canada shall Live with the Subjects of the King of Great Brittain not only in this Province but All other his majesties Subjects in A perfect friendship and Neutrality, in Case there should happen to be a War Between the King of Great Brittain and the French King, And that We shall for Ever live in Unity and peace together and

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*: 206-206a.

<sup>181</sup> *WA*, 220-21 (quote 221n).

<sup>182</sup> *MACIA-LAC*, 1820: 211, 214a (quotes) (reel C-1220).

have free recourses to and from Each Other habitations, Att all times as well on Account of Trade as on other business and receive one the Other At All times as Brethren and not molest Each Other in the Way to and From Each other But that the same remains always free and Clear without any Manner or Interruptions from Each other.”<sup>183</sup>

On the eve of the outbreak of Anglo-French hostilities in the War of Austrian Succession (1744-1748), the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke sent a messenger named “Aquaresa” to Albany to assure the Commissioners of their intention “to keep the Covenant and not meddle with the war, but to live in peace, and keep open the path.”<sup>184</sup> Six days after receiving this message, the Albany Commissioners met with Aquaresa on June 20, 1744 and advised that the neutrality was conditional on its “encompassing all the different Indian nations in Canada with all his Majesties subjects on this Continent.”<sup>185</sup> The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke prioritized their neutrality arrangements as a means of averting open conflict with Iroquois who might choose to act as English military allies.<sup>186</sup> Because they also maintained parallel diplomatic ties to the French in Canada, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke saw no conflict in accepting French invitations for individual warriors to take part in the conflict as allies of New France. Several Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke who came to Albany in June 1744 to renew the “ancient covenant” acknowledged openly that they had accepted such a French “hatchet,” but “not with an intent to use it unless they are first attacked.” The Kahnawà:ke Mohawks then noted that their community leaders defused the situation by sending interested warriors to attack the “flatheads” [i.e., the Catawbas residing on the frontier of South Carolina], a common tactic utilized to provide an outlet for the aggressions of young men at a great distance from the principal political and military theater.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*: 236-236a. Cf. *WA*, 229.

<sup>184</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 275a-276 (quotes 275a) (reel C-1220). Cf. *WA*, 233.

<sup>185</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 284a-285 (reel C-1220). Cf. *WA*, 236n.

<sup>186</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 290 (reel C-1220). Cf. *WA*, 237n.

<sup>187</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 298a-299 (reel C-1220). See also James Merrell, “Their Very Bones Shall Fight: The Catawba-Iroquois Wars,” in Richter and Merrell, eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain*, 115-34.

The War of Austrian Succession (a.k.a. King George's War) briefly interrupted Kahnawà:ke Mohawk-facilitated trade between Canada and Albany.<sup>188</sup> Two "Caughnawagas" arrived in Albany on September 9, 1745 carrying a package for the Mayor of Albany (then Cornelius Cuyler, an active member of the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs). The package, opened and inspected by the Albany Commissioners, turned out to contain correspondence from the Marquis de Beauharnois, the Governor of Canada, directed toward Massachusetts Governor William Shirley regarding an exchange of prisoners of war.<sup>189</sup> Under normal circumstances the Albany Commissioners would have written a pass permitting the Mohawk messengers to deliver the letters to Boston themselves, but they had just received news of an August 23, 1745 declaration of war by the colony of Massachusetts against the "Canada Indians" occasioned by "the breach of the treaty of neutrality which those Indians have made by killing and scalping two men upon the frontiers of New England."<sup>190</sup> The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke were not involved in the incident – the murders were committed by Abenakis<sup>191</sup> – but they were held accountable for the actions of other "Canada Indians" by a strict interpretation of the neutrality arrangements incorporated into their Covenant Chain treaty with the English Crown. The Albany Commissioners reported that the "2 Cachnawages took it Very much Amiss that they were not allowed to trade here as usual" and argued "that they had Inviolably kept ye treaty of neutrality and that [it] is not their fault other Indians have broake it."<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1821: 89-90 (reel C-1221).

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*: 95.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*: 96.

<sup>191</sup> By the Honourable Spencer Phips, Esq., Lieutenant-Governor and Commander in Chief, for the Time Being, of His Majesty's Government of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, A Declaration of War Against the Eastern and Canada Indians...Given at the Council-Chamber in Boston, the Twenty-Third Day of August, 1745 (Early American Imprints, First Series, No.40375); Samuel G. Drake, A Particular History of the Five Years French and Indian War in New England and Parts Adjacent, From Its Declaration by the King of France, March 15, 1744, to the Treaty with the Eastern Indians, Oct. 16, 1749 (1870; rpt. ed., Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1995), 82-83.

<sup>192</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1821: 97 (reel C-1221).

The actions of the Albany Commissioners in September 1745 provided the pretext for substantial retaliation by the French two months later. Governor Beaharnois later justified his offensive against the New York outpost at Saratoga on the dual grounds that his Kahnawà:ke messengers were stopped at Albany and prevented from continuing on to Boston and that they “were not permitted to sell their own Beaver, which was contrary to the Treaties persisting.”<sup>193</sup> Mohawks from Kahnawà:ke, including “Andaghsago their Chief Sachem” accompanied a French force under Paul Marin de la Malgue on the November 17, 1745 attack on Saratoga. Their stated purpose in accompanying the French was to ensure that no “Six Nations” individuals were harmed in the attack, and the record bears out their success in that objective.<sup>194</sup> Notwithstanding their achievement in preventing bloodshed among their Haudenosaunee kinfolk, the military offensive temporarily disrupted the longstanding diplomatic neutrality brokered by the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke between the St. Lawrence Valley Haudenosaunee communities, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the colonies of New York and New France.<sup>195</sup> New York colonial authorities adopted a more aggressive posture toward their alliance with the Haudenosaunee, and enlisted the services of a Mohawk Valley fur trader named William Johnson who promised to recruit Mohawk and other Haudenosaunee warriors for retaliatory offensive actions against New France.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 396 (reel C-1220).

<sup>194</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 362a-364, 371a, 374 (quote p.363a) (reel C-1220); David Preston, Colonial Saratoga: War and Peace on the Borderlands of Early America (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 2018), 49-87.

<sup>195</sup> MACIA-LAC, 1820: 334a, 363-64, 371a, 392-96 (reel C-1220).

<sup>196</sup> Ibid: 406a-411 (reel C-1220). Cf. WA, 247-48. On the emergence of Johnson as a figure in New York’s diplomacy with the Haudenosaunee after 1746, see Timothy J. Shannon, “Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Fashion,” William and Mary Quarterly 3d ser., (hereafter WMQ) 3d. ser., 53 (1996): 13-42.

The record of Covenant Chain diplomacy between the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and the English Crown fell silent for nearly eight years after the assault on Saratoga. Early in 1753, a party of Kahnawà:ke Mohawks hunting in the Ohio Valley captured two Pennsylvania trappers (David Hendricks and Alexander McGinty) and carried them back to their village, where they were “Placed in the Room & Stead of Indians there deceased, so That They could not be had without so much Money as for others that would pay for their Stead.” The resulting negotiations for their ransom, which eventually involved a payment carried to Albany by a Pennsylvania legation that included Benjamin Franklin, were mediated by a Kahnawà:ke woman well-known to Albany authorities as “Susana.” Long a porteur in the employ of Albany merchant and one-time mayor Robert Sanders, Susana of Kahnawà:ke proved instrumental in parlaying the repatriation of the Pennsylvania captives into a renewal of the Covenant Chain treaty between her home community and the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs.<sup>197</sup>

Two Mohawk “sachems” from Kahnawà:ke named Onorogigha and Sanagowana appeared before the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs on October 30, 1753, stating (with a “Belt of Wampum”) that they had come “to renew the Old Covenant Chain and that they would for Ever keep it bright & Clear & free from Roast [i.e., rust].” They further supplemented their speech with a gift of “3 Bever Skins.”<sup>198</sup> The Mohawk leaders found a receptive audience at Albany, where the next day the Commissioners of Indian Affairs expressed their eagerness to renew their former relationship:

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<sup>197</sup> Manuscript Records of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs at Albany, 1753-1755, entries for July 7, 1753, August 3-4, 1753, August 8, 1753 (“Susana”), September 10, 1753, September 14-15, 1753, September 17, 1753, October 3, 1753 (“Placed in the Room and Stead...”), June 27, 1754 (Franklin), Native American History Collection, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI) (hereafter MACIA-WLCL). Cf. LAC, MG19-F35, Series I, Lot 680, pp.2-11, 42.

<sup>198</sup> MACIA-WLCL, October 30, 1753. Cf. LAC, MG19-F35, Series I, Lot 680, p.12.

“Brethren, what you said Relating to the late War to have Been Commenced By Both Kings, we Confess to be true, But we were Extreamly Surprized to hear you had taken up the Hatchet against us, and thereupon Immediately Committed Hostilities against us, Since you and the Rest of the Indians in Canada, Had so few years Before Intered with us in a Solmn Covenant, to Committ no hostilities Upon us In Case of a Rupture Between the Brittish & french Crowns. However we hereby Desire of you, not to make or Middle for the Future, In time of warr with any Brittish Subjects, Where upon Gave a Belt of Wampum. Bretheren We are glad you are Come to Renew the Old Covenant Chain, and we do hereby Assure you, that of our Sides We will keep the same Bright, and the Road Between us and You Clear from all filth and Dirth, and the fire allways Burning for you and all yours to Come & Smoke your pipes when you please, and you may Depend that our friendship will be towards you a Long Duration, Whereon gave one piece of Strouds.<sup>199</sup>

It is important to note once more the symbolic significance of the reciprocal gifts that accompanied the speeches at this renewal of the Covenant Chain treaty between the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs. The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke offered “Bever Skins” and the Albany Commissioners responded with a “Stroud” blanket. The gifts, which represented what each party contributed to the longstanding trade brokered by the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, along with the language renewing the Covenant Chain, the open road, hospitable fires burning to warm visiting Mohawks, and shared tobacco-smoking, all combined to indicate a restoration of the status quo ante bellum with regard to Kahnawà:ke Mohawk-facilitated trade between Canada and Albany.

Another legation of Kahnawà:ke Mohawk leaders returned to Albany on August 12, 1754 to renew the Covenant Chain treaty relationship. The party included at least one of the two sachems who renewed the treaty in 1753, and “Siohahisen who represents Oroniadickha.”<sup>200</sup> On August 14, 1754, the Albany Commissioners made the following speech:

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<sup>199</sup> MACIA-WLCL, October 31, 1753. Cf. LAC, MG19-F35, Series 1, Lot 680, pp.13-14.

<sup>200</sup> MACIA-WLCL, August 12, 1754. The names of the two attendees from 1753 are recorded here as Anonragete (written as Onorigigha in 1753) and Sanatsioware (recorded as Sanagowana in 1753). Cf. LAC, MG19-F35, Series 1, Lot 680, p.52.

“Bretheren We now Again, Renew the Old Covenant Chain With You and all your Allies, which has Been Made By Our forefathers, and Desire you and all Your Allies, to keep the Same Bright, Clear, and free from Rust, as Long as the Sun and Moon Indures, and that No Dark Clouds May Come in the Way So That You and We May Walk and Go Without fear or Terror; and Live always In Friendship with Each other. And if In Case an Open War Should Break Out, Between the King of Great Briton, and the french King, We Desire you to Stand Neuter, and Commit no Hostilities, on His Majesties Subjects, and We do Now again (as We all Did Last Fall) Assure you, that We of Our Side, Will keep the Said Covenant Chain Bright, Clear & free from Rust and filt, and the Road Between us and You Clear from all filt and Dirt, and the fire Burning. [...] Gave a Large Belt of Wampum.<sup>201</sup>

The August 1754 treaty represented the last recorded treaty between the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and the English Crown prior to 1760. Space does not permit a detailed recounting of the events of the Seven Years’ War in this chapter,<sup>202</sup> but we may turn our attention to two formal treaties signed between the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and the English Crown in 1760. These treaties “book-ended” the formal capitulation of New France to Great Britain on September 8, 1760, and they should be considered as a “capstone” to prior treaties between Crown and Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke negotiated since 1700. The treaties at Oswegatchie (August 30, 1760) and Kahnawà:ke (September 15-16, 1760) are best understood as efforts on the part of Crown negotiators to conciliate the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke by assuring them of the continuation of their existing privileges as allies rather than representing the imposition of any new or distinct form of British colonial rule just one week after the French surrender of Canada.<sup>203</sup> It is vital, in other words, to understand the Oswegatchie and Kahnawà:ke treaties as related agreements – the former (Oswegatchie) enabled the latter (Kahnawà:ke), and the latter represented official ratification of the former.

<sup>201</sup> MACIA-WLCL, August 14, 1754. Cf. LAC, MG19-F35, Series 1, Lot 680, p.54.

<sup>202</sup> See Parmenter, “After the Mourning Wars,” 63-76.

<sup>203</sup> J.R. Miller, “History, the Courts, and Treaty Policy: Lessons from Marshall and Nisga’a,” in Jerry P. White, Paul Maxim, and Dan Beavon, eds., Aboriginal Policy Research: Setting the Agenda for Change, Vol.1 (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 2002), 32-34.



As the British Army launched its final approach on French Canada in August 1760, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke (and other Indigenous residents of the St. Lawrence Valley) responded to messages sent by British Superintendent of Indian Affairs Sir William Johnson seeking their promise of non-intervention in the campaign.<sup>204</sup> They reconnoitered at Oswegatchie (modern Ogdensburg, NY) on August 28, 1760. After two days of negotiations, Johnson concluded a treaty with the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke (and several other French-allied Indigenous nations residing in the St. Lawrence River valley). While Johnson generally kept careful records of his diplomatic interactions with Indigenous nations, no official record of this treaty survives.<sup>205</sup> However, subsequent documents recording the recollections of Indigenous signatories of the terms of the treaty during the ensuing seven decades have established that its tenets included: no reprisals for past actions on behalf of the French, freedom of Catholic religious practice, the protection of all rights and privileges enjoyed during the French regime, and guarantees of the integrity of Indigenous lands and property by the Crown.<sup>206</sup>

Shortly after the conclusion of the Oswegatchie Treaty, while en route to Montréal, Sir William Johnson and Indian Department staff stopped at the Mohawk community of Akwesasne to confirm the terms of the treaty via the smoking of “the pipe of peace” and offering assurances of British protection “upon their future good behavior.”<sup>207</sup> On September 8, 1764, the Mohawks of Akwesasne recalled Johnson’s promise in 1760 “that if the Country remained in the

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<sup>204</sup> WJP 3: 272-73.

<sup>205</sup> Beaulieu, “Les garanties d’un traité disparu: le traité d’Oswegatchie, 30 août 1760,” Revue Juridique Thémis 34 (2000): 369-408.

<sup>206</sup> Daniel Claus to Sir William Johnson, 8 September 1764, LAC, RG10, 7: 184. See also WJP 7: 109-10; 11: 353-54, 872-73; 13: 622; NYCD 8: 237-38; LAC, RG10, 782: 25-26 (reel C-13498); LAC, RG8, 248: 231 (reel C-2848); LAC, RG8, 267: 287 (reel C-2856); Cornelius J. Jaenen, “Some Unresolved Issues: Lorette Hurons in the Colonial Context,” Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society 21 (1997): 118; John Thompson, “The Treaties of 1760: Mohawk Pacts With the British Reverberate Across Two Centuries,” Beaver: Exploring Canada’s History 76.2 (April/May 1996): 23-25.

<sup>207</sup> Knox, Historical Journal 2: 556.

Possession of the English, we should not only enjoy the same Priviledges we enjoyed during the time of the French, but still more and greater, and the usage better.”<sup>208</sup>

British commitments in the August 30, 1760 Treaty of Oswegatchie secured the approach of their military forces to Montréal and facilitated the formal surrender of Canada on September 8, 1760. Article 40 of the formal French surrender of Canada to Great Britain guaranteed that the Indigenous allies of France (which included the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke) would be “maintained in the lands they inhabit,” and that “they shall not be molested...for having carried arms and served his Most Christian Majesty [Louis XV].”<sup>209</sup> One week after the surrender of Canada, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke hosted Sir William Johnson for a two-day conference that ratified the Treaty of Oswegatchie.<sup>210</sup>

The transcribed words of the unidentified Kahnawà:ke Mohawk speaker thanked Johnson for “renewing and strengthening the Old Covenant Chain which before this War subsisted between us.”<sup>211</sup> The precise terms of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke’s understanding of this as an unambiguous rekindling of the former terms of free trade between their community and New York appears in the next clause in the treaty minutes: “We are greatly oblided to you for opening the Road from this to [Albany] your country we on our parts assure you to keep it clear of any Obstacle & use it in a freindly Manner.”<sup>212</sup>

The Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke expressed their hope that Johnson would “regulate the Trade so that we may not be imposed upon by ye. People our new Allies.”<sup>213</sup> Johnson, to

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<sup>208</sup> WJP 11: 353-54.

<sup>209</sup> NYCD 10: 1117.

<sup>210</sup> WJP 7: 109-10; 13: 162-65.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid 13: 163.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid: 165.

underscore the point, invited the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke to accompany him back “to Albany in order to try ye. goodness of the Road” for themselves.<sup>214</sup> This represented an explicit recognition of the right of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke (and other Indigenous parties to the treaty) to free and unrestricted passage across what was then the provincial boundary between Quebec and New York with their merchandise to conduct their customary commerce at Albany.

To the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, the two treaties of 1760 represented vindication and continuation of their direct diplomacy with Crown officials conducted over the previous six decades. The treaties restored and renewed their time-honored position as allies of the English Crown. Johnson, in an April 1761 letter to British Army Commander-in-Chief General Jeffery Amherst, stated that “the road of peace and commerce should be free and open” for the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and the British colonies. Johnson specifically mentioned the desire of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke to trade at Albany, “where they say they can have goods much cheaper than at Montreal.” He stressed to Amherst that as long as the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke (and other Indigenous parties to the two treaties of 1760) “continue to behave well and keep up to their engagements, it will be right to allow them a Free open trade.”<sup>215</sup> Amherst concurred, and authorized Johnson to assure the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke that “whatever promises have been made, they shall be strictly Adhered to, and so long as they behave well, they shall have full Liberty for a free and open Trade.”<sup>216</sup>

One month later, this directive had not yet reached British Army officers in Montréal, causing Johnson to express his consternation once more about the refusal of military authorities to grant “passes” for the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke to travel to Albany on the grounds such travel

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*: 164.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid* 10: 257 (quotes). See also *ibid* 3: 376, 381.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid* 3: 387.

would revive the pre-war “Counterband Trade” between Kahnawà:ke and Albany.<sup>217</sup> Johnson reiterated his surprise that:

“General [Thomas] Gage will not suffer the Caghnawageys & other Inds. inhabitting yt. Country, included in the peace made with them last Autumn, to come to, and trade at Albany or elsewhere, it being one of the Articles settled at the great Meeting at Cagnawagey last Year in presence of the Six Nations &ca. I think keeping them so much under, and debarring them the liberty of a Free Trade is far from being good Policy, whatever others may think who know little abt. it.”<sup>218</sup>

In addition to this violation of the terms of the 1760 Treaty Of Kahnawà:ke by the British Army, Johnson also bristled at reports of misconduct on the part of soldiers of the British Army’s 44<sup>th</sup> Regiment (then garrisoned near Kahnawà:ke), toward the Mohawks of that community as “Contrary to the assurances given them last Year at the Treaty held at Caghnawagey.” He complimented his Deputy Superintendent Daniel Claus for his efforts to smooth over the “little riots” caused by intoxicated soldiers by providing the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke with a gift of ammunition for their hunting.<sup>219</sup> Claus reported that several “Chiefs” of Kahnawà:ke and Kanesatake, including “Tiaogeara, the Caghnawago Sachm. [Joseph] Brants wifes Uncle” planned to travel to Albany and from there on to Mohawk settlements to see their “Relations.” He advised Johnson that he would endeavor to “get a Pass for them If I cant succeed they are resolved to go at any rate.”<sup>220</sup> This makes clear that one month after Gage refused to grant travel passes freely, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke no longer concerned themselves with seeking out those passes. The practice of requesting such passes should not be mistaken as a subservient gesture toward British authorities on the part of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke for permission to exercise treaty-guaranteed rights to undertake travel and trade. Rather, it represented a means by

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid* 3: 375.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid* 10: 260.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid* 10: 269.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid* 3: 395.

which the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke could test the commitment of various British authorities to the recognition of those treaty rights. By outing Gage's inability or unwillingness to recognize their treaty-guaranteed right of free movement with trade goods to British Indian Department officials, they ensured that the matter was brought to the attention of proper authorities and then continued to exercise their right to unrestricted travel.

In the record of Covenant Chain diplomacy between the English Crown and the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke from 1700 to 1760, the balance of Indigenous/settler power was much more difficult for the respective parties to discern, even in 1760, than it may seem to us now.<sup>221</sup> Treaties were not merely legal instruments that stripped Indigenous nations of their rights.<sup>222</sup> Treaties with Indigenous nations originally represented a marker of sovereignty for weak, outnumbered Europeans seeking to establish a tenuous foothold in Indigenous homelands<sup>223</sup> or, as in the case of the United States after 1783, to signal their own standing as a treaty-worthy nation vis-à-vis the wider world.<sup>224</sup> Certainly the Mohawks did not have access to information that would have enabled them to identify, much less assess any non-Indigenous threat looming, circa 1760, to their autonomy and prosperity.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> John G. Reid and Emerson W. Baker, "Amerindian Power in the Early Modern Northeast: A Reappraisal," *WMQ* 3d. ser., 61.1 (January 2004): 77-106.

<sup>222</sup> Anthony J. Hall, "Treaties With Indigenous Peoples in Canada," *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (published online June 6, 2011), <https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-treaties> (accessed November 3, 2020).

<sup>223</sup> Frederick E. Hoxie, "Why Treaties?" in Mark A. Lindquist and Martin Zanger, eds., *Buried Roots and Indestructible Seeds: The Survival of American Indian Life in Story, History, and Spirit* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 85-105.

<sup>224</sup> Parmenter, "Indigenous Nations and US Foreign Policy," in Jon Butler, ed., *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press; article published online June 2020). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013.744>

<sup>225</sup> According to historian Donald Fyson, scholarly consensus holds that after 1760 the British continued the pre-Conquest French practice of legal pluralism by maintaining distinct legal treatment for Indigenous peoples from that applied to the settler population, even for the so-called "domiciled" Natives (which would have included the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke) within the colonial settlement zone. See "Minority Groups and the Law in Québec, 1760-1867," in G. Blaine Baker and Fyson, eds., *Essays in the History of Canadian Law*, Vol. XI, *Québec and the Canadas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 283. Historian Nancy Christie additionally demonstrates that Crown officials in Québec retained a solicitous attitude toward their Indigenous allies (which included the Mohawks

The active and economically profitable fur trade between Montréal and Albany, facilitated for nearly a century by the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, gradually came to an end after 1768. In that year, the British Board of Trade restored legal control of the fur trade to the individual British North America colonies.<sup>226</sup> This amounted to a substantial deregulation of the fur trade, four decades after ardent British imperialists like Cadwallader Colden had argued so strenuously for tighter control on Kahnawà:ke Mohawk-managed traffic between Canada and New York, and would have represented a victory for the Haudenosaunee fur economy had such a trade continued to exist. Unfortunately, the departure of the French from North America after 1760, combined with the dramatic decline of the New York fur trade after 1763,<sup>227</sup> eliminated many of the economic and diplomatic reasons for travel between Confederacy towns and the Laurentian Mohawk villages. Mohawk hunters from Kahnawà:ke, Kanesatake, and Akwesasne began to travel more frequently with French-Canadian voyageurs on commercial hunting ventures northwest of the Great Lakes, returning with peltry for English-owned fur companies in Montreal.<sup>228</sup> By the eve of the American Revolution, the treaty-protected fur trade between Montréal and Albany no longer existed. Ties between the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and their

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of Kahnawà:ke) through the era of the American Revolution. See The Formal and Informal Politics of British Rule in Post-Conquest Québec, 1760-1837: A Northern Bastille (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020), 77-87. Janna Promislow identifies the post-1815 era as the key turning point for treaty-making in eastern Canada, noting the diminished need of the Crown for military support from allied Indigenous nations and increased settler pressure for territorial acquisition as key factors in the shift to more land-surrender-oriented treaties. See "Treaties in History and Law," University of British Columbia Law Review 47 (2014): 1115. J.R. Miller contends that Crown recognition of Indigenous protocols in treaty making persisted in eastern Canada until circa 1850. See "Aboriginal-Crown Treaty-Making in Canada: A Many-Splendoured Thing," in Jerry P. White, Erik Anderson, Jean-Pierre Morin, and Dan Beavon, eds., Aboriginal Policy Research, Vol.7, A History of Treaties and Policies (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 2010), 5.

<sup>226</sup> NYCD 8: 20-26, 55-58; Peter Marshall, "The Government of the Quebec Fur Trade: An Imperial Dilemma, 1761-1775," in Trigger, Morantz, and Dechêne, eds., Le Castor Fait Tout, 122-43.

<sup>227</sup> Norton, Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 198-221; Walter S. Dunn, Opening New Markets: The British Army and the Old Northwest (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 12.

<sup>228</sup> Trudy Nicks, "The Iroquois and the Fur Trade in Western Canada," in Judd and Ray, eds., Old Trails and New Directions, 85-101; Jean Barman, Iroquois in the West (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), passim.

kinfolk in Confederacy territory persisted,<sup>229</sup> but increasingly after 1760 the former conducted their diplomacy with the English Crown in concert with the Seven Nations of Canada - a trans-community Indigenous organization established in the St. Lawrence Valley during the Seven Years' War for mutual self-defense and the deployment of allied military services for the French (circa 1755-1760) and British (post-1760) colonial authorities.<sup>230</sup>

In the final analysis, the near-century duration of the treaty-protected, trans-national fur trade brokered by the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke served the Haudenosaunee well. Under the cover of trading expeditions between Canada and New York, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke established and maintained a well-organized communications network between their own (and affiliated communities) in the St. Lawrence Valley and their kinfolk in Confederacy towns. In addition to doing profitable business, they carried messages back and forth, gathered intelligence on both the French and the English, and negotiated agreements to avoid involvement in the wars of the European colonial intruders. Even in wartime, both the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke insisted on their right to trade and communicate with their kin in "enemy territory" on New York's provincial frontier and neither the French nor the British possessed the will or the power to deny these crucial diplomatic contacts.

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<sup>229</sup> For documentation of 1782 Condolence ceremony performed by "Confederacy" Mohawks at Kahnawà:ke for the latter's loss of a titleholder (Peter Asarekow, who held the title of Tekarohiken), see John Deserontyon, A Mohawk Form of Ritual Condolence, April 9, 1782, trans. and ed., J.N.B. Hewitt, Heye Foundation Indian Notes and Monographs, vol.10, no.8 (New York: Museum of the American Indian, 1928).

<sup>230</sup> Jean-Pierre Sawaya, La Fédération des Sept Feux de la Vallée du Saint-Laurent: XVIIe – XIXe Siècle (Sillery, QC: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 1998); Denys Delâge et Sawaya, Les Traités des Sept-Feux Avec Les Britanniques: Droits et Pièges d'un Héritage Colonial au Québec ((Sillery, QC: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 2001).

## Summary and Assessment

The question of contemporary recognition of the treaty-protected trading rights of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke is currently before the Superior Court of the Province of Québec.<sup>231</sup> Indigenous nations in Canada contend that historical treaties with the Crown “created a special, even sacred bond.”<sup>232</sup> These treaties represented the product of negotiation between two distinct legal orders and reflected the contemporary need of both parties to establish a formal relationship that would yield peaceful, ideally permanent coexistence.<sup>233</sup> The language employed during Covenant Chain treaty negotiations between the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and Crown officials from 1700 to 1760 offers clear proof that the treaties were intended as much to build specific and reliable forms of relationship as they sought to achieve practical agreements on issues of substance, such as the trading rights of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke. The use of Indigenous protocols by Crown officials (including at various times the creation of fictive kin relationships, pipe-smoking, ceremonial procedure, reciprocal gift-giving, and shared meals) demonstrated their understanding of the relational character of the treaty bond, which included an enduring pledge for each party to attend to concerns expressed by the other.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> The Amended Consolidated Constitutional Pleading in *R. v. Derek White and Hunter Montour* may be found at <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/trans/dsd-dda/cour.html> (accessed November 30, 2021).

<sup>232</sup> Michael Coyle, “As Long as the Sun Shines: Recognizing that Treaties Were Intended to Last,” in John Borrows and Coyle, eds., *The Right Relationship: Reimagining the Implementation of Historical Treaties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 41.

<sup>233</sup> Promislow, “Treaties in History and Law,” 1087; Michael Asch, *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 150-51; Susan Hill, “‘Traveling Down the River of Life Together in Peace and Friendship, Forever’: Haudenosaunee Land Ethics and Treaty Arrangements as the Basis for Restructuring the Relationship with the British Crown,” in Leanne Simpson, ed., *Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2008), 23-45; Patrick Macklem, *Indigenous Difference and the Constitution of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 137, 155.

<sup>234</sup> Coyle, “As Long as the Sun Shines,” 47-49.



Historical treaties created a new normative order between Indigenous nations, the Crown, and settler governments. From 1700 to 1760, the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke and the Crown came together on twenty different occasions to signify their assent to a new framework to govern their contemporary and future coexistence. The very existence of the treaty process demonstrated the acceptance by both parties of their negotiating counterparts' capacity to create and abide by norms.<sup>235</sup> If we accept that historic treaties represent consensual arrangements for coexistence based on reciprocal commitments and shared understandings,<sup>236</sup> we must also recognize that each party to a treaty expected its terms to endure. Any working relationship requires adjustment over time, but the core, solemn promises at the heart of the agreement cannot simply be put aside by one constituency in a treaty relationship without the consent of the other.<sup>237</sup>

The record of Covenant Chain diplomacy between the Crown and the Mohawks of Kahnawá:ke from 1700 to 1760 provides consistent recognition of the Mohawks' unhindered right to travel and conduct trade freely across inter-colonial boundaries. The relationship survived difficult episodes caused by intercolonial wars but emerged from the decisive Seven Years' War fully intact and sanctioned once more by Crown representatives. By 1760, they could point to six decades of direct treaty negotiations with Crown representatives on this subject that witnessed explicit acknowledgment of their sovereign standing and capacity, as Crown allies, to engage freely in long-distance travel and trade without regard for borders created by Europeans. Notwithstanding the comparatively robust paper trail supporting the rights of the

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<sup>235</sup> Bradford W. Morse, "Indigenous-Settler Treaty Making in Canada," in Marcia Langton, Maureen Tehan, Lisa Palmer, and Kathryn Shain, eds., Honour Among Nations? Treaties and Agreements with Indigenous People (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 50.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>237</sup> "Treaties in History and Law," 1099.

Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke,<sup>238</sup> the question of their recognition in the context of twenty-first century North American border security discourse awaits resolution.

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<sup>238</sup> In contrast to the twenty discrete treaties supporting the claims of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, in 1990 the Supreme Court of Canada recognized the treaty-protected right of the Hurons of Lorette to the practice of ancestral customs outside the boundaries of their reserve on the basis of a single document signed by General James Murray in 1760 that outlined the terms of their protection under the British Crown, which included the free exercise of their religion, their right to practice ancient customs, and freedom of trade with the English. See *R. v. Sioui*, [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1025, <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/608/index.do> (accessed November 30, 2021); Denis Vaugeois, *La Fin des Alliances franco-indiennes: Enquête sur un sauf-conduit de 1760 devenu un traité en 1990* (Montréal: Boréal/Septentrion, 1995); *idem*, éd., *Les Hurons de Lorette* (Sillery, QC: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 1996); Jaenen, "Some Unresolved Issues," 116-20; David Schulze, "The Murray Treaty of 1760: The Original Document Discovered," *Canadian Native Law Reporter* 1 (1998): 1-13; Beaulieu, "Les Hurons et la Conquête: Un nouvel éclairage sur le 'traité Murray'," *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 30.3 (2000): 53-63. Nine years later, the Supreme Court of Canada's judgment in support of Mi'kmaq treaty-protected fishing rights relied on three treaties. See *R. v. Marshall*, [1999] 3 S.C.R. 456, <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/1739/index.do> (accessed November 30, 2021); Ken Coates, *The Marshall Decision and Native Rights* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Arthur J. Ray, "Regina v. Marshall: Native History, the Judiciary, and the Public," *Acadiensis* 29.2 (2000): 138-46; William C. Wicken, *Mi'kmaq Treaties on Trial: History, Land, and Donald Marshall Junior* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).