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## **Jealous neighbors: Rivalry and alliance among the native communities of Detroit, 1701–1766**

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JEALOUS NEIGHBORS:  
RIVALRY AND ALLIANCE AMONG THE NATIVE COMMUNITIES OF  
DETROIT, 1701-1766

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Doctor of Philosophy

Lyon G. Tyler Department of History

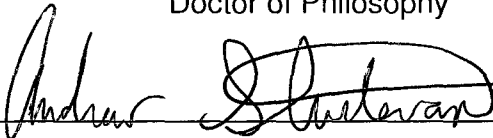
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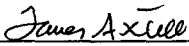
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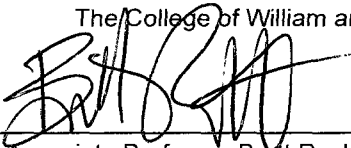
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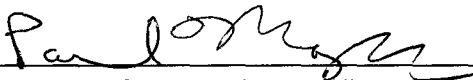
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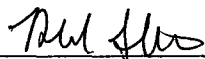
  
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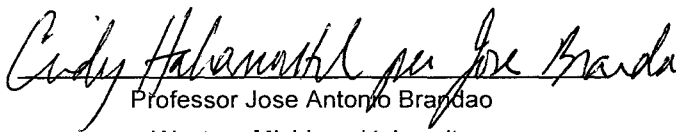
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## ABSTRACT PAGE

Between the founding of the French post of Detroit in 1701 and the end of Pontiac's War in 1766, several native American peoples settled in distinct clusters around the French (and later British post) near current-day Detroit, Michigan, and Windsor, Ontario. Focusing on the interactions among these communities, this dissertation makes two interrelated arguments. It first argues that, although these peoples had been challenged and changed by the forces of colonialism during the seventeenth century, they nonetheless emerged from that century as discrete ethnic, social, and political entities, rather than shattered or disintegrated refugees. A set of interconnected, mutually constituting, and consistent relationships between these separate and autonomous peoples, secondly, shaped affairs in the region just as much as the relationship between Europeans and native peoples. That colonial relationship, in fact, was embedded within and reciprocally tied to the web of relationships between native peoples. Only by understanding both exchanges between French and native peoples as well as modes of interaction between different indigenous peoples can scholars make sense of events at Detroit.

To demonstrate both the survival of these native groups as discrete peoples and the consequences of that survival, each of the first four chapters explores one of the salient relationships between native peoples at Detroit, while the final charts how these relationships shaped one event, Pontiac's War. The first chapter charts the way in which the Huron man, Cheanonvouzon, sought to compensate for his peoples' weakness by forming a "southern alliance" with two powerful groups in the region, the Miamis and Five Nations, or Iroquois. The second chapter investigates how the closely related Anishinaabe peoples—the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis—cooperated to meet the challenge posed by the southern alliance. The emergence of these two rival blocs led to conflict between the Hurons and Ottawas in 1738, and the third chapter places that violence within a longer pattern of competition between these peoples. Chapter Four uses a controversy among the Hurons in the 1740s and 1750s to understand the bonds which held that community together. Finally, the fifth chapter demonstrates how all of these patterns shaped one event, the Anglo-Indian conflict frequently called Pontiac's War, and situates that conflict within a local context. As scholars investigate how these relationships mutually constituted not only one another but also the colonial relationship, intercultural relations at Detroit, as well as the rest of the New World, become at once more complicated and more comprehensible.

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To Mom and Dad, who took me to Ouiatenon and Vincennes

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- BP Louis Waddell, John Tottenham, and Donald Kent, *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol. 5, "September 1, 1760-October 31, 1761," Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1984.
- CAOM Centre des archives d'outre mer, Aix-en-Provence, France
- CCOD Correspondence between Commander-in-Chief and Officers at Detroit, War Office, 34, Amherst Papers, National Archives, London, Microfilm at Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, MG13-WO34.
- DCB John English and Réal Bélanger, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. 12 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959-.
- HNAI William C. Sturtevant, ed., *Handbook of Native American Indians*. 20 vols. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1978-.
- JR Reuben Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. 73 Vols. Cleveland: Burrows, 1896-1901.
- MDE Pierre Margry, *Découvertes et établissements des français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique Septentrionale, 1614-1754*. 6 vols. Paris: D Jouaust, 1876-1886.
- MPHSCR Pioneer and Historical Society of the State of Michigan. *Collections and Researches*. 40 vols. Lansing [Mich.]: Thorp & Godfrey, 1888-1912.
- NYCD Brodhead, John Romeyn, Berthold Fernow, and E.B. O'Callihan, *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York*. 15 vols. Albany: Weed, Parsons, and Co., Printers, 1853-1887.
- RAPQ Les Archives de Québec, *Rapport d'Archiviste de la Province de Québec*. 53 vols. Québec: L. Amable Proulx, 1920-1975.
- RPD Registre paroisse, Detroit, Burton Collection, Detroit Public Library.
- WHC The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Collections*. 20 vols. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1888-1931.
- WJP William Johnson, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*. Edited by Alexander Flick. 14 vols. Albany: University of New York, 1921-1965.
- WMQ *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3 Ser.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Same Body

In a December 1701 conference, Antoine Laumet de Lamothe Cadillac, commandant of a new post on the Detroit River, invited the Hurons to come live at Détroit. Settled alongside the other native nations that were sure to come, Cadillac assured the Hurons, they would find cheap trading goods and security from enemies such as the Dakotas. Cadillac further promised the Hurons that he would “embrace [them] and enclose you between [his] arms,” and that they would form “the same body” with the French and other natives settled at the fort.<sup>1</sup> The following year he told the Miamis, through the Huron headman Cheanonvouzon, that “if they [the Miamis] come close to me, we will be the same body.”<sup>2</sup>

The analogy of a single, integrated body perfectly captured the sort of alliance that Cadillac and the French hoped to build among the peoples of the Great Lakes Region, or *pays d'en haut*.<sup>3</sup> As the governor of New France, Hector de Callière, had articulated it earlier that year, this alliance would unite all of France’s allies in the region into a collective military and commercial entity—a “new nation.” To ensure harmony

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<sup>1</sup> “je pourray vous embrasser et vous renfermer entre mes bras,” “Conseil des Hurons tenu dans le fort du Détroit, le 4 Décembre 1701,” in *MDE* 5:261. When the original French is supplied in the notes, the translation is that of the author. I have not corrected misspellings or inserted missing accent marks except when their absence makes the word unrecognizable. The translations are generally try to capture the sense of the quotation rather than a literal translation.

<sup>2</sup> “Paroles de quatre Hurons...,” 17 Feb. 1702, in *ibid.*, 266. For other uses of this idiom, see Antoine Laumet de Lamothe Cadillac, “Relation du Sieur de Lamothe Cadillac, capitaine en pied, ayant une compagnie de la Marine, en Canada, ci-devant Commandant de Missilimakinak et autres postes dans les pays éloignés, ou il a été pendant trois années,” in *ibid.*, 118; “Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages Who Came down from the Upper Country, [1711], *MPHSCR*, 33:503.

<sup>3</sup> The French universally referred to the Great Lakes Region as the “pays d'en haut” or “upper country” to differentiate it from the St. Lawrence Valley—the “pays d'en bas” or “lower country.” The *pays d'en haut* included a wide swath of land reaching west from the St. Lawrence Valley to the Plains, even including, in some formulations, the Ohio River Valley and Illinois Country.



among these peoples, the governor of New France would mediate disputes among the nations and thus maintain peace among these people.<sup>4</sup> As Callière reminded the Ottawas the following year, “if you have any quarrel between your people and theirs [the Iroquois’] do not Avenge it but Come here and inform me of it,” so he could reconcile the two peoples.”<sup>5</sup> The French cast this alliance in familial terms: the nations of the region, “Onontio’s children,” would cooperate with one another and would acknowledge French mediation between them.<sup>6</sup>

Accepting Cadillac’s promise and invitation, the Hurons and other groups who eventually settled at Détroit in the early eighteenth century—the Ottawas, the Ojibwas, and Potawatomis—certainly appeared to embrace this French vision of a unified regional alliance.<sup>7</sup> They explicitly used the language of alliance. During the peace negotiations in August 1701, for example, the Ottawa leader Ontontagon, whom the French called Jean le Blanc, noted that, although they frequently disagreed, the Hurons and Ottawas “nevertheless form only one body together.” Cheanonvouzon likewise noted that the

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<sup>4</sup> Maxime Gohier describes “mediation” as the “French imperial policy” and lauds the “genius” of such diplomacy. Gohier is more comfortable describing the way that mediation was meant to work than assessing the extent to which it did work (Gohier, *Onontio le médiateur: La gestion des conflits amérindiens en Nouvelle-France, 1603-1717* [Sillery: Septentrion, 2008], 23, 39).

<sup>5</sup> “s’il arrivoit quelque desmelé entre quelqu’uns de vos [les Outaouais] gens et les leurs [les Iroquois] de n’en pas Vanger mais de Venir m’en donner avis affin que je accommode tous chose comme je l’ay preserver [?] dans cette paix” (“Parolles des outaouïaes arrivez a Montreal Le Cinq juillet 1702,” in Moreau St.-Méry Collection, série F3, Centre des archives d’outre mer, Aix-en-Provence, France, vol. 8, fol. 310.

<sup>6</sup> “il vouloit être le seul Arbitte de leurs differends...qu’ils remissent tous leurs intérêts entre ses mains,” “Tous applaudirent avec de grandes acclamations, dont l’air retentit bien loin,” Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France*, 6 vols (Paris: Didot, 1744), 3:415, 418. See also, Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal: French-native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century*. trans. Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott (Ithaca: McGill-Queens University Press), 2001; White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 142; Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le pays d’en haut, 1660-1715* (Québec: Septentrion and Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), 215.

<sup>7</sup> I use “Détroit” to designate the settlement during the French regime, from 1701 until 1760, and “Detroit” to refer to the post and region in the British period (after 1760).

Hurons and the Miamis shared “one Body,” and the Miami leader Chichikatalo confirmed that his people had “the same will as the Huron[s’] with whom we make only one body.” Fifty years later, the native peoples living at Détroit used nearly identical terms to describe their alliance with one another, claiming to have “the same Heart, and the same Body.”<sup>8</sup> In 1760, the Hurons once again proclaimed, now to the British troops who had just taken possession of Detroit, that “All the Indians in this Country are Allies to each other and as one People” and “form one heart and one body together.”<sup>9</sup>

These proclamations of unity were more than simply words. On a daily basis, the peoples of Détroit lived in close proximity, traded with one another and with French merchants, competed in lacrosse and footraces with one another, and, in some cases loved and married one another. They sometimes appealed to the French to help them settle disputes and to keep the peace as well. These peoples also formed a powerful military coalition which had warred with the Iroquois in the seventeenth century and fought against the Catawbas, Foxes, Chickasaws, British, and other common enemies during the eighteenth. This cooperation suggests that the peoples of the region had indeed formed a single, integrated body under the auspices of Onontio. As one prominent historian of the region phrases it, the nations had joined a “collective identity.” The peoples of Détroit cooperated so closely that they appeared to form a single “Indian community at Detroit,”

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<sup>8</sup> “vous ne faites plus qu’un meme Cœur, et qu’un meme Corps,” “Conseil des hurons en presence des outaoüais, et pouteouatamis [et Sauteux] et reponse, Mai 1753, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 99, fol. 76v.

<sup>9</sup> George Croghan, “Journal,” 1760-1761, in Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels: Travel to the Interior of North America, 1748-1856*, 32 vols (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1904-1907) 1:118; “Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson Bart with the Indians on his Way to, and at the Détroit in 1761,” in WSJ, 2:497.



**Figure 1: Detail from Antoine Laumet de Lamothe Cadillac, “Carte du Détroit,” 1702. Service historique de la Marine, Château de Vincennes, France).** This map shows the original three native settlements closest to Fort Pontchartrain in their original configuration. From top to bottom, they are the Ottawa settlement, the short-lived Loup, or Mohican, community, and, below Fort Pontchartrain, the Huron village.

and easily interacted “across boundaries that were too often and too casually described as tribal.”<sup>10</sup>

Yet a 1702 map of Détroit presents a different perspective of that alliance (see figure 1). Drawn by Cadillac, the map shows that each of the groups then settled at Détroit—the French, Hurons, Ottawas, and Mohicans (Loups)—had its own separate village, walled off from their neighbors. Far from forming one cozy community or an integrated “body,” Détroit consisted of a collection of distinct ethnic enclaves positioned miles apart from one another.<sup>11</sup> Cadillac indicated that each of these native communities erected defensive palisades around their villages. Such walls served not only to defend these nations from external enemies, particularly the Iroquois Confederacy, or Five Nations with whom they had recently made a tentative and fragile peace, but as physical manifestations of the psychological distance which separated these communities from

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<sup>10</sup> Jon Parmenter, “Pontiac’s War: Forging New Links in the Anglo-Iroquois Covenant Chain, 1758-1766,” *Ethnohistory* 44.4 (Fall, 1997), 633; Gregory Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 62.

<sup>11</sup> Cadillac au ministre, 25 sept. 1702, in *MPHSCR*, 33:137-38.

one another.<sup>12</sup> These representations suggest that, contrary to what the French wanted to believe or the natives were willing to say, the peoples of the pays d'en haut had not abandoned their discrete identities to embrace a single, common identity or form the "same body." Indeed the peoples of Détroit demonstrated repeatedly in the coming decades that, although willing to cooperate with one another, they continued to be separate peoples with separate agendas and goals. Indeed, as the Jesuit polymath Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix observed, the pays d'en haut was home to a mélange of peoples. At "first glance," he admitted in 1721, "there is much resemblance in the character of the wit, morals, and customs of the savages of Canada." Yet his extensive research and his own observations in the region convinced him that these apparent similarities obscured a more profound "diversity" that separated the nations.<sup>13</sup> To the consternation of Cadillac, his successors, and countless other colonial officials, the native peoples never formed a single body under French supervision. "Onontio's children" refused to melt into a common, undifferentiated whole.

†

This dissertation takes its cue from Lamothe Cadillac's 1702 map, rather than his 1701 rhetoric. Focusing on the native peoples who settled at Détroit between the establishment of the French post there in 1701 and the conclusion of the Anglo-Indian conflict called Pontiac's War in 1766, I make two interrelated claims. First, I argue that

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<sup>12</sup> William Newbigging, "The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance" (PhD. diss. Dept. of History, University of Toronto, 1995), 248.

<sup>13</sup> "Il est vrai que malgré cette diversité, qui ne se remarque pas du premier coup d'œil, il y a bien de la ressemblance dans la caractere d'esprit, les mœurs, & les coûtumes de tous les Sauvages du Canada." Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Journal d'un Voyage*, ed. Pierre Berthiaume, 2 vols (Montréal : Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, [1744], 1994), 1:452.

although the peoples who settled at *Dé*troit faced considerable disruptions in the seventeenth century they nonetheless survived as discrete and autonomous groups. During the seventeenth century these peoples had encountered new diseases which ravaged some communities, encountered a wide range of new technology and new ideas, and engaged in a series of devastating wars with the Five Nations Iroquois. Some, especially the Hurons and Kiskakon Ottawas, had been forced to flee their homes when the Iroquois defeated them in the 1640s and again when the Dakotas did so in the 1660s. Yet the peoples of the region adapted to these changes and survived the seventeenth century as independent and autonomous social, political, and cultural entities. The pays d'en haut, therefore, was peopled by a host of discrete native peoples.

In arguing that these peoples identified themselves as distinct and autonomous, I do not mean to suggest that these identities operated as static, abstracted self-definitions like "citizenship." Rather than a fixed, self-conscious explanation of what it meant to be "Huron," or "Potawatomi," I understand identity to be a dynamic mode of acting which reflected loyalty to and membership in an exclusive and distinct community of fictively and literally related people (by which I mean a circumscribed and politically unified, though not necessarily centralized, entity). Thus identity was a way of living, not a mode of thinking. Native people demonstrated this identity, for example, when leaders sought to accomplish the best interest of their communities, when warriors fought to defend one another, and when they made alliances with other nations. Moreover, this identity could change over time as circumstances required. What persisted through these changes, however, was a consistent tendency to act in ways that affirmed membership in a larger

community.

My second argument flows from the first. If the peoples of *Détroit* did not form “one body,” and instead acted as coherent and discrete peoples, then scholars must pay attention not only to how Europeans interacted with native peoples, but with how native peoples acted with one another. Specifically, I argue that a set of interconnected, mutually constituting, and consistent relationships between the native people at *Détroit* shaped affairs in the region just as much as the relationship between the French and native peoples did. That colonial relationship, in fact, was embedded within and reciprocally tied to the web of relationships between native peoples. Only by understanding both exchanges between French and native peoples as well as modes of interaction between different indigenous peoples can we make sense of events at *Détroit*. Intercultural relations at *Détroit*, in other words, did not constitute a two-way dialogue between the French and the natives, but a multi-sided conversation among many groups including the French. As scholars eavesdrop on this conversation, and fully listen to each of the participants, the cultural encounter becomes at once more complicated and more comprehensible.

Home to many native groups living in such intimate proximity, *Détroit* offers the ideal laboratory for eavesdropping on this conversation.<sup>14</sup> From the beginning, the post attracted a large and diverse population of natives. The settled native population, consisting of a variety of cultural groups, generally did not dip much below 2,000 and approached 2,500 at times. In addition to the permanently settled groups—the Hurons,

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<sup>14</sup> Following the contemporary French usage, I define *Détroit* expansively to include not only the location of the modern-day city, but also the entire “strait” from Lake Huron to Lake Erie.

Ottawas, Mahicans, Ojibwas, and later Potawatomes—a number of others frequented the post to trade, carry out diplomacy, and rest during long journeys. A constant stream of Miamis, Iroquois, Foxes, Illinois, and other groups spent time at the post. These natives found at *Détroit* a cosmopolis of sorts, a mixture of tongues, cultures, dress, and religious beliefs. These differences led to myriad encounters and exchanges, ranging from the prosaic to the profound. Here, more than in the rest of the *pays d'en haut*, and indeed more than most of eastern North America, natives of different groups encountered one another on a daily basis, playing, trading, loving, and living in a dynamic new world.<sup>15</sup>

To demonstrate both the survival of these native groups as discrete peoples and the consequences of that survival, each of the first four chapters explores one of the salient relationships between native peoples at *Détroit*, and the final chapter charts how these relationships shaped one event, Pontiac's War. Together, these chapters form a single narrative arc. Focusing on roughly the first decade of settlement at *Détroit*, the first chapter explains how Cheanouvouzon, sought to compensate for his peoples' numerical weakness and diplomatic isolation by forming a "southern alliance" with two powerful groups in the region, the Miamis and Five Nations, or Iroquois. The second chapter investigates how the closely related Anishinaabe peoples—the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomes—cooperated to meet the challenge posed by the southern alliance. The

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<sup>15</sup> Until recently *Détroit* has received little scholarly attention. Older narrative histories such as George Paré (*The Catholic Church in Detroit*, 1951) and Clarence M. Burton ("*Cadillac's Village*," 1896) focused on the French community, referring to natives only incidentally. In recent years, however, a number of scholars have begun investigating the post more fully. These have focused more on Europeans in the region, with the exception of Karen Marrero, who is interested in *métissage* among European and native peoples. Lina Gouger, "Le peuplement colonisateur de *Détroit*, 1701-1765," (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, Université Laval, 2002); Catherine Cangany, "Frontier Seaport: *Détroit's* Transformation into an Atlantic Entrepôt, 1701-1837," (Ph.D. diss., Dept. of History, University of Michigan, 2009); Guillaume Teasdale, "The French of Orchard Country : Territory, Landscape, and Ethnicity in the *Détroit* River Region, 1680s-1810s," (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, York University, 2011).

emergence of two rival blocs led to conflict between the Hurons and Ottawas in 1738, and the third chapter places that violence within a longer pattern of competition between these peoples. Chapter Four uses a controversy within the Huron community, prompted by violence between the Hurons and Ottawas in 1738, to understand the bonds which held that community together. Finally, the fifth chapter demonstrates how all of these patterns shaped one event, the Anglo-Indian conflict frequently called Pontiac's War, and situates that conflict within a local context.

Although I have attempted to understand and analyze the dynamics of these relationships separately, they were clearly interwoven and mutually contingent. The Hurons' close association with the Iroquois and Miamis in the early eighteenth century, for example, had much to do with the Hurons' resentment of the Ottawas, their close neighbors and allies. And this Huron resentment came, in large part, from the Ottawas' dominance in the region, which itself derived from the Ottawas' connections to other Anishinaabe people in the region. It is therefore difficult to tell one story without telling all the stories, and to define where one ends and another begins. I have nonetheless sought to reduce repetition as much as possible and to supply only as much information as necessary to explain the current relationship while including cross-references to other chapters.

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My work participates in an ongoing reappraisal of intercultural interaction in the pays d'en haut. For nearly three decades, that literature has been dominated by the perspective offered by Richard White in his brilliant and magisterial *The Middle Ground*.



In that book, White suggests that the forces unleashed by the colonial encounter—disease, more frequent and more deadly warfare, dislocation, and dependence upon European goods—proved too powerful for native societies to handle. Overwhelmed by these challenges, native societies splintered into feeble fragments. In order to survive, these shards gathered themselves to form new mosaics, heterogeneous new constellations that could cope with the forces of colonialism. In New France, colonial officials fashioned these scattered remnants into a new political and cultural configuration—a “common identity.” As White phrases it, “[w]ar, famine, and disease,...had been the executioners of the older, familiar world of the Algonquians,...[and] the gruesome midwives attending the birth of the new world of the *pays d’en haut*.” In a sense, they became French Indians or “Algonquians,” dependent upon Onontio for support, for guidance, and, crucially, for mediation and crisis-management. Only Onontio’s careful mediation of disputes kept the alliance from crumbling. Under the governor’s watchful eye, his brood fused into one more-or-less integrated collective. Dependent upon the French, these peoples embraced Onontio’s interests as their own. In order to serve their mutual interests, they created an accommodative “middle ground” in which they created compromise through “creative misunderstandings.”<sup>16</sup>

As the number of studies citing “the middle ground” suggests, White’s thesis looms large in the historiography both of the Great Lakes Region and of North American more generally.<sup>17</sup> White so thoroughly defined the region, in fact, that even many of his

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<sup>16</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, xi. ix, 2, 16, 33, 142.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Charles Weeks, *Paths to a Middle Ground: The Diplomacy of Natchez, Boukfourka, Nogales, and San Fernando de las Barrancas, 1791–1795* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press,

critics accept his basic conceptual framework. Gilles Havard, for example, argues that White misapprehended the meaning of the “middle ground.” What appeared to be accommodative practices based on mutual regard, Havard argues, were actually infused with French imperial ambitions. Through “mixing,” the French hoped ultimately to establish their suzerainty in the region, and to accomplish “colonization without a population.” Disagree though he might about White’s description of the European-Indian interaction, however, Havard nonetheless accepts that the cultural encounter was a two-sided affair, an “entre-deux dynamique.” He echoes White, concluding that the French formed a “new nation” in the pays d’en haut, and arguing that they “conferred a common identity to their Amerindian allies.”<sup>18</sup>

My work, however, diverges from White in two critical respects—one methodological and the other philosophical—and thereby participates in larger debates about intercultural interaction in the Great Lakes Region and beyond. First, while White attempted to survey a large geographical region over a long span, my work focuses specifically on one small, albeit important, corner of that region. Surveying a region that stretched from the outskirts of Montréal to the Great Plains and from the seventeenth century until the War of 1812, White offers an abstracted aerial view of the Great Lakes Region. At such a remove, the texture of social relations and lines between peoples become blurry. From this perspective, the peoples of the region did in fact look as though they formed a grand alliance which, except for a few exceptions, functioned as a “common identity.” Conflict and tension among natives likewise appear only

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2005); Kathleen Du Val, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Havard, *Empire et métissages*, 44, 205.

occasionally as aberrations to the overall pattern. When scholars narrow that perspective, however, and study specific people, groups, places, or events, the social landscape of the region changes profoundly. Distinct peoples with their own goals and identities emerge from the undifferentiated “Algonquian” masses. Quarrels which otherwise seem innocuous and exceptional begin to demonstrate larger patterns and dynamics between peoples. When meticulously tracked on a local level, the behavior of local communities demonstrates a consistency over time and patterns of interactions between these peoples become clear. The Hurons acted in a certain way over time, for example, and they interacted with the Ottawas according to a consistent logic during that time. This behavior and consistency suggest that these peoples acted as separate communities over the *longue durée*. When viewed microscopically at Détroit, in other words, the Great Lakes Region begins to look significantly different than it did to White.

In focusing specifically on Détroit to understand the larger dynamics of the region, I follow other researchers who have explored specific periods, incidents, peoples, or places, and developed a very different view of the region from White’s. Specifically, these works have questioned the degree to which the Iroquois Wars “shattered” the people of the region, and, consequently the extent to which these people acted like “Algonquians” beholden to the French. William Newbigging, for instance, focuses specifically on one people, the Ottawas. Intensively reconstructing Ottawa diplomatic affairs during the French period, Newbigging points out that, far from being shattered, the Ottawas survived the Iroquois Wars of the seventeenth century largely intact. He further argues that the Ottawas did not ally themselves with the French because they were a

shattered people in need of a French father, as White suggests, but because they were a healthy people who saw an alliance with the French as an opportunity to advance their own interests and consolidate their influence among other native nations. As Newbigging suggests, the pays d'en haut is better understood not by viewing the whole region abstractly, but by understanding "individual nations...one community at a time."<sup>19</sup> Focusing on one culture group in a part of the pays d'en haut, Heidi Bohaker likewise contends that the Anishinaabe people identified themselves not as "Algonquians," but as members of kinship groupings, or "*nindoodemag*."<sup>20</sup> Referring specifically to White, George Ironstack, who focuses on the Miami settlement of Pickiwillany, points out that the "lack of localized studies" of the region has led to "the construction of overly broad generalizations that fail to take into account the diversity that existed...among the indigenous peoples of the pays d'en haut."<sup>21</sup> This attention to local history reflects a larger trend in the literature of native American history.<sup>22</sup>

Although scholars have increasingly questioned White's argument that the peoples of the pays d'en haut formed a regional "identity" based on their alliance with the French, they have disagreed about how identity actually functioned in the region. While some argue that the various "nations" or "tribal" groups that the French described maintained separate identities, others reject such designations as imperial impositions on

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<sup>19</sup> Newbigging, "The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance," 2, 27, 248-29, 410.

<sup>20</sup> Heidi Bohaker, *Nindoodemag: The Significance of the Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes Region 1600-1701*," *WMQ*, 36:1 (Jan. 2006), 29, 46; Bohaker, "*Nindoodemag: Anishinaabe Identities in the Eastern Great Lakes Region, 1600-1900* (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, University of Toronto, 2006), 40-41.

<sup>21</sup> George Ironstack, "From the Ashes: One Story of the Village of Pinkwi Mihtohseeniaki" (M.A. thesis, Dept. of History, Miami University, 2006), 5.

<sup>22</sup> Joshua Piker articulates the need for community studies of native American peoples (*Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1-6.

peoples that would not have identified themselves as “Ottawas” or “Ojibwas.”<sup>23</sup> These names, they argue, imply fixity of membership and political organization alien to the peoples of the pays d’en haut. Such scholars are certainly correct to suggest that these peoples did not operate like “nations” or “tribes” as we understand those terms. Yet their lived experience suggests that these designations meant something, even if they do not mean everything that contemporary or modern observers might assume they do. If these “national” or “tribal” categories meant nothing, why did different natives choose to live in different villages which included people of multiple lineages? Why did they speak as one people at councils? How could they even consider going to war with one another, if there was not some meaning to these “national” designations? As a Huron word list from around 1747 attests, even native peoples classified their neighbors by these supposedly artificial “national” names.<sup>24</sup>

If I have adopted a different approach from White’s, I have also asked different questions of my sources. White, and other scholars of his historiographic moment, asked a new and important question: how did native people interact with European newcomers

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<sup>23</sup> Claiming that the “differences between these nations are vital,” Newbigging suggests that “individual nations must be studied one community at a time.” Newbigging, “The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance,” 2, 27, 248-29, 410. Michael Witgen, in contrast, suggests that the Anishinaabeg were “shape-shifters” who easily and fluidly exchanged identities as the situation required. “The Rituals of Possession: Native Identity and the Invention of Empire in Seventeenth-Century Western North America,” *Ethnohistory*, 54:4 (Fall 2007): 667. Heidi Bohaker likewise rejects the “names and categories imposed by outsiders,” and instead argues that Anishinaabeg (the plural of Anishinaabe) identified themselves primarily through their patrilineal *nindoodemag*, or totemic clan designation. *Nindoodemag: The Significance of the Algonquian Kinship Networks*, 29, 46; Bohaker, “*Nindoodemag: Anishinaabe Identities*.”

<sup>24</sup> Potier left two different versions of a Huron dictionary recording the Hurons’ names for their neighbors. In both cases the Hurons provided separate and corporate names for each of these people, although they did provide different names for the Ottawas living at Détroit and those at Saginaw. To be sure, Potier’s questions might have shaped the Hurons’ responses, but this evidence nonetheless suggests that the Hurons categorized their neighbors the same way the French did. Pierre Potier, “Recensement des Hurons,” *Texte I*, 230, *Texte II*, 263.

to shape the Great Lakes Region? The answers to this question greatly illuminated not only native American history but early American history more generally. For the first time, scholars really understood the role played by native agents in the new world. Yet the question itself dictates the answer. By its very terms it assumes the locus of those interactions to be between Europeans and native people. I have asked, instead, a more basic question: which relationships shaped the Great Lakes Region? By searching for patterns of interaction not only between Europeans and native peoples but among native peoples themselves, I found that the interaction between Europeans and natives, accommodative or otherwise, did not dictate events in the pays d'en haut. Instead, a whole set of longstanding and dynamic relationships among native peoples shaped the social reality of the region, some of which had precious little to do with the French or British. The colonial relationship, though certainly consequential, was also embedded in a larger matrix of relationships. Those relationships both molded and circumscribed the colonial relationship, and were in turn molded and circumscribed by it. Scholars cannot therefore understand the colonial relationship, abstracted from those other entangled relationships.

This study therefore belongs to a longer tradition which has appreciated the importance of understanding interactions among native peoples. Many of these historians, tellingly, wrote before the publication of *The Middle Ground* in 1991. In 1983, for example, Michael McConnell argues that native peoples of the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley did not act as “cultural monoliths” following the fall of New France, but as

distinct and heterogeneous peoples.<sup>25</sup> In his dissertation, Peter MacLeod also denied that “European-Amerindian relations were the most important phenomena in the west,” and argues that native groups were connected in “network[s] of relationships” with other native groups.<sup>26</sup> More recently, Brett Rushforth has observed that the Ottawas and other groups demanded that the French wage war against other purported “Algonquians,” like the Foxes. Such behavior, Rushforth suggests, renders White’s “binary” representation of “Euro-Americans on one side, Indians on the other” unconvincing.<sup>27</sup> Historians of other regions, especially those focusing on Iroquoia, have also explored interactions among native peoples as well.<sup>28</sup> Together these works suggest the complexity of intercultural interaction in the new world.

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I use both an ethnohistorical and a microhistorical approach to understand interactions among native peoples at Détroit. It is based on a close reading of French-produced documents, such as official and ecclesiastical correspondence, maps, notarial records, and native-language lexicons. Although such documents are clearly filtered and shaped by the prejudices of their authors, they nonetheless offer a wealth of useful

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<sup>25</sup> Michael N. McConnell, “The Search for Security: Indian-English Relations in the Trans-Appalachian Region, 1758-1763.” (Ph.D. diss., Dept. of History, College of William & Mary, 1983), viii.

<sup>26</sup> Peter MacLeod. “*Une conspiration générale: The Exercise of Power by the Amerindians during the War of Austrian Secession.*” (Ph.D. diss. Dept. of History. University of Ottawa, 1992), 183.

<sup>27</sup> Rushforth, “Slavery, the Fox Wars, and the Limits of Alliance,” *WMQ*, 36:1 (Jan. 2006), 58, 59, 62-63, 79; “Savage bonds : Indian slavery and alliance in New France” (PhD. Diss, Dept. of History, University of California, Davis, 2003); Rushforth, “A Little Flesh We Offer You”: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France.” *WMQ*, 60:4 (Oct. 2003): 777-808.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Daniel Richter and James Merrell, eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and their Neighbors in Indian North America* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987); Jon Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534-1701* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010); Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1992).

information about the peoples of *Détroit*. No matter how ethnocentric they may have been, French officials, priests, and traders had a vested interest in understanding how conceptions of membership and loyalty worked in their communities. They lived with native people every day and their livelihoods and sometimes their lives depended upon an accurate understanding of the political and social structures of natives. In fact, some had even married native women and others were the offspring of such marriages. These people, therefore, understood native peoples and societies deeply, despite their ethnocentric baggage. More importantly, French and *métis* correspondents left a clear record of how native people behaved in certain contexts and how they reacted to crisis. Piecing together these patterns of behavior, scholars can uncover the goals, attitudes, and perspectives of these peoples, even if French writers sometimes misapprehended them or misrepresented them.

I have also adjusted for the distortions presented in the documents by measuring them against other epistemological tools. Anthropological evidence from sites in Ontario and Michigan, for example, allows us to contextualize native behavior and motivations in ways that contemporary French people could not. Such data, for example, suggest that significant cultural differences might have led to conflict between the Hurons and Ottawas. I also compensate for the lack of archaeological data with a thorough investigation of *Détroit* cartography. Maps reveal the spatial relationships between native villages and hence testify to the social and political proximity between native groups. Besides geography, maps often communicate a wealth of useful ethnographic detail—from the layout of the natives' forts to the size of the populations. Finally, I have



addressed these biases and prejudices by reading the documents closely and by comparing them with other accounts of similar events. Although two colonial officials might represent events very differently, their conflicting accounts give important clues. For example, the rancorous disputes between Cadillac and the Jesuits or the marquis de Vaudreuil (or for that matter anybody who crossed Cadillac) reveal important facts about the Huron leader Cheanonvouzon and the role that Mississauga-Miami animosity played in the Miami-Ottawa conflict of 1706.

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Beginning in the 1690s, several French officials, led by Cadillac, had advocated the establishment of a French trading post along the waterways that connected Lakes Erie and Huron. As Cadillac articulated the plan, the post would be the site both of an intensive European agricultural outpost and a large native American settlement, composed of native peoples from throughout the region whom the French invited to relocate there.<sup>29</sup> Such an establishment, Cadillac argued, would address two pressing concerns that New France confronted at the turn of the eighteenth century. Cadillac and others promised, first, that the post would blunt Anglo-American commercial incursions into the Great Lakes.<sup>30</sup> Engaged in fierce competition with the English for control of North America, French officials sought to dominate the sometimes lucrative beaver-fur

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<sup>29</sup> Cadillac seems to have been most concerned about securing his own financial welfare by monopolizing trade in the region and creating a feudal seigneurie, or perhaps even fiefdom, in the region. "Necessity of a Post at Detroit," [n.d.], in *MPHSCR*, 33:42-43; Cadillac, "Detroit Is Founded," in *ibid.*, 97-100.

<sup>30</sup> "Extrait d'une lettre du marquis de Denonville au Ministre," 8 May 1686, in *MDE*, 5 :14-17 ; "Extrait d'un mémoire du sieur Charron pour le Canada, *ibid.*," 135-36 ; "Envoi du Mémoire de Lamothe Cadillac sur la Fondation d'un Poste au Détroit," in *ibid.*, 136-37 ; "Extrait du mémoire du Roi au sieur chevalier de Callières, Gouverneur, et au sieur de Champigny, Intendant de la Nouvelle France," 27 May 1699, in *ibid.*, 137-53.

trade in the Great Lakes Region.<sup>31</sup> In the 1680s and 1690s, British and Dutch traders operating out of the post of Albany in New York had, in fact, sent large trading convoys into Lakes Erie and Huron—an area that the French claimed as part of New France—and traded with peoples whom the French considered their allies.<sup>32</sup> These incursions worried French officials not only because they threatened the fur trade, the basis of the colonial economy, but also because they fretted that, if the English established trading relations with the peoples of the region, the French would lose their native allies. As the French understood acutely, the natives of the region would happily form commercial and military alliances with the English intruders if English traders provided them with better and cheaper goods. If such incursions continued unchecked, they worried, England (and later Great Britain) might establish a beachhead in the Great Lakes.

Cadillac also claimed that this settlement would maintain the newly established peace reached with the Five Nations, or Iroquois Confederacy, New France, and the natives of the pays d'en haut, and would keep the Iroquois in check.<sup>33</sup> Since the 1630s, New France and its native allies throughout the Great Lakes had intermittently been at a war with the powerful Iroquois, who were allied with the English. These conflicts had taken a considerable toll on the French and their allies. In 1649, the Iroquois had finally

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<sup>31</sup> A glut in the supply of beaver pelts had triggered a sharp drop in the price of beaver furs, leading the French to abandon the posts they had established in the area. Eccles, *The French in North America, 1500-1783* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969) 108-115 at 110.

<sup>32</sup> “Governor Dongan’s Report on the State of the Province, including his Answers to certain Charges against him, 1686”, in John Romeyn Brodhead, trans, and E.B. O’Callaghan, ed., *Documents relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York* (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1854), 3:395; “Information furnished by Nanning Harmentse and others,” 7 Sept. 1687, in *ibid.*, 3:436; “Expedition of M. de Denonville against the Senecas,” Oct. 1687, in *ibid.*, 9:363; Newbigging, “The French-Ottawa Alliance,” 201. See also David Armour, *The Merchants of Albany, New York, 1686-1760* (New York: Garland Pub., 1986).

<sup>33</sup> “Lamothe Cadillac Rapporte les Débats qui Ont Eu Lieu a propos de Son Projet Dans l’Assemblée Ordonnée par le Roi et dans Sa Conférence avec M. Callières. Il Combat les Objections.” [n.d.], in *MDE*, 5:160-61.

defeated New France's chief native allies, the confederated Huron nations settled to the east and south of Lake Huron, and forced the Hurons to flee the region. Iroquois armies had also threatened French settlements in the St. Lawrence Valley and even the Ojibwas and Ottawas as far away as Michilimackinac on the straits between the Upper and Lower Peninsulas of modern-day Michigan.<sup>34</sup> In the last years of the seventeenth century, however, the Iroquois, French, and peoples of the pays d'en haut had decided, for various reasons, to make peace. They therefore began a process of negotiations which culminated in the Great Peace of Montréal in August 1701. In this treaty, the parties agreed to mutual non-aggression and vowed that, if troubles did arise, the parties would seek mediation from the French governor—whom they called Onontio.<sup>35</sup> Situated to the west of the Iroquois homeland and in the midst of France's allies in the west, Détroit promised to maintain this fragile new peace by intimidating the Iroquois and projecting French military power and diplomatic might into the region. Accordingly, the French gave Cadillac orders to establish a post between Lakes Erie and Huron and dispatched him along with one hundred French soldiers and civilians in the summer of 1701.

Arriving on 24 July, before the final settlement of the peace treaty in August, the French began building a fort and Cadillac issued invitations to the peoples of the region to settle at the new post.<sup>36</sup> Several groups accepted the captain's promise to form a

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<sup>34</sup> For general works on the Iroquois Wars, see Daniel Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); José Brandão, *"Your fyre shall burn no more:" Iroquois Policy toward New France and its Native Allies to 1701* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); Jon Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534-1701* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010), esp. chap. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal* ; Gohier, *Onontio le médiateur*.

<sup>36</sup> Chev. De Callieré and M. de Champigny, Quebec, to M. de la M., Versailles, 5 Oct. 1701, in *MPHSCR*, 33 :110 ; Brian Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit, 1701-1838* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 18-21.

single, integrated body and soon formed a native cosmopolis at D etroit. Their interactions would reshape the region in profound ways.

## PROLOGUE

### Exploring the Detroit River with Father Charlevoix, ca. 1721

When the Jesuit Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix and his escorts left Lake Erie to ascend the Detroit River on 5 June 1721, they entered a profoundly native social space (see figure 4).<sup>37</sup> As the canoes made their way up the river, the missionary marveled, as did many visitors to the region, at the beauty of the marshes, meadows, and “orchards” of wild fruit trees lining the river in their full spring splendor. He found the region “the most beautiful place in Canada.”<sup>38</sup> Yet Charlevoix, one of the first historians of New France and a learned ethnographer, found the human inhabitants even more interesting. As they neared the French stockade, Fort Pontchartrain, Charlevoix and his escorts saw the first evidence of the posts’ human inhabitants. Using Charlevoix’s description of his journey up the river as a guide, this prologue surveys the physical and social geography of Détroit in 1721.

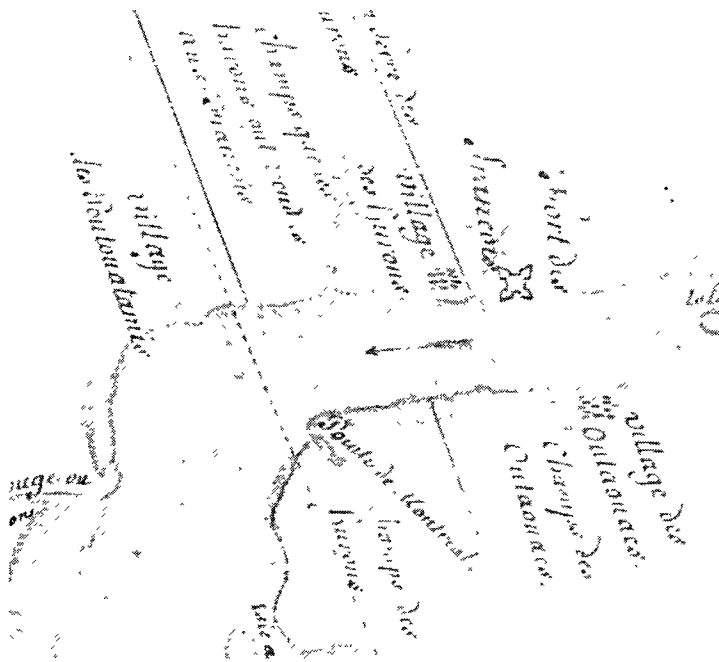
Ascending the river, Charlevoix first encountered the palisaded Huron village on the left-hand or eastern side of river 650 yards from the French fort, as well as the immaculate fields of corn, beans, squash, and even French peas and wheat which surrounded the fort.<sup>39</sup> Prior to the Great Peace of Montréal, the Hurons had lived at two

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<sup>37</sup> David M. Hayne, “Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix,” in *DCB, 1741-1770 (Volume III)*.

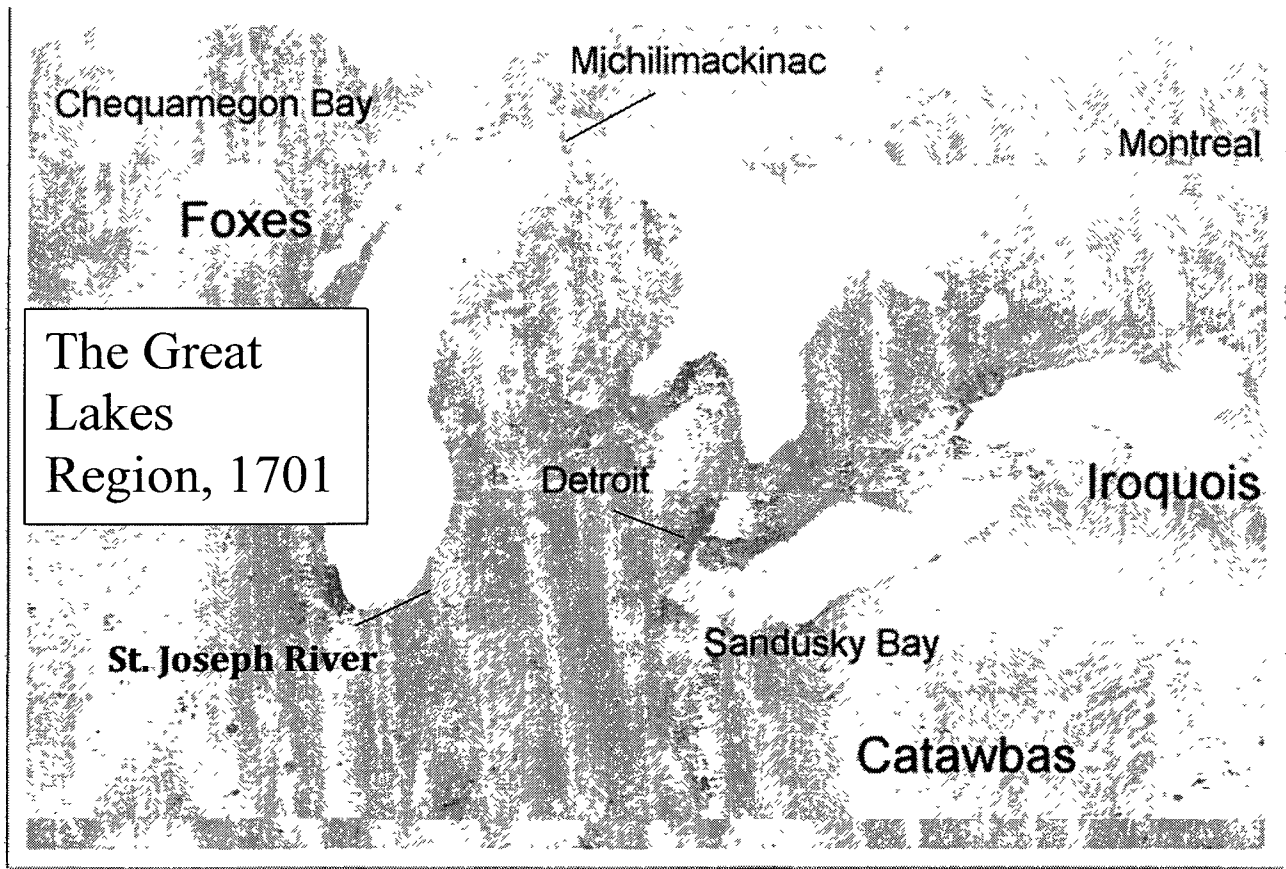
<sup>38</sup> Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Journal d’un Voyage*. ed. Pierre Berthiaume, 2 vols. (Montréal : Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, [1744], 1994), 1:535-48.

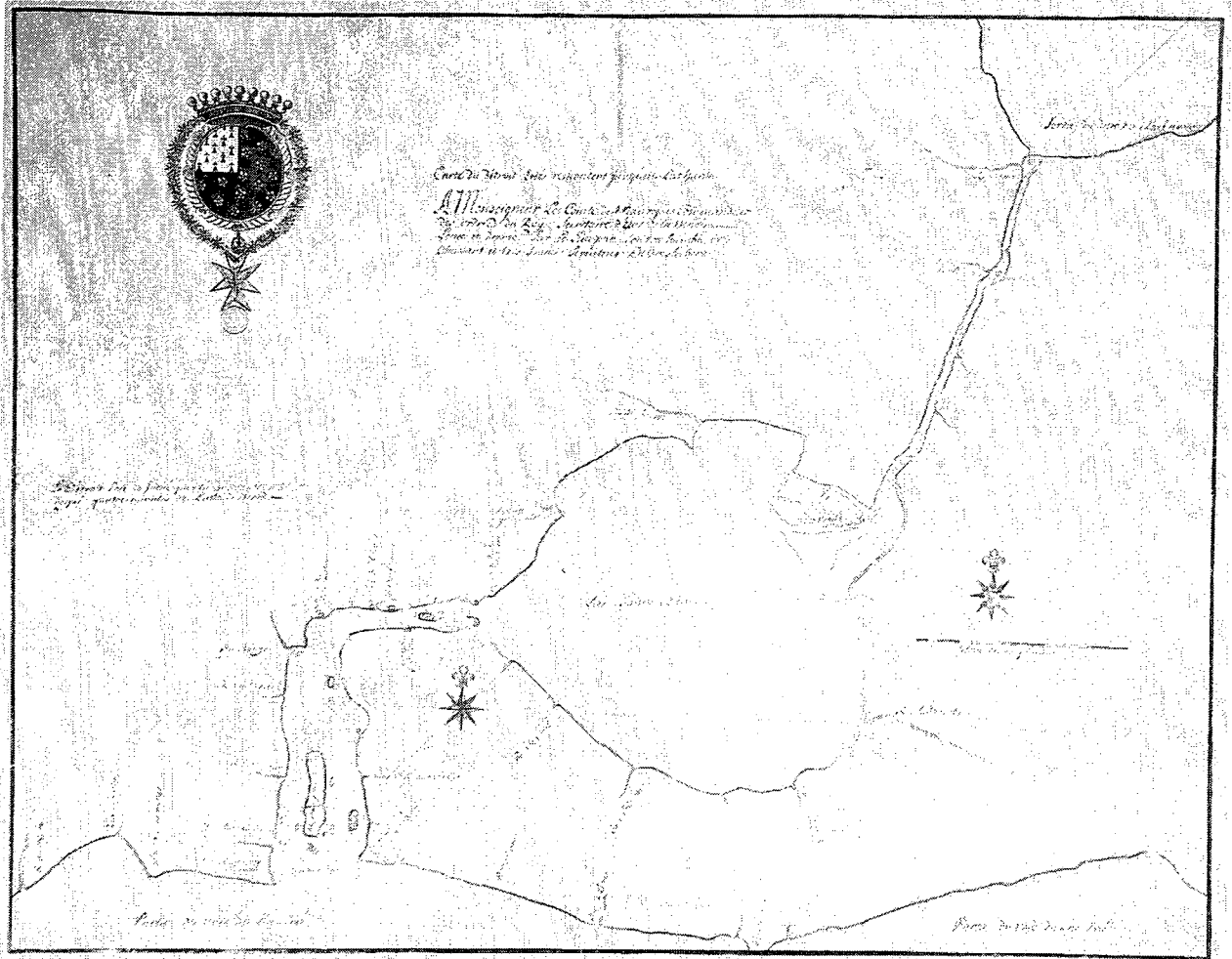
<sup>39</sup> [Sabrevois], “Memoire on the Indians between Lake Erie and the Mississippi,” 1718, *WHC*, Vol. 16:368; Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:542-43.



(Left) Figure 2: Detail, [Henri-Louis Boishébert], "Carte du Detroit et Partie du Lac Erie, et du Lac Ste. Claire," 1731, Centre des archives de'outre mer, Aix-en-Provence, France.

(Below) Figure 3: The Major Peoples and Places of the Pays d'en haut, 1701-1766.





**Figure 4: Boishébert, Carte du détroit Erié remontent jusqu'au Lac Huron, 1731. Service historique de la Marine, Château de Vincennes, France.**

locations, one on the St. Joseph River southeast of Lake Michigan, and the other at Michilimackinac, at the southern tip of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Responding to French invitations, they had arrived at Détroit by 1704.<sup>40</sup> As Charlevoix, who wrote a history of New France, knew, these people were the remnants of a once impressive native political entity, the Hurons Confederacy. The Hurons, and the related northern Iroquoian

<sup>40</sup> "Memorandum of M. de la Mothe Cadillac Concerning the Establishment of Detroit," 19 Nov. 1704, in *MPHSCR*, 33:235.

**Figure 5: Population of Natives Permanently Settled at Détroit, 1703-1761**

Year	Wendat	Odawa	Pottawatomie	Others	Total
1703 <sup>a</sup>	--	--	--	--	<b>2000</b>
1707 <sup>b</sup>	--	--	--	--	<b>1200</b>
1710-	240 <sup>d</sup>	800	--	800	1840
1718 <sup>c</sup>	400	400	720	--	1520
1721 <sup>f</sup>	480	520	600	400	2000
1729 <sup>g</sup>	800	1800 <sup>h</sup>	600		3200
1730 <sup>i</sup>	600	1200 <sup>j</sup>	600	--	2400
1737 <sup>k</sup>	1000	560	600	--	2160
1761 <sup>l</sup>	800	880	640	800	3120 <sup>m</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Source: Cadillac, "Mémoire," 19 Nov. 1704, in *MPHSCR*, 33:205.

<sup>b</sup> Source: Cadillac au ministre, 10, 15 Sept., 1 Oct. 1707, in *ibid.*, 340.

<sup>c</sup> Sources: The estimate of Wendats comes from an official report issued in 1710, while the estimates of the Ottawas and others comes from a 1711 map. Antoine Denys Raudot, and Antoine Silvy, *Relation par lettres de l'Amérique Septentrionale (années 1709 et 1710)*, ed. Camille de Rochemonteix (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, editeurs, 1904), 131. Jean-Baptiste de Couagne, "Carte du Canada sur un tres grand nombre de memoires des plus recents..." [1711], photostatic reproduction, in the Louis C. Karpinski Map Collection, Map Photo France ASH 124-1-2, Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>d</sup> Note: All estimates, except those in bold font, are projections based on the number of "warriors." The French almost universally gave their estimates in terms of effective warriors, or "men at arms" rather than of the entire population. I follow François Clairambault d'Aigremont's ratio of one warrior to four members of the general population. Clairambault au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, in *MPHSCR*, 33:436; Cadillac, "Mémoire," 19 Nov. 1704, in *ibid.*, 205.

<sup>e</sup> Source: Jacques-Charles de Sabrevois, "Mémoire de Sabrevois sur diverses tribus de l'Ouest," 1718, in *DRCHNY*, 9:888.

<sup>f</sup> Source: Vaudreuil and Bégon au Conseil de Marine, 4 Nov. 1721, in *MPHSCR*, 33:680-81.

<sup>g</sup> Source: Noyan, « Project pour s'opposer a l'agrandissement des anglois en Canada Et pour Le Bien de la Colonie Francoise » in C<sup>11</sup>A, vol. 51, fol. 465v, 467v.

<sup>h</sup> Note: This number, based on an estimate of 450 men, seems high, given that the number is 150 fewer the next year.

<sup>i</sup> Source: Noyan au ministre, in *MPHSCR*, 34 :76.

<sup>j</sup> Note: This number includes some Mississagués who apparently settled with them.

<sup>k</sup> Source: Hocquart, "Détail de toute la colonie," 1737, in AN, série C<sup>11</sup>A, 67 :103v-104.

<sup>l</sup> Source: Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson Bart with the Indians on his Way to, and at the Détroit in 1761, in *WJP*, 3:501.

<sup>m</sup> Note: This is the first estimate provided by the British and suggests a fifty percent increase among the peoples of Détroit, which is unlikely. The discrepancy—especially as regards the Ojibwas—probably suggests that the British counted not only the Ojibwas living at on Lake St. Clair, but in southern Ontario and perhaps at Saginaw in this number.



peoples, the Tionontatés, or Pétun peoples, and Neutrals, had been situated in the region immediately to the east and south of Lake Huron. In 1649, the Hurons, who were allied to the French, finally succumbed to the onslaught of the Dutch-allied Iroquois Confederacy, or Five Nations, and abandoned the region. In the ensuing diaspora, some Hurons fled east and formed a community near Québec. Others fled west, finding shelter with their allies in the region, particularly the Ottawas, first at Michilimackinac on the Mackinaw Straits, then at Chequamegon Bay. By the time they returned to Michilimackinac in the 1670s, these Huron refugees had formed a new composite group, referred to usually as the Hurons, and sometimes as the Tionontatés and, later, “Wyandots.”<sup>41</sup> Buffeted by disease, war, and dislocation, these people numbered around 500 people in 1721 (see figure 5).<sup>42</sup>

The next group that Charlevoix encountered where the last to have arrived at Détroit. Potawatomi settlers had only moved to Détroit around 1711 and 1712, perhaps in response to the growing hostility between the Foxes of Green Bay near their settlement on the St. Joseph River. At the time Charlevoix encountered them, the Potawatomis still lived in a temporary camp adjacent to the French fort, although they later formed separate villages further south on the eastern shore of the river, a little over a mile from the French

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<sup>41</sup> The Détroit “Hurons” were composed of remnants of the Huron Confederacy and the Tionontatés, or “Pétuns,” French for tobacco, a crop which they grew in great quantities. Although later evidence suggests that the group called themselves “Wendats”—the autonym of the Huron Confederacy—I follow the more familiar and accessible French usage of “Huron,” which referred to their distinctive hair-style. “Tionontaté” here denotes that nation before the fall of Huronia. See Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*. 2 vols (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1976), 824-25; Charles Garrad and Conrad E. Heidenreich, “Khionontateronon (Petun),” in Bruce Trigger, *The Northeast*, vol. 15 of *HNAI*, 394-97; James A. Clifton, *Hurons of the West: Migrations and Adaptations of the Ontario Iroquoians, 1650-1704* (Research Report, Canadian Ethnology Service, Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1977). For names, see “Donation des Hurons au Père Potier,” 22 Dec. 1780, in Ernest J. Lajeunesse, ed., *Windsor Border Region* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960), 281.

<sup>42</sup> Gilles Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le Pays d’en Haut, 1660-1715* (Sillery (Québec): Septentrion, 2003), 134.

fort.<sup>43</sup> Had he arrived in February, and not June, Charlevoix might have noticed, as another observers a few years before, that the Potawatomis wore heavy bison-skin cloaks in cold weather. Their attire attests to the Potawatomis' geographic ties to the west. With settlements not only at Détroit but also on the St. Joseph River and Green Bay, the Potawatomis had access to bison hides coming from the tallgrass prairies of Illinois and Wisconsin.<sup>44</sup> The Potawatomis living at Détroit maintained close ties to other Potawatomi communities, particularly the one at St. Joseph, as a series of exchanges between the communities in 1763 demonstrates. In June, according to British reports, a group of Potawatomis settled at Detroit visited their "Relations" at St. Joseph and invited them to attack the British garrison at the post.<sup>45</sup> The St. Joseph contingent complied and soon came "to join the Potawatomis of Detroit" in their siege of the British fort.<sup>46</sup> When the Detroit Potawatomis decided to abandon the siege in July, they pledged that they would work to convince "the rest of their Nation at St. Josephs" to do so as well.<sup>47</sup> After Potawatomis from St. Joseph killed British people in 1764, moreover, Detroit Potawatomi leaders interceded to resolve the crisis.<sup>48</sup> Not only did the two groups of Potawatomis easily move back and forth, they continued to constitute a single, coherent

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<sup>43</sup> For their original position, see [François La Forest], *Memoir on Detroit*, 1 Oct. 1714 ; [Sabrevois], *Memoir on the Indians between Lake Erie and the Mississippi*, 1718m in *DRCHNY*, 9:887. For their later village site, see [Noyan] *State of Canada in 1730*, in *MPHSCR*, 34:76; ("The Captivity of Charles Stuart, 1755-57," ed. Beverley Bond, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 13 (1926-1927): 58-81 at 75-76.

<sup>44</sup> James A. Clifton, *A Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture, 1665-1965* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977); R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978).

<sup>45</sup> "A Court of Enquiry held by Order of Major Henry Gladwin to Enquire into the Manner of the taking of the Forts Sandusky, St. Joseph, Miamis & Presquill," 6 July 1763, in *CCCOP*, 425

<sup>46</sup> [Robert Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," in Milton Quaiife, ed., *The Siege of Detroit in 1763: The Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy and John Rutherford's Narrative of a Captivity* (Chicago, 1958), 130.

<sup>47</sup> [Jehu Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," in *Diary of the Siege of Detroit*, ed. Franklin Hough (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1865), 42.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, 114; *Indian Proceedings*, 26 Jan. 1765, *WJP*, 11:547-50.

political community which conferred on matters of importance. The Détroit Potawatomis saw the St. Joseph Potawatomis, not as a separate entity, but as the “rest of their Nation.” The combined populations at Détroit (ca. 600) and the St. Joseph River (400) represented a powerful people stretched over a considerable territory.<sup>49</sup>

Located near where Lake St. Clair drains into the Detroit River, the French stockade stood adjacent to the Potawatomi camp—Potawatomi structures incorporated the walls of the French fort. Fort Pontchartrain, named after minister of the marine Jérôme Phélypeaux, comte de Pontchartrain, the senior French official overseeing colonial affairs, housed all of the posts’ French population. This population, which numbered fewer than two hundred French people following a period of official neglect and indifferent administration, consisted mainly of people involved in the fur trade and a few lackluster French Marines. After tracing the occupations of the *habitants*, Lina Gouger notes the “essentially commercial nature” of Détroit during the French period.<sup>50</sup> The colonial official, François Clariambault d’Aigremont, sent to evaluate the state of the post in 1708, counted only sixty heads of household, the majority of which engaged in trade and neglected to grow crops.<sup>51</sup>

Looking across the river from Fort Pontchartrain, Charlevoix could see the Ottawa village perched on the western shore, where the Ottawas had resettled after having abandoned their former village on the eastern shore in the aftermath of a conflict

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<sup>49</sup> “Enumeration of the Indian Tribes connected with the Government of Canada, 1736” in *DRCHNY*, 9:1056.

<sup>50</sup> Lina Gouger, “Le peuplement colonisateur de Detroit, 1701-1765” (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, Université Laval, 2002), 53, 87-93.

<sup>51</sup> “Letter from Sr. d’Aigremont Denouncing Cadillac Methods,” 14 Nov. 1708, in *MPHSCR*, 33:425-26.

with the Miamis and Hurons.<sup>52</sup> The Ottawas at Détroit belonged to a powerful native alliance of four constituent nations: the Kiskakons (les Queues coupées), Sinagos, Kamigas (la Nation du Sable), and Nassaukuetons (la Nation de la Fourche). Although these groups retained separate identities, they also identified themselves as part of the larger group. As Cadillac put it, the four nations were “well united together, living in good intelligence.”<sup>53</sup> In addition to speaking the same language, they lived together in the same the villages at Chequamegon Bay, Michilimackinac, and Détroit.<sup>54</sup> According to the Ottawa speaker Kiscouaky, Kiskakons, Sinagos, and the Kamigas had settled at Détroit by 1703, presumably in the single village indicated on French maps of the area.<sup>55</sup> Later evidence indicates that both Kiskakon and Sinago contingents remained at the post (see figure 6).<sup>56</sup> They also frequently spoke through one “Ottawa” spokesman rather than through different representatives for each nation.<sup>57</sup> The Ottawas relied upon their

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<sup>52</sup> Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1 :536-37.

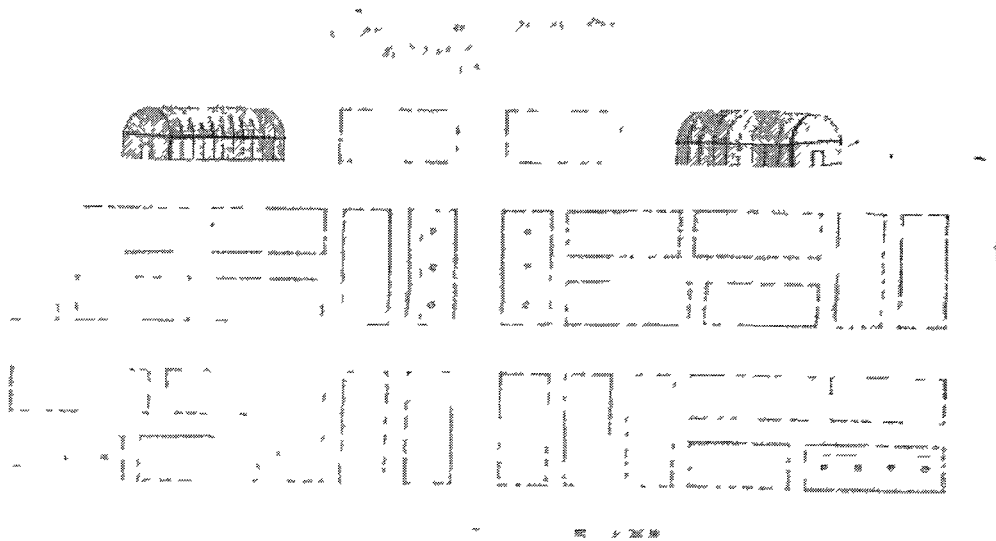
<sup>53</sup> “Ces quatre nations sont alliées et bien unies ensemble, vivant en bonne intelligence entre elles et ne parlent aujourd’huy qu’une mesme langue,” “Relation de Lamothe Cadillac,” in *MDE*, 5:80.

<sup>54</sup> Claude Allouez, “Voiage du P. Alloüez,” Tiré de la Relation de la N<sup>le</sup> France de 1662 et 1667, Delisle Sketches, Newberry Library, Chicago, AN 158-1-58 ; *JR*, 51:20 (François Le Mercier); “Paroles de Miscouaky Frere de jean le blanc Chef outaouias du detroit à Vaudreuil,” 26 Sept. 1706, in *MPHSCR*, 33:228

<sup>55</sup> [Henri-Louis Boishébert], “Carte du Detroit et Partie du Lac Erie, et du Lac Ste. Claire,” 1731, MapPhoto France MC no. 545, Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>56</sup> Cadillac to the Minister, 31 Aug. 1703, in *MPHSCR*, 33:163; Speech of Miscouaky, 26 Sept. 1706, in *ibid.*, 288; “Enumeration of the Indian Tribes connected with the Government of Canada,” 1736, *DRCHNY*, 9:1053, 1058; “Mémoire des ouvrages que j’ai faits par ordre de M. de Noyelles, commandant au Détroit, par Pierre Belle Perche”, armurier, COAM, C11A, 74:136-37; “Estate des Despenses faites par Moi Capitaine au fort PonChartrain du Detroit,” 1738-1740, 20 June 1740, COAM, C11A, vol. 74, fol. 136; “Operations of the French in New England and New-York,” 1745, 1746, *DRCHNY*, 10:34; Ottawa at Montreal, 16 June 1742, *WHC*, 17:372, “Other Western Indians at Montreal,” July 14, 1742, in *ibid.*, 387; “Extrait de la dépense qui a été faite dans les magasins du roi à Montréal (fournitures distribuées),” 1746, COAM, C11A, vol. 86, fol. 178v).

<sup>57</sup> Conference of Indian Envoys with Governor de Vaudreuil, 27 Sept. 1703, *WHC*, 16:227; Speech of Miscouaky, Chief of the Outaouais to the Marquis de Vaudreuil, 26 Sept. 1706, in *MPHSCR*, 33:288, 04; “Paroles des Outaouais...” 18 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 319.



**Figure 6: [Henri-Louis Boishébert], “Plan du Village Des Sauvages Outaouas du Detroit,” 1732. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.**

This plan of the Ottawa village portrays a bifurcated layout, which may indicate that the Kiskakons and Sinagos observed residential segregation

superior numbers and settlement at strategic locations in the region to deploy what William Newbigging calls the “gateway strategy.” The four constituent Ottawa nations controlled the crucial entry points into western Lake Huron and thus into Lakes Superior and Michigan—Manitoulin Island, Michilimackianc, and Détroit. Using the waterways that connected them, they easily and frequently moved between these settlements to trade, visit kin, and confer on strategic and diplomatic issues that affected them all. So positioned, they thereby mediated commerce within the region, supplied the French with

many of their furs, and exerted a powerful influence over their neighbors.<sup>58</sup> Numbering some 520 people and around 700 more at Michilimackinac and 320 at Saginaw Bay, the Ottawas served as the “elder brothers” of the peoples of Détroit (see figure 5).<sup>59</sup>

After remaining at Détroit for three weeks, Father Charlevoix and his company moved up the strait late in the evening of June 24 and soon reached the Ojibwa on Walpole Island near where the St. Clair River flows into Lake St. Clair. Although the settlement was much farther from Fort Pontchartrain than the Huron and Ottawa villages—some 36 miles and a half-day’s journey by canoe—the French nonetheless reckoned the Ojibwa settlement part of Détroit. As the baron de Longueuil, commandant at Détroit, put it when he addressed the Ojibwas in 1744, although they were “far from me...I know that your Heart has never been Separate” from the French.<sup>60</sup> This settlement included a number of different Ojibwa groups who had “united and incorporated with one another” in a single village: the Mississaugas (who came from the river of that name which flows into Lake Huron from the north), the Sauteur (those originally from the Sault Ste.-Marie) and the Amicoués.<sup>61</sup> Like the Ottawas and Potawatomis, the Ojibwas were also connected to other communities spread throughout the region, including at Sault-Ste.-Marie, Saginaw Bay, Toronto, and Détroit. Although they lived in more dispersed settlements and had less cohesion or centralization than the Ottawa nations enjoyed, these peoples nonetheless frequently cooperated with other Ojibwas and traveled between

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<sup>58</sup> Newbigging, “History of the French-Ottawa Alliance,” viii, 87.

<sup>59</sup> These numbers are based on a 1736 census of the warriors in the region. “Enumeration of the Indian Tribes connected with the Government of Canada, 1736” in *DRCHNY*, 9:1053, 1058.

<sup>60</sup> “tous éloigné de moy avec tu sois, je sçai que ton Cœur ne s’en est jamais Separé,” Conseil tenu par M<sup>r</sup> de Longueuil Commandant pour Le Roy au Détroit, aux 4. nations de Son Poste, au Sujet dela déclaration de la guerre contre L’anglois, 1744, CAOM, C11A, vol. 18 :134-35.

<sup>61</sup> Report of Detroit in 1703, 31 Aug. 1703, in *MPHSCR*, 162.

settlements throughout the region. In particular, the Ojibwas settled around the northern end of Lake St. Clair around Walpole Island, usually identified as Mississaugas but occasionally as Sauteux, maintained connections with the Mississaugas living near Toronto and elsewhere along the northern shores of Lakes Erie and Ontario.<sup>62</sup> Mississaugas traveling from Lake St. Clair could ascend the Thames river which the French, portage to the Grand and continue down to the vicinity of Toronto.<sup>63</sup> This geographic arrangement allowed the Mississaugas to carry goods easily between Niagara and Détroit, including British trade goods and rum. By 1718, some 240 to 320 Ojibwa peoples lived at the settlement and a French census-taker counted some 400 on the island in 1737 (see figure 5).

During his three week stay at Détroit, Charlevoix carefully observed and described the natives he met there. For example, he watched the natives of Détroit play a dice game, which he called the “Dish game, or jacks.” Charlevoix noted that that “sometimes one Village...play[ed] against another.” In these cases, each village chose a champion who played in the name of the entire community, which eagerly cheered on its representative. To ensure their victory, each village “invoke[d] its spirit [*Génie*].”<sup>64</sup> Charlevoix’s observations tell us a great deal about the peoples that he encountered at Détroit. These peoples interacted as friendly neighbors, but as distinct communities who

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<sup>62</sup> Cadillac to the minister, 31 Aug. 1703, in *MPHSCR*, 33:162; Leroy Eid, “Ojibwa-Iroquois War: The War the Five Nations Did Not Win,” *Ethnohistory* 26:4 (Autumn, 1979): 297-324; Neal Ferris, *The Archaeology of Native-Live Colonialism: Challenging History in the Great Lakes* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009), chap. 3.

<sup>63</sup> The Mississaugas could also use the Thames and Grand River portages to gain access to Lake Huron. Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, *Journal de la Campagne que le S<sup>t</sup> de Léry, 1749*, *RAQ*, 7:335, 339-40.

<sup>64</sup> Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:544-45.

competed with one another and venerated separate gods. The interactions between this distinct peoples form the content of the next five chapters.



## CHAPTER ONE

### Lyons and Foxes: Cheanonvouzon and the Southern Alliance

“[The Hurons] were formerly the most powerful, strongest, and numerous nation, but the Iroquois destroyed it and chased it from its lands, so that it is at present reduced to a very small number, and...their sword is cut too short...”<sup>1</sup>

Antoine Laumet de Lamothe Cadillac, ca. 1694

“all the Savages [of Détroit] are guided exclusively by the sentiment of the Hurons.”<sup>2</sup>

Pierre-Jacques de Payan de Noyan, 1730

By all accounts, the Hurons should have been decimated by the time they limped to Détroit in 1701. The northern Iroquoian peoples who made up the composite Huron community—the constituent nations of the Huron Confederacy as well as the Tionnontatés and Neutrals—had borne the brunt of colonialism in the seventeenth century. Because they had closer contacts with French missionaries and fur traders than other nations in the region, they suffered more acutely from the epidemic diseases brought by the Frenchmen. Experiencing “catastrophic depopulation,” northern Iroquoian peoples lost nearly two thirds of their population between 1634 and 1640.<sup>3</sup> Situated close to the Iroquois Confederacy, they also suffered disproportionately during the wars, not only from deaths but also from captive raiding.<sup>4</sup> Pressure from the Iroquois

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<sup>1</sup> “C’etoit autrefois la nation la plus puissante, la plus forte et mesme la plus nombreuse, mais l’Iroquois, l’a destruite et l’a chassée de ses terres, en sorte qu’elle est à présent réduite à un fort petit nombre, et il est bon pour nous qu’elle le soit ainsi, car ce sont des hommes malins, intrigans, malintentionnez et capables de grandes entreprises, mais par bonheur leur épée est tro courte,” Antoine Laumet de Lamothe Cadillac, “Relation du Sieur de Lamothe Cadillac,” *MDE*, 5 :80.

<sup>2</sup> “tous les Sauvages qui ne Se conduissent que par l’Esprit du huron,” Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et de Chavoy, “Mémoire,” [1730], COAM, C11A, vol. 52, fol. 279v.

<sup>3</sup> Gary Warrick, *A Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500-1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 222-36 at 245.

<sup>4</sup> José Brandão, “*Your fyre shall burn no more:*” *Iroquois Policy toward New France and its Native Allies to 1701*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); Jon Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534-1701* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010), esp. chap. 3; Gary Warrick, *A*

had finally forced these peoples to flee the region and begin a long sojourn throughout the Great Lakes Region, where they encountered still more trouble with the Sioux. This demographic decline and dislocation severely weakened the Hurons. Unlike the Ottawas who had extensive ties to communities in Saginaw Bay, Michilimackinac, and elsewhere, they lacked the kinds of regional connections which would allow them to command much respect in the region. With an earthiness which did nothing to endear himself to his Jesuit rivals, Cadillac noted that the Hurons' "sword" had been cut "too short" to wield much influence. The once powerful "lyons" were now mewling kittens.<sup>5</sup> Father Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, a Jesuit missionary and historian who visited Detroit in 1721, marveled that the Hurons, once the "most numerous" nation in the pays d'en haut, had "almost entirely disappeared in a few years."<sup>6</sup>

Despite the brutal battering they had received, however, the Hurons emerged from the seventeenth century not only as a proud and autonomous people, but as a powerful force in regional diplomacy. Forming a new social and political fabric and replicating cultural practices based on historical precedents, the new Huron community zealously maintained the borders of its community and chose a separate path from their close neighbors and allies, the Ottawas. In 1708 Cadillac proclaimed the Hurons the "elder brother" among the nations at Détroit."<sup>7</sup> Charlevoix found that the Ottawas,

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*Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500-1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 240.

<sup>5</sup>"Relations de Mémoire de Lamothe Cadillac," [ca. 1696], *MDE*, 5:80.

<sup>6</sup>"On a vû avec étonnement une Nation des plus nombreuses, & des plus guerrieres de ce Continent, & la plus estimée de tous pour sa sagesse & pour son esprit disparoître presque entièrement en assez peu d'années," Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Journal d'un Voyage*, ed. Pierre Berthiaume, 2 vols (Montréal : Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, [1744], 1994), 1:457.

<sup>7</sup>"il est vrai qu'autrefois L'outaouois étoit mon fils aîné ; mais puis qu'il a leve son feu d'ici, . . . , il sera avenir mon enfans cadets, et vous hurons rentez vous aujourd'huy que parôte obeissance, nous avez pris

Potawatomis, and Ojibwas accorded the Hurons “the honor of speaking for all” the natives at Détroit.<sup>8</sup> Recognizing the Hurons importance in 1728, the Marquis de Beauharnois, newly appointed as the governor of New France, acceded to the Hurons’ demands that he relieve Alphonse de Tonty, the commandant at Detroit, because the Hurons’ “resentment was to be feared.”<sup>9</sup> In 1730, Capt. Pierre-Jacques de Payan de Noyan noted that “All the Savages” of Détroit “are guided exclusively by the sentiments of the Hurons.”<sup>10</sup> He confirmed this observation a decade later when, as commandant of Detroit, he declared that the Hurons were “a nation [which was] not to be neglected.”<sup>11</sup> Noting that the Hurons were “restless” in 1754, the French officer and cartographer, Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, hyperbolically observed that if the Hurons decided they wanted to, they and their allies could “force the English of Virginia, Carolina and Georgia to abandon this country and take refuge in Europe.”<sup>12</sup> In 1779 an Anglo-American colonel informed George Washington that the Hurons “are respected by the

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dans mon Cœur et dans mes bien fait Le place de vôtre aisé,” “Procès-verbaux des conseils tenus à Détroit,” Aug. 1707, CAOM, C11A, vol. 26, fol. 123v.

<sup>8</sup> “l’honneur de parler pour tous est ordinairement déferé aux Hurons [Wendats], quand il s’en trouve dans un Conseil.” Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:539.

<sup>9</sup> “la nécessité de conserver une nations dont le réssentment estoit a craindre,” Beauharnois au ministre, 27 Sept. 1727, COAM, C11A, vol. 49, fols. 109-112v at 110v.

<sup>10</sup> “tous les Sauvages qui ne Se conduissent que par l’Esprit du huron,” Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et de Chavoy, “Mémoire,” [1730], COAM, C11A, vol. 52, fol. 279v.

<sup>11</sup> “Indian Affairs at Detroit in the Years 1738-1741,” *MPHSCR*, 34:201. Other officials agreed that the “Although the hurons are not numerous, it nonetheless would appear important to conserve them” (“Quoique les hurons ne soient pas bien nobreux, il paroît néanmoins interessant de les Conserver.”) “Résumé de dépêches du Canada concernant les Indiens,” CAOM, C11A, 80:361; “Mémoire concernant diverses nations indiennes,” 1742, *ibid.*, 77:390 ; “Résumé de lettres du Canada avec commentaies des autorités métropolitaines,” 1740, *ibid.*, 74:232-36v.

<sup>12</sup> “ils forceront les Anglais de la Virginie, Caroline et de la Georgie d’abandonner cette countrée et de se réfugier en Europe,” Joseph-Gaaspard de Chaussegros de Léry, “Journal de Joseph-Gaspard de Chaussegros de Léry, Lieutenant des Troupes, 1754-1755,” in *RAQ*, 8 :410.

western Indian nations as much as the six nations [Iroquois] are by the Northern.”<sup>13</sup>

Although they never commanded more than a couple hundred warriors, the Hurons nonetheless commanded fear and deference among their neighbors.

The Hurons were ultimately able to exercise an influence so disproportionate to their numbers by creating a network of allies and situating themselves in a new diplomatic configuration. In particular the Huron leader Cheanonvouzon, the purported “chief of all his tribe” following the death of Kondiaronk in 1701, formed three alliances which this chapter examines separately.<sup>14</sup> They first exploited their cultural and kinship ties with the Five Nation Iroquois (especially the Senecas) to create an alliance which both guaranteed them military backing and access to the Iroquois’ British allies. At the same time, they formed a new relationship with the Miamis, a group of people living south and southwest of Lake Michigan, to strike against the Hurons’ Ottawa rivals. Finally, based on these two relationships, the Hurons forged a tripartite “southern alliance” which involved both the Iroquois and Miami. While the first two alliances compensated for the Hurons’ comparative weakness and allowed them to act with an

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<sup>13</sup> Col. Daniel Brodhead to Gen. George Washington, 6 May 1779, Louise Kellogg, *The Frontier Advance on the Upper Ohio, 1778-1779. Collections of the Wisconsin Historical Society*, Vol. 21. Draper Series, vol. 2. (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1916), 311.

<sup>14</sup> Cheanonvouzon, who was forty-five when he died in 1707, was already a senior elder and led the Huron contingent then living at the Miami settlement on the St. Joseph River. “Paroles de quatre Hurons,” *MDE*, 5:266. Cadillac au ministre, 31 Aug. 1703, *MPHSCR*, 33:165-66; “Baptême de Louis-Antoine Cheanonvouzon,” *Registre paroisse de Détroit*, 1:19, 26. After the death of Kondiaronk, whom the French called the “first mover” among the Hurons and even Ottawas, in 1701, Cheanonvouzon apparently became the most powerful Huron leader until his death in 1707 (Kondiaronk “étoit le premier mobile de sa Nation & de tous les Outaouaks”). Claude-Charles Bacqueville de Pothérie, *Histoire de l’Amérique*, 4 vols (Paris : Jean-Luc Nion...et François Didot, 1722), 4:222-23; J.J. Marest to Cadillac, 23 July 1702, *MPHSCR*, 33:127; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 14, 145-48. According to the 1694 *Dictionnaire de L’Académie française*, a “premier mobile,” or “first mover,” was a someone who initiated affairs and offered an example for others to follow (“premier mobile, Un homme qui donne le bransle, le mouvement à une affaire, à une compagnie”; “Donner le bransle, pour dire, Commencer une affaire, & par son exemple obliger les autres à suivre. Il a donné un grand bransle à cette affaire”). *Dictionnaire de L’Académie française*, 1st. ed. (Paris: J.B. Coignard, 1694), 98, 126.

autonomy they would not have otherwise enjoyed, the third allowed the Hurons to operate as a regional leader. In short, these alliances allowed the Hurons to envision a world in which they regained a measure of the prestige they had enjoyed before the fall of Huronia. Commenting on the Hurons' use of diplomacy and alliances to compensate for their small numbers, Cadillac proclaimed that the erstwhile "lyons" had now become wily "foxes" who exerted a soft power in order to refashion the region in ways which would have otherwise been impossible.<sup>15</sup>

That the Hurons both survived the beating they endured in the seventeenth century as a discrete community and charted their own course in the new world suggests that they were not orphaned refugees but an integrated and coherent community. Disease, defeat, and dislocation had all taken their toll on the Hurons and had broken the political and economic structures of the various northern Iroquoian peoples. Yet these peoples quickly assembled the pieces of the old polities into a new configuration and created a new community. Creating a new configuration based on distinctively Iroquoian cultural traditions—an exogamous clan system, an Iroquoian language, surplus or market farming—and complemented with new additions, such as French technology and

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<sup>15</sup> "Relation de Lamothe Cadillac," [ca. 1694], *MDE*, 5 :81; According to the first edition (1694) of the *Dictionnaire de L'Académie française*, a fox was a "stinking, malign, and crafty beast, which lives by plunder" ("Beste puante, maligne & rusée, qui vit de rapine"). The proverb "to sew the skin of a fox to that of lion," further, meant "to add ruse, finesse, to force" ("On dit prov. & fig. *Coudre la peau du renard à celle du lion*, pour dire, Adjoûter la ruse, la finesse, à la force"). *Dictionnaire de L'Académie française*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 393. Jesuit Jean de Quens used the same language to describe the Algonkians, who faced circumstances similar to the Hurons. "It [the Algonkian nation] knew well that it was not equal in number [to the Iroquois] and that, having lost the skin of the Lyon, they were very well served by that of the Fox" ("Il sçauoit bien qu'il n'estoit pas égal en nombre, & que la peau de Lyon luy manquant, ils, s'estoit fort bien serui de celle du Renard.") *JR*, 42 :230.

Catholicism, a new Huron entity emerged from the ashes of Huronia.<sup>16</sup> This Huron community continued to refashion itself long after their arrival at Détroit, but nonetheless remained an integrated and coherent whole.

That these reconstituted Hurons successfully fought to insure their autonomy from both the Ottawas and the French largely through their connections to the Iroquois and Miamis, furthermore, demonstrates how relationships between native peoples shaped the region. Without their connections to the militarily powerful Iroquois and Miamis, Cheanonvouzon and his people could not have dreamed of achieving the kind of autonomy they wanted. Their neighbors and allies, the Ottawas living at Detroit used their superior numbers and connections with peoples throughout the region to project their power over the Hurons. Only by establishing connections to the militarily powerful Miamis and Iroquois and establishing an alternative to the powerful Anishinaabe alliance, could the Huron escape the Ottawas' domination.

## **I. The Huron Fox: Cheanonvouzon's Vision**

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<sup>16</sup> Conrad Heidenreich, *Huronia: A History and Geography of the Huron Indians, 1600-1650* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971); Susan Branstner, "Decision-Making Processes in a Culture Contact Context: The Case of the Tionontate Huron of the Upper Great Lakes" (Ph.D diss., Dept. of Anthropology, Michigan State University, 1991); Jules M. Boucher, "The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron: The Western Wendat People to 1701." M.A. Thesis (Department of History, University of Kansas, 2001); Campeau, Appendice I: Les Hurons de Détroit, in *La mission des jésuites chez les Hurons, 1634-1650* (Montréal : Editions Bellarmin, 1987), 361-67 ; Bruce Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*. 2 vols. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976), 824-25; Charles Garrad and Conrad E. Heidenreich, "Khionontateronon (Petun)," in Bruce Trigger, *The Northeast*, vol. 15, *HNAI*; James A. Clifton, *Hurons of the West: Migrations and Adaptations of the Ontario Iroquoians, 1650-1704* (Research Report, Canadian Ethnology Service, Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1977).

The Hurons who limped to Detroit in the early eighteenth century were a pale shadow of their former glory. The Huron nations, Tionnontatés, and Neutrals had dominated western Lake Huron commercially and militarily. Reaching for familiar language to describe the Hurons he met in Huronia in the 1630s, Recollect brother Gabriel Sagard likened the Wendats to the “nobility,” compared to the humble Ottawa, “bourgeois”<sup>17</sup> Yet since 1649 they had been defeated both by the Iroquois and by Dakota Sioux, whom they deemed cultural inferiors, in the 1660s.<sup>18</sup> Dislocation, warfare, and disease, moreover, had taken a considerable toll on the Hurons. While the Hurons and Tionnontatés numbered as many as 30,000 at the dawn of the seventeenth century, the portion of those survivors who arrived at Détroit in the seventeenth century number under five hundred.<sup>19</sup> They were so diminished, in fact, that they had to rely on their allies, the French and the Ottawas, for protection. As the French trader Nicolas Perrot maintained, if the French “had not protected [the Hurons, they] would no longer exist,” and the Ottawa leader, Ontontagan claimed to have saved the Hurons more than once.<sup>20</sup> In such reduced circumstances, the Hurons simply could not shape the world as freely as their ancestors had.

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<sup>17</sup> Gabriel Sagard, *Le grand voyage du pays des Hurons situé en l'Amérique* (Paris: Denys Moreau, 1632), 184.

<sup>18</sup> Perrot, *Mémoire*, 86-90, 101.

<sup>19</sup> Archaeologist Gary Warrick estimates that in 1615 some 21,600 Wendats-Hurons lived in about twelve villages, while 6,500 Tionnontaté-Pétuns occupied at least seven more villages. Each of these villages probably housed 1000 denizens, considerably larger than the villages at Michilimackinac and Détroit. Many of the remnant Hurons moved closer to Québec and settled at Lorette and other settlements, while others had been absorbed into the Iroquois Confederacy. Warrick, *A Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500-1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 218-20, 245; Anon., “Memoir on the Indians between Lake Erie and the Mississippi,” 1718, *NYCD*, 9:8880.

<sup>20</sup> “if I had not protected you, you would no longer exist” (“Et si je ne te protégois, tu ne serois plus,” Nicolas Perrot, *Mémoire sur les moeurs, coustumes, et religion des sauvages de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, ed. J. Tailhan (Leipzig : A. Franck, 1864), 155; “Paroles des Outaouais....” 18 June 1707, *MPHSCR*, 33:323).

Judging from his actions, the Huron headman, Cheanonvouzon, known as Michipichy to the Ottawas and Quarante Sols to the French apparently understood the root cause of his people's weakness in the late seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup> His people were weak not simply because they had lost so many of their people or because the Ottawas outnumbered them, but also because they had been plucked from the geographic and diplomatic context in which they had long operated. Forced to flee from Huronia east of Lake Huron, they abandoned the alliances, patterns of exchange, and networks of power which had defined them before 1649. During their long sojourn through the Great Lakes wilderness, the Huron refugees had been a strange people in a strange land. They had been torn from the set of geopolitical relationships which they had enjoyed in the Huron homeland and now lived among people whom they did not know and did not trust. This vulnerability placed them at the mercy of both the French and Ottawas, who did have connections throughout the region, especially with other Anishinaabe peoples like the Ojibwas and Potawatomis. The price of survival had been a surrender of autonomy and influence.

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<sup>21</sup> Dominique de La Marche, the Recollect priest serving at Détroit baptized "Louis Antoine Cheanonvouzon, du nomm  Quarante Sous Chef des Hurons" on 27 April 1707 and the man died soon thereafter ("Bap me de Louis-Antoine Cheanonvouzon," *RPD*, 1:19, 26). They also rendered his name "Saint-Cho ian," in 1701 ("Conseil des Hurons tenu dans le fort du D troit," 4 Dec. 1701, *MDE*, 5:259; Joseph Marest to Cadillac, 12 May 1703, *MPHSCR*, 33:160). The French called him "Quarante Sous" or "Sol," or "forty cents," probably a reference to what the French perceived as the man's avarice. The Ottawas called the man "Michipichy," mostly likely in reference to the fierce "underwater panther" said to live in the depths of Lake Huron. The Ottawas feared this creature, just as they feared the mercurial Huron leader. Perrot, *M moire*, 121; Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, *New Voyages to North-America* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, [1703] 1905), 232-33; Richard Rhodes. *Eastern Ojibwa-Chippewa-Ottawa Dictionary*, (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993), 253; Claude Allouez, in Fran ois le Mercier, *Relation*, 1668, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, 73 vols (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901), 50:286, 288. Hereafter "JR." Rasles   son fr re, 12 Oct. 1723, in *JR* 67 :158; Harry Kelsey, "Michipichy (Quarante Sols)," in *DCB*, vol. 3.



Cheanonvouzon and his people sought to do three things to reclaim Huron autonomy. First they must compensate for his lack of military might in comparison to his neighbors. Outnumbered and dependent upon the Ottawas for military protection, the Hurons knew that they could not assert their independence or act with freedom as long as the Ottawas and their allies could field more warriors. Alliances with powerful groups, however, would not only help the Hurons defend themselves in case of conflict, but would also serve as a deterrent in ordinary times. Second, the Hurons sought to situate themselves in a commercial network which would give them access to goods and elevate their status in the region. The Tionnontatés and Hurons had long been commercial intermediaries who traded with northern Algonquian peoples and the Iroquois before 1649, and Cheanonvouzon understood the connection between commercial and political power.<sup>22</sup> Finally Cheanonvouzon knew that if the Hurons hoped to act as independent players in the region, they would have to operate independently from their longtime allies and rivals, the Ottawas. The Ottawas, whose constituent nations had settlements throughout the region and who had connections to Potawatomi and Ojibwa communities, had dominated the Hurons since the fall of Huronia in 1649. The Hurons could not hope to operate independently as long as the Ottawas held them in “a sort of slavery.”<sup>23</sup>

To an extent, the Hurons addressed this problem by courting the French. Arriving at Montréal for the peace negotiations in August 1701, Cheanonvouzon told Callière that it gave him a “particular joy to come hear his word” and assured the governor of “the zeal

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<sup>22</sup> Newbigging, “The French-Ottawa Alliance,” 44.

<sup>23</sup> Les Hurons “n’ont quite ce poste que par l’aversion naturelle qu’ils ont pour les [Odawas], et que ceux cy les tenoient dans une espece d’esclavage,” Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, CAOM, C11A, vol. 29, fol. 69; Raudot and Silvy, *Relation par lettres de l’Amérique Septentrionale*, 131.

he [Cheanonvouzon] had to please him.”<sup>24</sup> He was so eager to see a peace concluded between the Iroquois and the nations of the pays d’en haut that he had lent canoes to his allies, the St. Joseph Miamis, so they could come to Montréal and participate in the talks. A grateful Callière thanked Cheanonvouzon for the “good sentiments that he has come to convey to the French Nation.” The aid he had provided to the Miamis, furthermore, was a sure “proof of the attachment” that the Huron had to French “interests.”<sup>25</sup> That summer at Montréal he promised Gov. Callière that he would work to move his people to the new post of Détroit. At Cadillac’s request, Cheanonvouzon worked to convince his own people and the Miamis to come settle at Détroit in 1701 and 1702.<sup>26</sup> He even collaborated with the commandant, who served as his godfather when he was baptized in 1707, against Cadillac’s rival, the governor of New France, Philippe Rigaud, the marquis de Vaudreuil, in 1704.

Yet Cheanonvouzon quickly realized that his alliance with the French and participation in the French-led alliance would not guarantee him the autonomy he wanted or help him subvert the Ottawas. He in fact grumbled that “the French were preventing

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<sup>24</sup> Cheanonvouzon a dit “qu’il étoit fait un joye particuliere d’aller écouter sa parole,” “le zèle qu’il avoit eü de lui plaire.” Claude-Charles Bacqueville de Pothérie, *Histoire de l’Amérique*, 4:222-23.

<sup>25</sup> “On remercia Quarante-sols des bons sentimens qu’il venoit de témoigner à la Nation Française,” “les secours qu’il avoit donné aux Miamis, étoient une preuve de l’attachement qu’il avoit à nos interêts,” in *ibid.*, 226. Havard, *The Great Peace of Montréal, The Great Peace of Montreal : French-native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott. (Ithaca: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001). App. 2, 207-08.

<sup>26</sup> “Paroles de quatre hommes,” 17 Feb. 1702, *MDE*, 5:266-67; “Paroles de Michipichy,” in *ibid.*, 271; “Conseil tenu dans le fort du Détroit,” 27 Jan. 1702, in *ibid.*, 282; Cadillac to the Minister, 31 Aug. 1703, *MPHSCR*, 33:443; Aigremont to the Minister, 11 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 442; “Conseil tenu par les Hurons, dans lequel se trouvoient les Outaouas,” 12 June 1703, *MDE*, 5:292-93; “Conseil des Hurons tenu dans le fort Détroit,” 4 Dec. 1701, in *ibid.*, 260; “Paroles des Hurons,” 14 July 1703, COAM, C11A, vol. 21, fol. 74-75v. “Paroles de Miscouaky [Ottawa]...à Monsieur le marquis de Vaureuil,” 26. Sept. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:288.

him from revenging himself” on the Odawas.<sup>27</sup> Accordingly he sought to address all of these problems by crafting a series of alliances with peoples in the Great Lakes Region. Building on an ancient cultural affinity and the effective demographic blending of the two peoples during the seventeenth century, Cheanonvouzon continued Huron attempts to maintain an exclusive and powerful alliance with the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. Alliance with the Iroquois not only served as a deterrent against external attack from other nations, but also ensured access to the British, with whom the Iroquois were bound in the celebrated Covenant Chain. In addition to this Iroquois alliance, Cheanonvouzon also slowly forged an alliance with the Miamis, a group living along the St. Joseph River southeast of Lake Michigan. Like the Iroquois alliance, this relationship provided military protection for the Hurons and helped them compensate for their relative weakness. In 1706 Cheanonvouzon, well aware of the hostility between the Ottawas and Miamis, engineered a conflict between the two nations in hopes of escaping Ottawa domination. Finally, Cheanonvouzon sought to create a larger regional alliance—a southern alliance—which included both the Miamis and Iroquois. This coalition allowed the Hurons to do more than separate relationships with those peoples. By mediating trade and diplomacy between the Iroquois and Miamis, the Hurons claimed for themselves a place of influence and prestige for themselves which would have otherwise been impossible. This southern alliance likewise challenged the grip of the Anishinaabe people on the region. Through skillful diplomacy, Cheanonvouzon built a series of alliances which situated the Hurons in a region-wide commercial and diplomatic context

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<sup>27</sup> Lamothe au gouverneur, 17 Feb., 1702, *MDE*, 5:266; Jean Mermet à Cadillac, 19 April 1702, *MPHSCR*, 33:118-119.

and helped them regain some of their erstwhile influence. Cheanonvouzon and the Hurons pursued these three separate alliances simultaneously. In order to examine the particular dynamics of each of the alliances, I deal with them separately meaning that there is chronological overlap in the three sections.

## II. “Flesh and Blood”: The Iroquois and the Hurons

In March 1758, during the height of the Seven Years’ War, the Huron man, Théata, traveled to Seneca territory to recount the proceedings of a recent council between François Marie Picote, sieur de Belestre, the commandant of Fort Pontchartrain and the peoples of Détroit. According to Théata, Belestre had invited the nations to attack the Six Nations in order to secure territorial rights to the Ohio Valley. When some of the nations agreed to the attack, the Huron leader named Sastaretsy reacted angrily.<sup>28</sup> Grabbing the belt that Belestre had presented, he chastised his neighbors for so easily betraying the Iroquois. The Huron leader rhetorically asked how “I, whom am Flesh and Blood of the Six Nations and in whose Towns Number of our Friends & Children are living and settled, declare War against them.” He then reminded his neighbors that they too were allied with the Six Nations and implored them to reject the “French Hatchet.”<sup>29</sup>

Sastaretsy’s angry reaction to Belestre’s invitation reveals not only the long-term and exclusive affinity between the Hurons and Iroquois, but also indicates the key to that relationship: the cultural kinship and intermarriage of the two peoples. This relationship,

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<sup>28</sup> Sastaretsy, the hereditary title for the leader of the Huron Deer clan, passed from maternal uncle to nephew [Pierre Potier, “Recensement des villages hurons,” 1747, in Robert Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier* (Ottawa : Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1996), 226-27; Cadillac, “Relation du Sr. De Lamothe,” [1718], *MDE*, 5:119 ; Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Journal d’un Voyage*, 1:451].

<sup>29</sup> “Message of a Seneca to Sir William Johnson,” in *WJP*, 2:793-96.

which had begun in the late seventeenth century, allowed the Hurons to claim an unprecedented power in the region. The Hurons' relationship with the Iroquois allowed them to accomplish two specific goals. First, the alliance with the most powerful people in the region discouraged any potential enemies from menacing the Hurons. Living in western New York and numbering some 6,400 individuals, the Iroquois Confederacy was the most powerful native group in northeastern North America.<sup>30</sup> No nation in the region wanted to resume the warfare which had broiled the region during the late seventeenth century. At the same time, their alliance with the Iroquois also allowed the Hurons access to the Iroquois' allies, the British. The British entrepot of Albany, after all, was situated in the midst of Iroquois country, and no one could reach the post without the Iroquois' blessing.

In spite of the fierce conflict between the Hurons and Iroquois in the seventeenth century, the two peoples formed an unusually close alliance in the last decades of the seventeenth century. That alliance was premised upon a shared cultural kinship and a practice of intermarriage which reached back hundreds of years. Both the Hurons and the Iroquois claimed a kinship with an ancestral group of St. Lawrence Iroquoian peoples who had inhabited the lower reaches of that river, and whom Jacques Cartier had encountered in the 1530s. Following Cartier's last visit these Iroquoians dispersed; while some moved west into southern Ontario and formed the Wendat nations, others traveled south and became the Mohawks, Cayugas, Onondagas, Senecas, and Oneidas—the constituent nations of the latter-day Iroquois League.<sup>31</sup> Descendant from the same the

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<sup>30</sup> Parmenter, *The Woods' Edge*, Appendix 2, 291.

<sup>31</sup> Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods*, 60 (quotation), 69, 80-81

ancestral groups, these people shared many cultural and linguistic traditions as well as a sense of cultural kinship and a sense of common kinship. As a French official later observed, the Hurons' "language and customs" had a strong resemblance to those of the Iroquois, and the two groups therefore shared a "great affinity."<sup>32</sup>

This shared mythic heritage, and the very real cultural and linguistic affinities it bequeathed, led to an impressive cultural and biological convergence between the Hurons and Iroquois in the mid-1600s. When epidemics reduced the populations of both the Hurons and the Iroquois, these peoples sought to compensate for their losses by raiding other Iroquoian peoples and forcibly assimilating captives into their communities. Because of the shared sense of Iroquoian heritage and cultural similarities, both the Iroquois and the Hurons preferred to capture and incorporate other Iroquoian peoples. Indeed Jon Parmenter argues that the Iroquoian attacks on the various northern Iroquoian peoples, including the peoples who later became Wendats, reflected, not a particularly hatred for the Hurons, as the Jesuits believed, but a preference for Iroquoian captives. These Huron captives, or "Iroquois by affection," represented a sizeable minority among the Iroquois population.<sup>33</sup> Indeed Cheanonvouzon himself may have been born as an Iroquois.<sup>34</sup> An adopted Huron leader who had become an Iroquois war leader

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<sup>32</sup> "les hurons dont la langue et les mœurs ont un grand rapport avec les leurs et avec lesquels ils ont de grands afinités," Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, in C11A, 29 :45-45v.

<sup>33</sup> Parmenter refers to the conflict as a "civil war" given the numbers of Iroquois and Hurons on both side of the conflict. Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods*, 72; Boucher, "The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron," 151-52.

<sup>34</sup> Giles Havard suggests that Cheanonvouzon might have been a native Iroquois who had been adopted by the Hurons, and the man's dealings with the Iroquois support this possibility. But the evidence for this, as Havard observes, is ambiguous. Cheanonvouzon's position in the Huron community, moreover, suggests that, even if he had been born an Iroquois, he had earnestly and thoroughly embraced his new community. In 1702, a Seneca chief accused him of plotting against the Iroquois, suggesting that he saw himself as a Huron, not an Iroquois. "Narrative of the most Remarkable Occurrences in Canada," 1695, *NYCD* 9:606;

encapsulated the ambiguous blending of Iroquois and Huron identity. Addressing a Huron audience as “My brothers,” he proclaimed that “I have not changed my soul by changing my country; & my blood has not become Iroquois, although I have lived among them. My heart is completely Huron, as is my language.”<sup>35</sup> In a very real sense, these peoples were a hybrid Iroquoian people.

Even after the peace of 1701 ended the captive-raiding between the Hurons and Iroquois nations, these peoples continued to marry and have children together. Although they are incomplete and only include those children presented for baptism, the surviving baptismal records bespeak a pattern of conception, and probably marriage, between the Hurons and the Iroquois. In May 1707, for instance, the Huron woman Marie Timenguré had a child with T8rak8innen, a Seneca man. In the next six decades, Hurons from Détroit and Iroquois parents from the St. Lawrence Valley and Iroquoia conceived eight more children which appeared in the existing baptismal records.<sup>36</sup> Father Pierre Potier’s census of the Huron communities at the Bois Blanc mission and Sandusky taken around 1746 further bears out these patterns of intermarriage and cohabitation. In his manuscript he identified twenty-three individuals by a designation other than Huron. Of these the majority, fifteen, were either Foxes or Flatheads who had either been captives or slaves

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Havard, *The Great Peace of Montréal*, App. 2, 207; “Conseil tenu dans le fort de Détroit par les Iroquois, Outaouais, Hurons, Népissingues et Mississagues,” 4 May 1702, *MDE*, 5:277.

<sup>35</sup> “Mes freres, dit-il aux Huron, ie n’ay point changé d’ame pour auoir changé de païs : & mon sang n’est pas deueni Iroquois, quoy que i’habite parmy eux. Mon cœur est tout Huron, atuant que ma langue,” *JR* 42 :56; Richard White, “‘Although I Am Not Entirely Dead. I Have Left a Second of Myself’: Constructing Self and Persons on the Middle Ground of Early America,” in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on a Personal Identity in Early America*, ed. Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika Teute (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 406.

<sup>36</sup> The Hurons did have children with four Abenakis before 1765. They also had seven or eight children with a French parent. The records also include evidence for two Church-sanctioned marriages between the French and the Hurons. They also had children with adopted Foxes and Chickasaws.

adopted into Huron families.<sup>37</sup> Potier identified one “Loup,” or Delaware, and one Abenaki, presumably a Christian convert from Kanahsatake.<sup>38</sup> The other six individuals identified were Iroquois, three of which were specified as Senecas and three simply as “Iroquois.” Two of these Iroquois individuals were women and the rest were men.<sup>39</sup> Of the eight non-Huron individuals who had come to live with the Hurons willingly (compared to those captured in slave raids), the vast majority were therefore Iroquois. And this number excludes those Hurons of both Iroquois and Huron descent whom Potier identified as Huron instead of Iroquois and, of course, those Huron who had gone to live in Iroquois villages. As in the baptismal records, no Ottawas, Potawatomis, or Ojibwas appear in Potier’s census.

To put these numbers into context, existing parish records suggest that priests at Détroit only baptized three children with a Huron and Ottawa parent between 1735 and 1764. There are no recorded incidents of a Huron parent having a child with a Potawatomi or Ojibwa between 1704 and the death of the last Jesuit missionary, Pierre Potier, in 1781. The paucity of such children is telling. Although the Hurons lived less than a mile from the Ottawas and Potawatomis at Détroit and less than a day from the Ojibwa village, the existing baptismal and marriage registers indicate that the Hurons rarely ever married these peoples. The Hurons were much more likely to marry their

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<sup>37</sup> The inclusion of these Algonquian-speaking people is instructive. While the existing records indicate that they seldom married or lived with their Algonquian neighbors, they did live with and sometimes married captive Algonquian-speaking Chickasaws and Foxes and the Siouan Flathead/Catawbas. This might indicate that they regarded these people as culturally Huron following their adoption into Huron families. Potier, “Recensement des Hurons,” Texte II, in Toupin, ed., *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, , 241-43, 245, 247, 249-50, 253, 255.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 242, 246.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 242, 243, 253, 257, 258.



Iroquoian cousins than the Algonquian-speaking peoples who lived nearest them.<sup>40</sup> As in the baptismal records, no Ottawas, Potawatomis, or Ojibwas appear in Potier's census. These numbers confirm indications that Hurons had intermarried with Algonquian-speakers during the seventeenth century, and suggest a clear distinction between Iroquoian and Algonquian peoples.<sup>41</sup>

Iroquois people married to or living with Hurons at Détroit or settlements like Sandusky surfaced frequently in official correspondence over the years. In 1709, for example, a "Sinneke Indian who livd at Tjuhhsagrondie [Détroit]" had married a woman living at the post, possibly a Huron.<sup>42</sup> An anonymous French chronicler noted that a Seneca man, whom he called "the great Sononton," lived at the primarily Huron settlement of Sandusky in 1745.<sup>43</sup> This is likely Ta8ita, a Seneca man whom Potier listed in his census.<sup>44</sup> In the early 1750s the British captive James Smith noted that his adopted Kahawake Iroquois brother had a Huron wife and he belonged to what ethnohistorian Eminie Wheeler-Voegler called "a mixed Caughnawaga Mohawk-Wyandot

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<sup>40</sup> The Hurons did have children with four Abenakis before 1765. Huron parents also conceived seven or eight children with a French parent who were baptized, and the existing records include two Church-sanctioned marriages between the French and the Huron celebrants. They also had children with adopted Foxes and Chickasaws.

<sup>41</sup> Boucher, who suggests that the Hurons "incorporated people of non-Iroquoian ethnic identity," admits that there is "[m]eager documentary evidence" for this supposition. Apart from a couple of ambiguous early seventeenth-century references, Boucher only offers Richard White's generalization about the frequency of such unions in the region. Boucher, "The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron," 201-202. Gregory Dowd also states, without evidence, that "villagers intermarried frequently across boundaries that were too often and too casually described as tribal" and that "Algonquian-speaking Ottawas, Miamis, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas thought little of intermarrying with one another or even with Iroquoian-speaking Wyandots." Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 62.

<sup>42</sup> "Examination of Atheroghkoes an onnondage Indian," 17 July 1710, in Lawrence Leder, ed., *Livingston Indian Records* (Gettysburg, PA: The Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956), 210.

<sup>43</sup> "Anonymous Diary of a Trip from Detroit to the Ohio River," 22 May – 24 August 1745, *Archives of the Seminary of Quebec*, ASQ V-V 17:1 (Translation), Papiers Contrecoeur, pp.1-10. Translation provided by the Glenn Black Laboratory of Archaeology, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>44</sup> Potier, "Recensement des Hurons," Texte I, in Toupin, *Les Ecrits de Pierre Potier*, 225.

assemblage.”<sup>45</sup> When Smith and his Kahnawake family arrived at Détroit to buy supplies, naturally, they stayed at the Huron village.<sup>46</sup> In 1760 George Croghan spoke to a “Six Nation Indian, who has lived.... amongst the Wyandotts” at Detroit for fourteen years.<sup>47</sup>

The Hurons themselves testified to their practice of intermarrying with the Iroquois. In 1747, for example, the Hurons noted that because the “greater part of their village were children” of the Six Nations, they were no longer truly Hurons but actually Iroquois.<sup>48</sup> As we have seen, Sastaresty likewise claimed to be “Flesh and Blood of the Six Nations” and added that many of the Hurons’ “Children” lived in the villages of the Six Nations in 1758.<sup>49</sup> Two years later Huron representatives used the same phrase in a conference with British and Iroquois representatives.<sup>50</sup> These fragmented references hint at a larger pattern of cohabitation and sexual intimacy between these two peoples, especially given the frequency of intermarriage and captive adoption between the peoples in the seventeenth century.

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<sup>45</sup> “An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Colonel James Smith. . .during His Captivity with the Indians, in the Years, 1755, ’56, ’57, ’58, and ’59,” in Samuel G. Drake. Ed. *Indian Captivities, or Life in the Wigwam*, (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1852), 190, 225, 255; Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin. *Indians of Northwest Ohio: An Ethnohistorical Report on the Wyandot, Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa or Northeast Ohio*. (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974), 32.

<sup>46</sup> Smith, “An Account,” in Drake, *Indian Captivities*, 218, 225.

<sup>47</sup> George Croghan, “George Croghan’s Journal April 3, 1759 to April [30], 1763,” ed. Nicolas B. Wainwright, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 71:4 (Oct. 1947): 370-71.

<sup>48</sup> The Iroquois League added a sixth member, the Tuscaroras, in the 1720s, making them the Six Nations. Les Hurons “ne se regardoient plus Comme hurons attendu leur petit nombre, mais comme yroquois, puisque La plus grande partie de leur village (des hurons) En Estoient Enfants,” *Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart)*, 1747-1748, COAM, C11A, vol. 87, fol.186.

<sup>49</sup> The term “Flesh and blood” may have been an idiom, rather than a literal indication of genetic relation, the equivalent of the phrase which the French rendered as having the “même corps.” Yet Sastaresty’s clarification that Huron “Children” lived among the Iroquois suggests that he meant that they had intermarried. Message of a Seneca to Sir William Johnson, *WJP*, 2:793-96.

<sup>50</sup> “Conference held by the Honorable General Monckton with the Western Nations of Indians,” Aug. 1760, Samuel Hazard, *Pennsylvania Archives* (Philadelphia : Joseph Severns & Co., 1852), 3:750.

This intermarriage facilitated constant communication and travelling between the Huron settlement at Détroit and the various Iroquois outposts in Iroquoia, in the St. Lawrence Valley, and after the 1730s, in the Ohio Valley. Indeed the Iroquois seemed to be omnipresent in the Huron village at Détroit.<sup>51</sup> Cadillac claimed that thirty Iroquois families had settled at the Huron village at Détroit in 1704. To be sure, Cadillac serially exaggerated the number of natives settled at Détroit, and the commandant presented the claim in an attempt to demonstrate the Iroquois' acquiescence to the French settlement at Détroit. Yet other evidence validates his claim. The Ottawas testified that some Kahnawake Iroquois had been present in the Huron fort in the summer of 1706, for example.<sup>52</sup> François La Forest, commandant of Detroit in 1711, referred to the "Iroquois...established at detroit."<sup>53</sup> In 1728, a Mohawk even threatened the British that if they continued to encroach on their lands the Iroquois would move "to Tughsaghrone," or Détroit, and other places, suggesting the ties between the Iroquois and Hurons.<sup>54</sup> Potier listed "La Cabane des Iroquois" in his 1746 census, and indicated that the "old Iroquois woman" Thérèse headed the household. Since two of the inhabitants of the longhouse were "at the sault"—Sault-Saint-Louis, or Kahnawake—these Iroquois were likely from the St. Lawrence Valley settlements.<sup>55</sup> In 1747, the

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<sup>51</sup> The presence of Iroquois people at Détroit, both from the St. Lawrence settlements and from Iroquoia itself, lend credence to Jon Parmenter's argument that the Iroquois formed settlements outside of Iroquoia in order to project Iroquois power and to gather information. Détroit probably served as a node in the greater Iroquoian world in the same way that St. Lawrence Valley settlements did or that the Ohio River Valley settlements later would. Jon Parmenter, "At the Wood's Edge: Iroquois Foreign Relations, 1727-1768" (Ph.D. diss. Dept. of History, University of Michigan, 1999).

<sup>52</sup> Marest to Vaudreuil, 14 Aug. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:269.

<sup>53</sup> La Forest au ministre, 1711, *COAM*, C11A, vol. 120, fol. 125.

<sup>54</sup> "Minutes of the Albany Commissioners for Indian Affairs," 1728, cited in Parmenter, "The Edge of the Woods," 61.

<sup>55</sup> Potier, "Recensement des Hurons," Texte I, in Toupin, *Les Ecrits de Pierre Potier*, 200, 205, 211.

marquis of Vaudreuil-Cavagnal, the governor of Louisiana and Canadian-born son of a long-serving governor of New France, accused the “Iroquois of detroit” of acting as messengers for the British.<sup>56</sup>

The appearance of Iroquois children in the Détroit parish register also suggests that some Iroquois people either lived at Detroit or at least visited there frequently. In addition to the nine children of Huron and Iroquois parents baptized at Détroit, parish priests and the Jesuit missionaries recorded the births of nine children with at least one Iroquois parent, but no Huron parent, between 1707 and 1765, as well as the deaths of three Iroquois people, the majority of which came from the Huron mission.<sup>57</sup> These visitors included not only Iroquois from the St. Lawrence Valley, but also Cayugas, Senecas, and Mohawks, as well as many “Iroquois” from unidentified nations. While these numbers are by no means overwhelming, they do give a sense of the communication and interchange between the Hurons and Iroquois. That pregnant women and small children traveled from Iroquois villages in the St. Lawrence Valley and Iroquoia to the Huron village of Détroit suggests an intimacy and frequency of contact between the two peoples.

The cultural and physical intimacy between the Hurons and Iroquois led to an enduring diplomatic alliance between the two nations beginning in the final two decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>58</sup> Not only did the mingling of the Huron and Iroquois

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<sup>56</sup> Pierre François de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil-Cavagnal, au ministre, 22 March 1747, COAM, C13A, vol. 31, fol. 42.

<sup>57</sup> All of these children were born either to two Iroquois parents or an Iroquois and a French parent. *Registre paroisse de Détroit*, 1:19, 67, 132, 240; Toupin, “Introduction au registre de la mission huronne,” in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 793; Potier, “Registre Mortuaire,” in *ibid.*, 922-23, 925.

<sup>58</sup> Boucher argues that the Turtle segment or hontaXen (see chapter four) made overtures to the Iroquois in order to “counterbalance” the influence of the newly ascendant Deer segment, which supported a French

populations create a shared sense of trust and common culture, but it also created a large cadre of Huron-born Iroquois and Iroquois-born Hurons who served as intermediaries and facilitated the diplomacy between the two peoples. These diplomats thus began negotiating a separate peace to end the disruptive beaver wars. As early as 1679, the Senecas informed the Indian Commissioners at Albany that they had reached a separate peace with the “Dionondadaagas”—or Hurons.<sup>59</sup> Three years later, after the Hurons visited the Seneca territory, the Ottawas complained that the Hurons had “an understanding” with the Iroquois and they had frequent clandestine meetings with them.<sup>60</sup> By the end of the decade, the Hurons had sent envoys to the Iroquois and apparently concluded a peace with the Hurons.<sup>61</sup> In 1689, the fur trader Nicolas Perrot concluded that the Hurons and Iroquois were, despite appearances to the contrary “at peace.” The French interpreter and trader claimed that the Hurons only pretended to fight against the Five Nations because the French and Ottawas compelled them to do so.<sup>62</sup> Eventually they dropped their pretenses. In 1695, Cadillac, then commandant of Michillimackinac, complained that, no matter how much he cajoled them, the Hurons would not raise

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alliance instead of an Iroquois one. Although the Deer leader, Sastaresty, did appear to be more disposed to the French and other Huron leaders like Le Baron and Cheanonvouzon supported an Iroquois/British alliance, we have no clue about the ethnic identity of these later leaders. To posit this conflict between Iroquois- and French-aligned factions as one revolving around phratry-identification is unsupported. Boucher, “The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron,” 249.

<sup>59</sup> “Dionondagaagas” was a corruption of Tionnontaté, or Ionontady-Haga, the Iroquois name for the Hurons. Peter Christoph and Florence Christoph, *Andros Papers: Files of the Provincial Secretary of New York during the Administration of Governor Sir Edmund Andros, 1674-1680*, 3:544.

<sup>60</sup> “Paroles échangées entre Frontenac et les Outaouais, Hurons et Miamis,” 13 Aug. 1682, *NYCD*, 9:176. “Propositions made by the Sachims of Sumondowanne or Linicekes the Tenth day of March 1681/2,” in *Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1681-1685/6* (Baltimore, Md. : Maryland Historical Society, 1883-1972), 17:198-99; Boucher, “The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron.”

<sup>61</sup> Denonville au ministre, 1687, *NYCD* 9: 324-25 ; Denonville au ministre, 25 Aug. 1687, in *ibid.*, 336; Etienne Carheil à Denonville, 1689, in *JR*, 64:22, 24, 36 ; Frontenac au ministre, 4 Nov. 1695, in *AN*, C<sup>11</sup>A, 13 :292-92v

<sup>62</sup> Perrot, *Mémoire*, 145.

raiding parties against the Iroquois. One Huron leader, called Le Baron by the French, rebuffed French demands to attack the Iroquois, claiming that the Christian God had forbidden him to do so.<sup>63</sup> While some Hurons, led by the headman Kondiaronk, finally relented and sent a war party against the Iroquois, Le Baron, Cheanonvouzon and others moved to the Miami settlement on the St. Joseph River in order, Perrot opined, to abscond to the “Iroquois.”<sup>64</sup>

By the time the peoples of the Great Lakes met with Callière in 1701, then, the Iroquois and Hurons had translated their cultural and biological union into a diplomatic one. Indeed their cultural and diplomatic bonds were so strong that the Iroquois frequently invited the Hurons to relocate in Iroquoia and the Hurons, or at least some of them, often seemed disposed to do so. Around the turn of the eighteenth century, for example, Iroquois people from the St. Lawrence communities of Kahnawake and Kanehstake asked the Hurons to move to their settlements near Montréal.<sup>65</sup> When Huron-Ottawa tensions rose in 1705, for example, the Hurons wanted to move to Seneca territory and, anticipating fear from the Ottawas and others, asked the Senecas to send three hundred warriors to Détroit to help them leave.<sup>66</sup> In August of the following year, after the Hurons and Ottawas had fought openly at Détroit, the Michilimackinac Ottawas fretted that the Hurons would flee to the Iroquois and implored Gov. Vaudreuil to prevent

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<sup>63</sup> “Narrative of the most remarkable Occurences in Canada,” 1695, *NYCD*, 9:603-04, 609.

<sup>64</sup> Perrot, *Mémoire*, 146.

<sup>65</sup> In 1742, the Hurons recalled that these nations had come to them before they left Michilimackinac, but after the Marquis de Vaudreuil had become governor, meaning the exchange came in the first years of the eighteenth century. “Paroles de Beauharnois à trois chefs hurons,” 28 June, 1742, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 77, fol. 163v.

<sup>66</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 May 1705, C11A, vol. 22, fol. 231v.

them from doing so.<sup>67</sup> The governor shared the Ottawas fears and worked hard to prevent “too close a connection between the Miamis, Hurons, and Iroquois.”<sup>68</sup> On his tour through the pays d’en haut the following year, François Clairambault d’Aigremont once again learned that the Hurons “may settle with the Iroquois.” Indeed the officials’ sources told him that the Hurons would have done so already if the Senecas had permitted them to establish their own village in Seneca territory and retain their autonomy, rather than merge with the Iroquois and lose their distinct identity.<sup>69</sup> In the 1715, the Hurons still “irritated” by the Ottawas and desperately alarmed by the Fox incursions in the neighborhood of Détroit, again considered an Iroquois invitation to settle with them.<sup>70</sup> Although the Hurons never moved to Iroquoia, the Iroquois’ frequent invitation for them to do so, the Hurons’ serious contemplation of these offers, and the continual French fear that the Hurons would do so all attest to the strong cultural and political alliance which had bound the Iroquois and Huron together. As late as 1726, the Senecas identified Détroit as the “place where the Tienonadies [Hurons] now live.”<sup>71</sup> The remark suggested that the Senecas associated Détroit, not with the more numerous or powerful Ottawas living at the place, but the Senecas’ cultural and linguistic cousins and commercial partners, the Hurons.

Their ties to the Iroquois, the most powerful and well-connected people in the region, allowed the Hurons to act with a freedom of movement and autonomy that they

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<sup>67</sup> Father Marest to the Marquis de Vaudreuil, 14 Aug. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:269.

<sup>68</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 24 July 1707, in *ibid.*, 330 ; Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 Nov. 1706, *NYCD*, 9:780

<sup>69</sup> “il est a craindre que les hurons ne s’establissement avec les Iroquois par le mecontentment qu’ils ont de M<sup>r</sup> de la Mothe,” Aigremont to the Minister, 4 Nov. 1706, *COAM*, C11A, vol. 29, fol. 69v.

<sup>70</sup> Ramezay and Bégon to the Minister, 7 Nov. 1715, *WHC*, 16:333

<sup>71</sup> “Conference between [William] Governor Burnet [New York] and the Indians,” Albany, 7 Sept. 1726, *NYCD*, 5:794.

had lacked for the past fifty years. Since the fall of Huronia and during their long sojourn through the Great Lakes wilderness, the Hurons had been a strange people in a strange land. They had been torn from the set of geopolitical relationships which they had enjoyed in the Huron homeland and now lived among people whom they did not know and did not trust. This vulnerability placed them at the mercy of the Ottawas, who did have connections throughout the region. By forming alliances with the Iroquois, however, the Hurons had created a place for themselves in the pays d'en haut. They were no longer wanderers who lacked ties to their neighbors and depended upon the Ottawas. They had situated themselves as part of a larger social and diplomatic reality. On its most practical level these connections guaranteed protection for the Hurons: few nations would risk a fight with the Iroquois by attacking the Hurons. Having finally made peace with the Iroquois in 1701, the people of the region had little interest in renewing the conflict that had consumed much of the seventeenth century. In the aftermath of Huron-Ottawa violence in 1706 and 1738, for example, the Ottawas implored the Iroquois to “take no part” in their quarrel with the Hurons.<sup>72</sup>

Their relationship with the Iroquois, furthermore, allowed the Hurons unprecedented access to the Iroquois' English allies, and, in turn, access to British goods. The Iroquois, who had joined the English colony of New York in the Covenant Chain, introduced the Hurons to their allies and mediated between the two peoples.

Cheanonvouzon admitted to Gov. Vaudreuil that the Mohawk messengers “have come on

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<sup>72</sup> “Les Outa8ais [Odawas] ont donné trois branches de Porcelaine aux cinq Nations Iroquoises pour les Inviter de ne prendre aucun party,” Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1738, COAM, C11A, vol. 69, 128v; Marest to Vaudreuil, 14 Aug. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:269.



the part of the English to invite the Hurons to Orange.”<sup>73</sup> According to rumors, in fact, Le Baron and Cheanonvouzon had been plotting since the late seventeenth century to defect from the French alliance altogether and move to Niagara, or some other location where they could trade openly with the British.<sup>74</sup> To that end, he had sent representatives to Albany along with Miami leaders to “see if goods be cheaper here than elsewhere.”<sup>75</sup> Having succeeded in doing so, the Miamis and Hurons apparently tried to return to Albany in 1705.<sup>76</sup> Twelve Huron and Miami representatives returned to Albany in 1708 in order to “Trade & Traffick” with the British.<sup>77</sup> In that year a French official complained that the Hurons “constantly pass through their [Iroquois] districts to take their beaver-skins to the English.”<sup>78</sup> Their relationship with the English not only gave the Hurons access to coveted goods like Caribbean rum and scarlet woolens, which the French could or would not supply, but it also enhanced the Hurons’ status in the region.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> “Speeches of the Outaouaes of Missilimakinak,” 27 Sept., 1703, *WHC*, 16:223.

<sup>74</sup> “Narrative of the most remarkable Occurrences in Canada,” 1695, *NYCD*, 9:619-20, 627; “Narrative of the most remarkable Occurrences in Canada,” 1697, in *ibid.*, 672; Jean Mermet à Cadillac, 19 avril 1702, *MDE*, 5 :219-22; Joseph Marest à Cadillac, 30 mai 1702, in *ibid.*, 227-28; Marest à Cadillac, 23 juillet 1702, in *ibid.*, 243; Paroles des Hurons, 14 July 1703, *COAM*, C11A, vol. 21, fol. 74-75v.

<sup>75</sup> Although Cheanonvouzon later denied his involvement in the plot, plenty of circumstantial evidence from both French and English sources indicate that he had indeed negotiated with the English in 1703 (“Conference of Lord Cornbury with the Indians,” 10 July 1702, *NYCD*, 4:979-81; Callière to the Minister, 4 Nov. 1702, *MPHSCR*, 33:158; “Conseil tenu dans le fort de Pontchartrain”, 29 aoust 1703, *MDE*, 5:297).

<sup>76</sup> The Commissioners of Indian Affairs at Albany reported that the French had dissuaded some unspecified Détroit natives from visiting Albany in 1705. Since the Ottawas and Senecas were currently on bad terms after an Ottawa attack in 1704, the would-be traders were probably the Miamis and Hurons. Moreover, Vaudreuil noted in the same year that the Hurons were considering moving to Seneca country and had communicated with them. Peter Wraxall, *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (New York: Benjamin Blom, [1915] 1968, 44-45; Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 May 1705, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 22, fol. 231v.

<sup>77</sup> Waxall identifies these, not as Hurons and Miamis, but as “far or Western Indians settled about Lake Erie or Tughsackrondie.” The following month, however, Cornbury clarified that these visitors were “Twigtwicks and Dionondadees,” or Miamis and Hurons. Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 56; “Lord Cornbury to Lords of Trade,” 20 Aug. 1708, *NYCD*, 5:65.

<sup>78</sup> Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:426, 431, 441, 450.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Haan. “The Covenant Chain : Iroquois Diplomacy on the Niagara Frontier, 1697-1730” (PhD. diss. Dept. of History, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1976).

The Hurons quickly situated themselves as intermediaries between their Iroquois and British allies and the peoples of the pays d'en haut. As had their middlemen status before the fall of Huronia, this commercial position conferred political power on the Hurons. Indeed in 1687 the Marquis de Denonville, the governor of New France, speculated that the Hurons wanted to make peace with the Iroquois and English because they hoped to become "master of the entire trade of the other Far Nations."<sup>80</sup>

### **III. "One Mind": The Hurons and Miamis**

The Iroquois alliance allowed the Hurons to operate without fear of serious reprisals from any regional rivals and to position themselves as commercial middlemen. Yet for the Hurons to act with the kind of autonomy and power they desired, Cheanonvouzon recognized that he would have to assert Huron independence from their closest ally and most determined rival in the region, the Ottawas. Constituted of four nations who had settlements throughout the region and allied to the other Anishinaabe peoples—the Potawatomis and Ojibwas—the Ottawas had lorded over Huron affairs since the Hurons first fled Huronia and took refuge at the Ottawa communities on Manitoulin Island and Michilimackinac. To revenge himself on the Ottawas and declare Huron autonomy from them, Cheanonvouzon relied on another alliance with a regional power, the Miamis. Adeptly reading the geopolitical situation at Détroit and marshalling his considerable diplomatic skills, the Huron leader orchestrated a conflict between the Miamis and Ottawas in 1706. In so doing, Cheanonvouzon, leader of a small and much-reduced band, used his diplomatic skills to shake the pays d'en haut.

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<sup>80</sup> Gov. Denonville to the Minister, 1687, *NYCD*, 9:325.

As the third chapter explores in greater detail, relations between the Hurons and Ottawas, two longtime allies, had deteriorated badly by 1701. At the 1701 peace talks with the Iroquois, for example, Cheanvouzon and the Ottawa leader Ontontagon, also known as Jean le Blanc, clashed. When Ontontagon claimed to speak for both the Ottawas and the Hurons, a “scandalized” Cheanonvouzon asked the Ottawa leader how he dared speak “for all the Nations, without having asked for the Hurons’ particular advice,” and demanded to know why Ontontagon was “meddling” in Huron affairs.<sup>81</sup> Ontontagon’s brazen pretensions to authority over the Hurons nettled Cheanonvouzon, who envisioned a future of Huron ascendancy. This event convinced him, if he was not already convinced, to strike against the Ottawas. In 1702, Father Jean Mermet, missionary to the Miamis, warned that Huron resentments against the Ottawas would “explode one day” very soon, and Gov. Vaudreuil confirmed that the Hurons were “only waiting for an opportunity to avenge themselves” on the Ottawas.<sup>82</sup>

Knowing that the Hurons could never take on the Ottawas by themselves, Cheanonvouzon reached out to the Miamis for help in striking the Ottawas. He apparently tried first with the Iroquois in 1702. Spreading an apparently spurious rumor that an Iroquois man had killed an Ottawa, he sought to reawaken the war which the two nations had so recently ended. When the Iroquois refused to participate and sharply reproached Cheanonvouzon for trying to “disrupt the land,” Cheanonvouzon turned

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<sup>81</sup> “Les Hurons repirent, dequoi te mêles-tu (237),” “ il n’y eut que Quarante-sols qui fut scandalisé de ce qu’il venoit d’ouïr pour toutes les Nations, sans avoir demandé l’avis particulier aux Hurons (258),” Bacqueville de Pothérie, *Histoire de l’Amérique*, 4:237, 256-59.

<sup>82</sup> “les resentments qu’il [Cheanonvouzon] doit faire esclater un jour contre les Outaoua.,” Mermet au Cadillac, 19 April 1702, *MDE*, 5:220; “ils n’attendent que l’occaision pour se venger,” Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 May 1705, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 22, fol. 231v.

instead to his close allies, the Miamis, for help in humbling the Ottawas and exerting Huron influence in 1706.<sup>83</sup> The Miamis provided the perfect partners, not only because they had quarreled with the Ottawas in previous years, but because the Huron and Miamis had already formed a close alliance in the previous decade. The Miamis, settled at the St. Joseph River in southwestern Michigan in the early 1700s but later moving into the Maumee and Wabash watersheds, consisted of around 2,000 in 1736.<sup>84</sup> While the Hurons did not share the same cultural bonds that they did with the Iroquois, Cheanouvouzon nonetheless crafted powerful personal and diplomatic ties to the Miamis.<sup>85</sup> As early as 1682 the Hurons, Miamis, and Kiskakon Ottawas concluded a defensive alliance, announcing that they had formed “one body and one spirit.”<sup>86</sup> When the Iroquois threatened the Miamis in 1695, Cadillac reminded the Hurons of this alliance and implored the Hurons to protect their long-time “friend and ally.”<sup>87</sup>

The decision of a group of Hurons, led by Le Baron and Cheanouvouzon, to move from Michilimackinac to the Miami settlement on the St. Joseph River in southeastern Lake Michigan in the early 1690s both testifies to the importance of these bonds and strengthened those same connections. Although a rival Huron leader, Kondiaronk, or Le Rat, accused these Hurons of moving to the Miami settlement in order to betray them to

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<sup>83</sup> “brouiller la terre et de vous souvenir de ce qui a esté convenu à Montréal,” Conseil tenu dans le fort du Détroit entre les Iroquois, Outaouas, Hurons, Nepissings et Mississaguez, in Margry, *Découvertes et Etablissements*, 275-77 at 276; “Paroles de Alleouoyé, Huron envoyé par les Outaouas à M. de Lamothe,” in *ibid.*, 368-71.

<sup>84</sup> Enumeration of the Indian Tribes connected with the Government of Canada, 1736, *NYCD*, 9:1057; Charles Callendar, “Miami,” in *HNAI*, 15:681-89; George Ironstack, “From the Ashes: One Story of the Village of Pinkwi Mihtohseeniaki” (M.A. thesis, Dept. of History, Miami University, 2006).

<sup>85</sup> According to Vaudreuil, the Miamis and the Weas, or Ouaténonis, formed “one and the same nation” (Vaudreuil to the Minister, 22 Oct. 1720, *WHC*, 16:394).

<sup>86</sup> “Paroles échangées entre Frontenac et les Outaouais, Hurons et Miamis,” 13 Aug. 1682, *NYCD*, 9:178-79, 181-82; “Mémoire sur le dominion français dans Canada,” 1706, in *ibid.*, 788.

<sup>87</sup> “Narrative of the most remarkable Occurrences in Canada. 1694, 1695,” *NYCD*, 9:604.

the Iroquois and then “promenade in their prairies,” Le Baron and Cheanonvouzon likely moved to the Miami settlement in order to collaborate more closely with the Miamis and Iroquois, and to escape the oppressive thumb of the Ottawas at Michilimackinac.<sup>88</sup> Accordingly, between three and six extended Huron households, or about half of the nation, settled with the Miamis.<sup>89</sup> These “Hurons of saint Joseph,” traveled with the Miamis to Montréal in the summer of 1701, and Cheanonvouzon even provided canoes for the Miamis’ voyage.<sup>90</sup> During the negotiations with the French and Iroquois Cheanonvouzon even spoke for the Miamis “with whom we make only one Body.” The Miami leader Chichikatalo agreed that their two nations constituted only “one body,” and added that they had the “same will as the Hurons”<sup>91</sup>

When Cheanonvouzon decided to accept Callère’s offer and move to Détroit, he sought to convince the Miamis to do so as well. Holding a council with the Miamis and the Hurons who remained at the settlement in October 1701, he extended an invitation from Cadillac to establish a village near the newly erected Fort Pontchartrain.<sup>92</sup> In doing so, he used evocative language to suggest the intimacy between the Miamis and Hurons. He suggested, for instance, that the Miamis and Hurons join “the two villages together” at Détroit, and repeated Cadillac’s promise that the Hurons and Miamis would “be one

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<sup>88</sup> “Narrative of the most remarkable Occurrences in Canada,” 10 septembre 1697, *NYCD*, 9:672, at 674; Pothérie, *Histoire de l’Amérique*, 2:353.

<sup>89</sup> Different sources offer different estimates on the size of the Huron defectors. “Narrative of the most remarkable Occurrences in Canada.” 15 Oct. 1697, *NYCD*, 9:672; “Paroles de quatre Hurons,” 16 Feb. 1702, *MDE*, 5:266 ; Perrot, *Mémoire*, 146. For a fuller discussion of the size and role of the household or “cabane” in Huron political life, see Chapter Four, *infra*.

<sup>90</sup> Pothérie, *Histoire de l’Amérique*, 4:226, 236.

<sup>91</sup> “Miamis avec qui nous ne faisons qu’un Corps”; “Chichikatalo dit, quoique souvent les hommes étoient de sentimens contraires, nous n’avons cependant qu’une même volonté avec les Hurons qui ne font qu’un Corps avec nous,” *ibid.*, 213-14.

<sup>92</sup> “Paroles de quatre Hurons,” 17 Feb. 1702, *MDE*, 5:266-68; “Paroles de Michipichy,” in *ibid.*, 271-73.

body” with each other and with the French.<sup>93</sup> Despite Jesuit opposition, Cheanonvouzon convinced all of his people and some of the Miamis to settle at Détroit. By autumn of 1702, the Miami headman, Miamensa, and several Miami families lived with the Hurons in a fort constructed less than half a mile from the French fort.<sup>94</sup> This cohabitation was remarkable. Not even the culturally similar Anishinaabeg peoples—the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis—shared villages at Détroit.<sup>95</sup>

Even among the Hurons, Cheanonvouzon appeared to have especially close ties to the Miamis. Cadillac, in 1702, and the Ottawas, in 1706, had enlisted the man to carry messages to the Miamis, and the Miamis trusted him to carry their case to Iroquois and other groups. When the Senecas failed to return Miami captives as they had promised Callière, for example, Cheanonvouzon chastised the Iroquois nation.<sup>96</sup> Even more tellingly, one of Cheanonvouzon’s daughters married a Miami man. Such intermarriage is perhaps the greatest symbol of Huron and Miami intimacy.<sup>97</sup> Although the Hurons often married the culturally and linguistically similar Iroquois, they rarely married Algonquian-speaking peoples, perhaps because they considered them culturally inferior. That they would marry the Miamis, then, suggests an unusually powerful alliance.

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<sup>93</sup> Cheanonvouzon apparently held at least two such councils, one in the autumn of 1701 and another in February of 1702. “Paroles de quatre hommes,” 17 Feb. 1702, *MDE*, 5:266-67; “Paroles de Michipichy,” in *ibid.*, 271.

<sup>94</sup> “Conseil tenu avec les Miamis dans le fort du Détroit,” 27 Jun. 1702, in *ibid.*, 282; Cadillac au ministre, 31 Aug. 1703, *MPHSCR*, 33:442; Aigremont au ministre, 11 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 442.

<sup>95</sup> [Anon.], “Memoir on the Indians between Lake Erie and the Mississippi,” 1718, *WHC*, 16:268-70.

<sup>96</sup> “Conseil tenu dans le fort de Détroit par les Iroquois, Outaouais, Hurons, Népissingues et Mississagues,” 4 May 1702, in Margry, *Découvertes*, 5:279.

<sup>97</sup> Cornbury reported that “Tehonwahonkarachqua, a Twichtwigh [Miami] son in law of y<sup>c</sup> Principal Scahim of Deonondade [the Huron village] spoke first,” apparently referring to Cheanonvouzon. “Conference of Lord Cornbury with the Indians,” 20 July 1702, *NYCD*, 4:979. Another, much later, example, indicates that the Miamis and Hurons might have intermarried frequently. Pierre sens8anne, the son of a latter-day Sasteretsy, married a Miami woman. Toupin, “Introduction,” *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 41. Yet unions between Miami and Huron parents do not regularly appear in the baptismal registers of Détroit.

Cheanonvouzon's daughter and his Miami son-in-law had symbolically become one flesh, just as their nations had.

By 1702, the Miamis and Hurons had forged a powerful alliance.<sup>98</sup> At the peace talks in Montréal in 1701 the Hurons claimed that the two nations had “formed only one body,” and the Miamis insisted that they had the “same will as the Hurons.”<sup>99</sup> The following year a Huron leader told the governor of New York that the “greatest part of y<sup>e</sup> Twichtwighs [Miamis] are removed and come to live” at Détroit and that the “said two nations are united.”<sup>100</sup> Cheanonvouzon likewise told Vaudreuil that the two nations were “united together” and shared a common “head by the union that is between us.”<sup>101</sup> This relationship continued long after Cheanonvouzon's death in 1707. In 1713, the Miamis sent the Hurons to talk to Gov. Vaudreuil in their name.<sup>102</sup> The Miamis participated in the anti-French movement led by Huron dissident Nicolas Oronotny in the 1740s (see Chapter Four).<sup>103</sup> In 1759, the Hurons and Miamis gave a joint response at a conference with British representatives, the Delawares, and the Shawnees, suggesting that they maintained their close connection.<sup>104</sup> Twenty years later a Huron leader claimed to speak in the “name of the Wyandotts [Hurons] & Miamis.”<sup>105</sup> To be sure the relationship was not without its problems—the Miamis resented the Hurons' reconciliation with their

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<sup>98</sup> Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le pays d'e haut, 1660-1715* (Québec: Septentrion and Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), 223.

<sup>99</sup> Les “Miamis avec qui nous [the Hurons] ne faisons qu'un Corps,” “nous [les Miamis] n'avons cependant qu'une même volonté avec les Hurons” (Pothérie, *Histoire de l'Amérique*, 4:213-14).

<sup>100</sup> “Conference of Lord Cornbury with the Indians,” 20 July 1702, *NYCD*, 4:979.

<sup>101</sup> “nos freres les miamis que nous avons Joint avec Nous et nous n'avons fait qu'une Seulle teste par L'union qui est entre nous,” “Paroles des Hurons,” 14 July, 1703, in *COAM*, C11A, vol. 21, 74v.

<sup>102</sup> Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 15 Nov. 1713, *WHC*, 16:298.

<sup>103</sup> Robert Toupin, “Introduction,” *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 38.

<sup>104</sup> Minutes of a Conference Held by Capt. George Croghan, 7 Aug. 1759, Sylvester Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds., *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, Northwestern Pennsylvania Historical Series, (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1942-1943), Series 21655, 74.

<sup>105</sup> “Council held at Detroit,” June 1779, *MPHSCR*, 9:449.

mutual foes, the Flatheads, in 1729, for example.<sup>106</sup> Yet they nonetheless cooperated closely during the eighteenth century.

When Cheanonvouzon began looking for a partner to help humble the Ottawas in 1706, he settled on the Miamis. Not only were the Miamis closely aligned with the Hurons, they, too, had recently had trouble with the Ottawas and the Ottawas' close allies. In early 1704 some Weas, a group allied to the Miamis, attacked Détroit and killed two Hurons, a Potawatomi and an Ottawa man.<sup>107</sup> Sometime around then, they also attacked the Mississaugas, an Ojibwa group closely allied with the Ottawas.<sup>108</sup> To prevent war between the Ottawas and Miamis and Weas, the French sought to mediate the disputes. Cadillac demanded that the Weas come to Détroit to atone and they apparently did so before August 1704, meeting with the acting commandant, Tonty.<sup>109</sup> Noting that the attacks had been a "mistake," Vaudreuil encouraged the offended parties to put the unpleasantness behind them. In so doing, the governor concluded, the French had successfully "set matters right."<sup>110</sup>

Yet Cheanonvouzon, closely allied with the Miamis and familiar with the Ottawas, knew that the groups had not forgotten their anger as easily as the French imagined. The Huron leader may well have attended an 8 March conference in which the

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<sup>106</sup> Beauharnois au ministre, 21 July 1729, CAOM, C11A, vol. 51, fol. 127.

<sup>107</sup> Aigremont identified these attackers not as Weas, but as Miamis. He also notes that there had already been some conflict between the Ottawas and Miamis. Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:, 431). Vaudreuil noted that the Miamis had twice attacked the Miamis. "Paroles des Outaouais..." 20 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 320; "Conference," 21 June 1704, in *Livingston Indian Records*, 197-98. See also "Paroles des Hurons, Outaouais et Miamis de Détroit aux Tsonnontouans," 30-31 July 1704, in *ibid.*, 190-91; "Paroles de Vaudreuil aux Indiens (Hurons) de Détroit," 7 Aug. 1704, in *ibid.*, 193; Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 Sept. 1704, *NYCD*, 9:760; Cadillac au ministre, 14 Nov. 1704, *MPHSCR*, 33:232-3.

<sup>108</sup> "Paroles adressées à Vaudreuil par des chefs outaouais de Michillimakinac," 1 Aug. 1706, in *ibid.*, 261.

<sup>109</sup> Cadillac au ministre, 19 Nov. 1704, in *ibid.*, 234; "Paroles de Vaudreuil aux Indiens," 7 Aug. 1704, in *ibid.*, 193; Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 431.

<sup>110</sup> "Paroles de Vaudreuil aux Indiens," 7 Aug. 1704, in *ibid.*, 193.



Kamiga Ottawa leader Mekoua, known to the French as Le Pesant, or “the Heavy One,” railed against both the French and the Miamis. Meeting with Ensign Étienne Bourgmont, the acting commandant in Cadillac’s absence, Mekoua noted that the Weas had “killed us” and that the Miamis had attacked “our Comrades the Missisaguez,” but that the French had done nothing to resolve the solution and had implored the Ottawas not to retaliate against the Miamis. Instead Onontio had only put him off, telling him “to wait, and that he Wished to be master of That affair.”<sup>111</sup> Later that month, Mekoua told Bourgmont that the “Missaguéz Are angry...that the Miamis killed two of their men last year, and want...to go kill them.”<sup>112</sup> The Mississaugas, in fact, nearly did so and only relented when the Ottawas and Hurons convinced them to do so.<sup>113</sup> Frustrated and embarrassed, Mekoua worried that, if the Ottawas allowed any more murders to go unrevenged, his neighbors would “no longer esteem us, and will look on us as women.”<sup>114</sup> The Ottawas, therefore, were primed for confrontation. Ottawa informants told the sieur d’Aigremont in 1708, the Miamis had never made reparation for their attacks and directly connected later violence to these on-going disputes.<sup>115</sup>

Reading the conditions adeptly, Cheanonvouzon saw his chance to finally revenge himself on the Ottawas. In such combustible conditions, he only needed to provide a spark to ignite the war he wanted with the Ottawas. Those Ottawas unwittingly gave him

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<sup>111</sup> “Depuis que nous sommes dans le detroit, Les ouyat[anons] nous ont tué,” “ Le printêms Passé les Miamis ont tué nos Camarades [les] Missisaguéz,” “ il nous a toujours du dattendre, et qu’il Vouloir estre maistre de Cette affaire la,” “Conseil tenu au fort Pontchartrain le 8. Mars 1706,” CAOM, F3, vol. 2, 320.

<sup>112</sup> “les Missaguéz Sont faschéz tous de bon de ce que les Miamis leur ont tué deux hommes Lannée passée, et Veulent ... aller tuer,” “ Conseil tenu a Fort Pontchartrain Ce 24 mars 1706,” CAOM, F3, vol. 2, fol. 322.

<sup>113</sup> “Conseil Tenu avéz les Missisaguéz par Monsieur de Bourmont...ce 26 mars 1706,” in *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> “on ne nous Estimeroit plus, et on nous regardevoit comme des femmes,” “Conseil tenu au fort Pontchartrain le 8. Mars 1706,” in *ibid.*, 320.

<sup>115</sup> Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, in *MSPHCR* 33:431.

an opportunity to do just that in 1706. Sometime in late spring or early summer, the Ottawas had organized a raid against the Dakotas and, at the Sieur de Bourgmont's urging, invited the Miamis to come along. Because of his close ties to the Miamis, the Ottawas sent Cheanonvouzon to both the Miamis at Détroit as well as the Weas on the Wabash to deliver the invitation. When he arrived, however, he apparently told the Miamis and Weas that the raid on the Dakotas was merely a ruse. The Ottawas, Cheanonvouzon warned them, planned to betray the Miamis.<sup>116</sup> He suggested instead that they wait until the Ottawas warriors left and then attack the undefended Ottawa fort. The Miamis agreed. All the parts were in place.<sup>117</sup>

Unfortunately for Cheanonvouzon and his Miami allies, however, secrets were hard to keep at Détroit. According to later Ottawa testimony, a Potawatomi who lived with the Miamis told the Ottawas about the plot. The Ottawas, who had already left Détroit for the Dakota territory, stopped to confer. Two Ottawa brothers, Miskoaky and Ontantagan, later told Vaudreuil that they had urged the warriors not to attack the Miamis until they had consulted with the French. Mekoua, still angry with the Miamis because of the uncovered deaths, however, prevailed over them and the party returned to Détroit to

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<sup>116</sup> The Ottawas who spoke with Aigremont suggested that Ensign Bourgmont had encouraged Cheanonvouzon to act as he had, although Miscouaky's and Ontantagan's accounts mention nothing about this. In fact, this narrative generally suggests that Bourgmont had a larger role in the actions than the other two. The Ottawas to whom Aigremont spoke interpreted Bourgmont's apparently gruff attitude toward them as indication of hostility and inferred that he had cooperated with Cheanonvouzon to precipitate the conflict. The other accounts scarcely mention Bourgmont and portray him more as inexperienced than scheming (ibid., 432-33). Cadillac, seeing conspiracy everywhere alleged that Vaudreuil had ordered Jean le Blanc to carry out the attack. "Words of the Outavois on the 18th of June with the Answers with Lamothe Cadillac's marginal comments," *MPHSCR*, 33:319-22; [Ruelle d'Auteuil?] "Mémoire de l'état présent en Canada," 1712, CAOM, C11A vol. 32, fol. 270.

<sup>117</sup> "Paroles de Miscouaky [Ottawa]...à Monsieur le marquis de Vaudreuil," 26. Sept. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:288; Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 Nov. 1706, in ibid., 307; Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, in ibid., 431-33; "Paroles des Outaouais," 18 June 1707, in ibid., 320.

attack the Miamis preemptively sometime in early June.<sup>118</sup> Just as the group returned to the fort, they encountered a delegation of Miami leaders walking to the French fort for a feast, perhaps in preparation for the attack. The Ottawa column split, allowing the Miamis to pass between them. Then Mekoua gave a signal and the warriors, after an initial hesitation, attacked the Miami leaders, killing or capturing all but one. The warriors then rushed to attack the Miami encampment, situated to the north of Fort Pontchartrain. Luckily for the Miamis, they saw the Ottawas advancing and scurried into the safety of the French fort. Ontotagan struggled to restrain the warriors, urging them to douse the arrows they had already lit to set the French fort on fire, but could not keep them from killing a French soldier and a Recollect priest, who, by unlucky circumstance, were outside of the fort.<sup>119</sup>

Cheanonvouzon had been discovered before he could execute his plan, but he nonetheless succeeded in kindling a war between his allies, the Miamis, and his enemies, the Ottawas. Nor was he content to stop there. Following the initial attack, the headman frequently visited the Ottawas, who were apparently ignorant of Cheanonvouzon's involvement in the contemplated attack. He convinced the Ottawas to attend a feast with the Miamis in order to reconcile their differences. On the appointed day, the Hurons laid

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<sup>118</sup> The timing of this conflict is difficult to reconstruct. The Ottawas appear to have left Detroit by 2 July, when the Miamis, Hurons, and Weas held a council with Ensign Bourgmont to inform him that they planned to attack the Ottawas at Michilimackinac, where they had taken refuge. "Conseil Tenu au fort Pontchartrain le deux<sup>e</sup> juillet 1706," CAOM, F3, vol. 2, fols. 232v-25. Bourgmont also indicated that the siege had lasted two months, meaning that the initial attack must have happened two months before the 2 July, sometime in early May. "Résumé d'une lettre de Bourgmont avec commentaries," 27 Aug. 1706, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 24, fol. 207v. Vaudreuil knew about the attack before 27 June, when he mentioned it in a letter to Cadillac, and this would have been long enough for the information to have traveled from Detroit to Montréal. Cadillac's to Vaudreuil, 27 Aug. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:272). Father Marest reported that the Ottawas had returned to Michilimackinac from Detroit in early August (Father Marest to the Marquis de Vaudreuil, 14 Aug. 1706, in *ibid.*, 263-69.

<sup>119</sup> "Paroles de Miscoaky...", 26 Sept. 1706, in *ibid.*, 288-90; "Paroles des Outaouais...", 18 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 320; Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 433-36.

out a spread of maize on a large cloth in a clearing and invited the Ottawas to partake. The Ottawas, however, became suspicious when they saw movement in the trees surrounding the field. When they investigated, the Ottawas found Miami warriors ready to spring on the Ottawas as soon as they entered the clearing. The Ottawas rushed back to their village, where they found Miami warriors preparing to attack and destroy the undefended fort. Reaching the safety of their palisades, the Ottawas immediately fired upon the Miamis. Huron warriors soon joined the Miamis besieging the Ottawa fort. They reportedly insulted the Ottawa warriors, calling them “women” and cowards. Finally, the Hurons could revenge themselves on the Ottawas, and even claim that they were acting in French interest while doing so.<sup>120</sup>

Even then, however, Cheanonvouzon continued to exacerbate matters. Earlier that summer, some Ottawa warriors had joined a Huron party headed to attack the Catawbas of the Carolina Piedmont. The group returned just as hostilities broke out between the Ottawas and Miamis, and the Hurons detained their erstwhile comrades in the Huron fort. In a clear sign of the Hurons’ enmity, they tortured the Ottawa warriors and killed at least one. Now, Cheanonvouzon offered to return the remaining Ottawa warriors to their people in exchange for some Miami captives. The Hurons and Ottawas gathered outside of the French fort to exchange prisoners. Just as Cheanonvouzon offered his hand to Ontontagan, however, some Huron sharpshooters shot at the Ottawa leader. Barely escaping with his life, Ontontagan seemed truly hurt by the Huron’s betrayal. After “having been our friends so long,” he told Vaudreuil, the Hurons “have

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<sup>120</sup> “Paroles de Miscouaky...,” 26 Sept. 1706, in *ibid.*, 290-92.

basely betrayed us.”<sup>121</sup> After two months, Ontontagan and the Ottawas decided that they were no longer safe at Détroit, escaped the post and joined the Michillimackinac Ottawas in late July or early August.<sup>122</sup>

Following the Ottawas’ departure, Bourgmont struggled to keep the Miamis and Hurons from immediately counterattacking the Ottawas at Michilimackinac. Meeting with the officer in early July, the Hurons, speaking for the others, bluntly declared “We Came to tell you that we Want to Avenge to Strike that outaoüas have made in this land” and that they would “not listen to you.” They only relented when Bourgmont pointed out that the natives had little ammunition and that, if they attacked Michilimackinac, they ran the risk of killing the French people at the fort.<sup>123</sup> The next month the Hurons repeated to Cadillac, who had finally returned to Détroit, that they would “never hear a word of any arrangement with the [Ottawas]; on this point we do not listen to the Governor, nor to you either,” hardly the words of obedient children. Promising that he would personally lead the campaign to annihilate the Ottawas if they failed to make amends for their attack, Cadillac barely managed to restrain them.<sup>124</sup> The commandant also sent a cadet, Pierre Boucher de Boucherville, Cheanonvouzon, and the Détroit Miami leader, Pakoumakouïá, to allay the Miamis and Weas during the winter of 1706-1707.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> “Paroles des Outaouais,” 18 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 33:323

<sup>122</sup> “Résumé d’une lettre de Bourgmont avec commentaries,” 27 Aug. 1706, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 24, fol. 207v; “Paroles de Miscouaky,” 26 Sept. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:292-93; Marest à Vaudreuil, 14 Aug. 1706, in *ibid.*, 265.

<sup>123</sup> “Nous te Venons dire que nous Voulons Vanger le Coup que les outaoüas ont fait sur la terre, ce Collier parle pour toutes les trois Nations,” “Nous te Prions de ne nous plus estime car nous ne t’écouterons point,” “Conseil Tenu au fort Pontchartrain le deux<sup>e</sup> juillet 1706,” CAOM, F3, vol. 2, fols. 232v-25.

<sup>124</sup> Cadillac à Vaudreuil, 27 Aug. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:280-83.

<sup>125</sup> Cadillac also invited the Miamis to settle at the Maumee River in late November 1706. “État des dépenses faites par Lamothe Cadillac,” 29 Sept. 1706, in *ibid.*, 296-97; “Paroles de M. de Lamothe que M. de Boucherville fera dire aux Miamis en general,” 24 Nov. 1706, COAM, C11A, vol. 24, fols. 365-66.

Although Cadillac succeeded in temporarily restraining the Hurons and Miamis, the Ottawas' behavior put the French in a delicate situation. They could not allow the death of French people, and especially a priest, to go unanswered. Such would be an invitation to further attacks and would ruin French credibility in the region. They also had to find a solution that would satisfy the Miamis and Hurons.<sup>126</sup> Those groups, after all, claimed to be defending themselves and the French by fighting the Ottawas. More threatening, the Hurons and Miamis had developed close bonds to the Iroquois and, if the French failed to punish the Ottawas, those groups might ally with the Five Nations.<sup>127</sup> If they feared alienating the Hurons, the French were terrified of estranging the Ottawas. The Ottawa nation was not only the largest and most powerful in the region but also claimed close relations to the other Anishinabeeg groups, the Ojibwas and Potawatomis, as well as a host of smaller Algonquian groups. A wrong move could have triggered a regional war between a Huron, Miami, and Iroquois bloc, on the one hand, and the Ottawas and their allies on the other.<sup>128</sup>

Taking all of these concerns into consideration, Cadillac charted a cautious strategy.<sup>129</sup> To allay the Hurons and Miamis, who still wanted revenge for what had happened, he would demand that the Ottawas turn over one scapegoat, whom would bear

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<sup>126</sup> Cadillac mused that "if I make peace with the one set, I shall very likely have war with the other," but nonetheless believed he could resolve the conflict. Cadillac à Vaudreuil, 27 Aug. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:281.

<sup>127</sup> The Iroquois seemed to confirm these affairs when they asked Vaudreuil to allow them to punish the Ottawas. "Paroles des Sonnotuans," 4th Sept. 1706, in *ibid.*, 286 ; Vaudreuil to the Minister, 4 Nov. 1706, *NYCD*, 9 :780-81, and *MPHSCR*, 33:313; Vaudreuil to the Minister, 24 July 1707, in *ibid.*, 330.

<sup>128</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 Nov. 1706, in *ibid.*, 305-7.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.; Vaudreuil's marginal comments on *ibid.*, 281; Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 Nov. 1706, in *ibid.*, 307; "Paroles des Outaouais...", 20 June, 1707, in *ibid.*, 320-21; "Paroles des Outaouais...", 21 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 324-25 ; Vaudreuil au ministre, 24 July 1707, in *ibid.*, 329-30.

the responsibility for the entire affair, for execution.<sup>130</sup> To avoid alienating the Ottawas, he demanded that they turn over Mekoua, then promptly let the Ottawa man escape.<sup>131</sup> Far from placating all the parties, however, Cadillac's design only fanned the fire. The Miamis, Hurons, and Iroquois, apparently infuriated by the commandant's indulgence toward Mekoua, demanded justice, and even contemplated assassinating Cadillac himself. Some Miamis took justice into their own hands in April, attacking Détroit and killing some French people, and, intriguingly, some cows, which they may have seen as symbols of the French presence. Another group attacked the Ottawas wintering at Saginaw. When the Miamis failed to make amends, Cadillac organized an abortive and mismanaged campaign against the offenders.<sup>132</sup> Cadillac's gambit was not a subtle use of "creative misunderstandings" but an ill-informed and disastrously managed attempt to mediate between people who knew their business much better than the commandant or governor.<sup>133</sup> Ultimately, the Hurons, Miamis, and Ottawas resolved their problems themselves, although animosities lingered long after 1706. Animosity still lingered

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<sup>130</sup> "Paroles de Lamothe Cadillac aux chefs outaouais," 6 Aug. 1707, in *ibid.*, 331-36 ;

<sup>131</sup> Cadillac to the Minister, 10, 15 Sept., 1 Oct., 1707, *MPHSCR*, 33:337-38; Cadillac à Vaudreuil, 1 Oct. 1707, in *ibid.*, 350-53; Vaudreuil's observations on *ibid.*, 354-59; Vaudreuil et Raudot to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 403-4; "Paroles des Outaouais," 24 Sept. 1707, in *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 26, fols. 69-74 at 73v.

<sup>132</sup> Joseph Marest, no friend of Cadillac, traced the Miamis' violence to Cadillac's pardon of Mekoua (Marest to Vaudreuil, 8 July 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:384-85; Vaudreuil to the Minister, 5 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 395-96 ; Vaudreuil et Raudot to the Minsiter, 14 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 403-7; Aigremont to the Minsiter, 14 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 436).

<sup>133</sup> Richard White concedes that the events around Détroit in 1706 poorly fit his model of mutual accommodation and challenge his contention that Great Lakes natives formed a "common identity." He explains this contradiction by arguing that Vaudreuil, distracted by war with Britain, had failed to perform his fatherly duty. Without Onontio's careful oversight, natives like Cheanonvouzon stepped into the newly created "power vacuum" and sought to reshape the pays d'en haut to his own liking. Yet Onontio and his deputies had tried repeatedly to mediate these disputes with limited success. Vaudreuil, Tonty, and Cadillac repeated sought to cover deaths and smooth paths and in fact thought that they had done so. Violence broke out in 1706, then, not because Onontio had failed to provide mediation and guidance, but because Cheanonvouzon and other natives rejected the governor's role as mediator and father (White, *Middle Ground*, 152).

between the groups in 1718, when Alphonse de Tonty, now commandant of the post, suggested that Hurons were once again trying to trigger a war between the Miamis and Ottawas.<sup>134</sup>

The chroniclers of the 1706 conflict locate Cheanonvouzon squarely at the root of the crisis. Granted, these accounts favor the Ottawas' versions of these events. Since the French officer commanding at the time left no official report of the events, we only have the testimony of the Ottawa brothers Ontontagan and Miscouaky to Vaudreuil in 1706 and 1707 and the statements of five Ottawas to the sieur d'Aigremont in 1708.<sup>135</sup> These Ottawas, having just killed a Recollect priest, had reason to deflect the blame and therefore may have overemphasized Cheanonvouzon's role in the events. Still, their accusations ring true. All the accounts agree upon Cheanonvouzon's involvement in the affair and offer a consistent version of events. Vaudreuil noted, moreover, that a French person who had been at Détroit during the conflict had corroborated the Ottawas' story.<sup>136</sup> No one, not even Cadillac, bothered to deny Cheanonvouzon's involvement in the affair, either. The allegations of Cheanonvouzon also make sense, given what we know about the man. Cheanonvouzon, after all, had been openly denouncing the Ottawas since he arrived at Détroit, and he had close ties with the Miamis. Nor would this be the first time that he had used such trickery and diplomacy to advance his group's interest.

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<sup>134</sup> Dubusson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:551 ; Vaudreuil au ministre, 30 Oct. 1718, in *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 39, fol. 150v.

<sup>135</sup> "Paroles de Miscouaky [Ottawa]...à Monsieur le marquis de Vaureuil," 26. Sept. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:288-94; "Paroles des Outaouais," 18, 21, 23 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 319-27 ; Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 31-36.

<sup>136</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minsiter, 4 Nov. 1706, in *ibid.*, 307.



Cheanonvouzon, then, finally had his revenge on the Ottawas, thanks in part to Mekoua's rashness. He had not only successfully arranged a conflict between the Miamis and Ottawas, but had, by Ontantagan's count, betrayed the Ottawas four times. Cheanonvouzon, to be sure, had not "destroyed" the Ottawas—far from it.<sup>137</sup> Although the group lost between twenty-six and thirty warriors, they soon returned to Détroit, albeit on the opposite shore of the river.<sup>138</sup> But he had revenged himself upon the Ottawas. According to Father Marest, this had been his goal all along. Moreover, Cheanonvouzon apparently succeeded in lowering the Ottawas' standing with the French, while elevating the Hurons' status. In the peace talks of 1707, Cadillac praised the Hurons for their support and defense of the French during the previous year. Although the commandant had heretofore counted the Ottawas as his "elder son," that group's rebellion had cost them his esteem. Henceforth, the Hurons would be Cadillac's "elder brother in my heart."<sup>139</sup> The leader of a small, embattled group had used diplomacy and trickery to reshape the political landscape at Détroit.

#### **IV. "too close a connection": The Southern Alliance**

Both his connections with the Miamis and the Iroquois had allowed Cheanonvouzon to assert Huron autonomy in the region. In order consolidate their independence from the Ottawas, he sought to create a larger alliance that incorporated

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<sup>137</sup> Perrot, 145; Vaudreuil to the Minsiter, 24 July 1707, *MPHSCR*, 33:328.

<sup>138</sup> "Paroles de Miscouaky...", 26 Sept. 1706, in *ibid.*, 293; "Paroles des Outaouais," 18 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 33:323; "Paroles des Outaouais...", 24 Sept. 1707, in *ibid.*, 347; The Ottawas asked for their old lands back, but these had been granted to French colonists. Cadillac therefore granted them land across the river. Map of Détroit, 1711, reprinted in Brian L. Dunningan, *Frontier Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit, 1701-1838*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001).

<sup>139</sup> "Paroles de Lamothe Cadillac aux chefs outaouais," 6 Aug. 1707, *MPHSCR*, 33:334.

both the Miamis and Iroquois. Although he had not yet been born when the Hurons abandoned Huronia in 1649, Cheanonvouzon surely had been raised on stories of the ancient glory of the northern Iroquoian peoples. Those people had been powerful in part because they served as commercial mediators between the Iroquois nations and the Algonquin-speaking people to the west and north.<sup>140</sup> Well aware of the connections between commercial clout and political influence, Cheanonvouzon envisioned a new world in which the Hurons would serve as mediators in an expansive alliance which included both his Iroquois and Miami allies. By mediating interactions between their two allies and by channeling goods from the Iroquois and British to the Miamis, the Hurons positioned themselves at the center of an important strategic and commercial network. Observing these movements, Gov. Vaudreuil publically fretted that “everything was to be feared from too close a connection between the Miamis and Hurons and the Iroquois.”<sup>141</sup> Since this alliance involved the Miamis and Iroquois living to the south of Détroit, I refer to this coalition as the “southern alliance,” in comparison to the northward-facing alliance of Anishinaabe people addressed in the following chapter.

Cheanonvouzon seems to have conceived of this southern alliance before he moved to Détroit in 1701. He laid out his scheme to the Miamis in early 1702, when he visited the St. Joseph settlement purportedly to invite the Miamis to settle at Détroit.<sup>142</sup> According to Jean Mermet, the Jesuit missionary stationed at Miamis’ St. Joseph

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<sup>140</sup> Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic*, 824-35.

<sup>141</sup> “il y avoit tous a Craindre d’une trop grande liason du miamis et du hurons avec L’Iroquois.” Vaudreuil au ministre, 24 July 1707, CAOM, C11A, vol. 26, fol. 58v.

<sup>142</sup> “Paroles de quatre Hurons, députés à M. de Lamothe par Michipichy, leur grand chef, que les François ont nommé Quarante-Sols.” 17 Feb., 1702, *MDE*, 5 :266-8; “Paroles de Michipichy,” 27 Feb., *ibid.*, 5:271-3; Jean Mermet à Cadillac, 19 avril 1702, *ibid.*, 219-22.

settlement, Cheanonvouzon suggested that the Hurons and Miamis move to a location sixty to ninety miles away from the new post in the Maumee River watershed, in hopes of concluding an “alliance...with the English,” the foes of New France. The Iroquois, after all, purportedly planned to establish a trading post on the Maumee River, and Cheanonvouzon wanted move to the region so he could have “his choice of the English or the French for trade.” Mermet also spoke of the Huron’s “resentments” against the Ottawas and feared they would soon lead to violence between the nations.<sup>143</sup> From Michilimackinac, Father Joseph Marest repeated his brother Mermet’s warnings. He understood that Iroquois, the Mahicans (Loups), and the Détroit Hurons, particularly Cheanonvouzon, planned “to establish at Ouabache [Wabash] an English post.”<sup>144</sup>

As articulated to the Miamis, Cheanonvouzon’s plan to move to the Maumee portage contained the four crucial elements of Cheanonvouzon’s plan for the southern alliance. First he would use his connections to the Iroquois to facilitate a closer relationship between his people and the English and Dutch traders settled at Albany, in the colony of New York. Having done so, he would then implicate the Miamis into this alliance and convince them to take their furs to Albany instead of Montréal. To facilitate the trade between the Hurons, Miamis, Iroquois, and British, he would convince the Miamis to move with the Hurons to some place far from French supervision and closer to the English, where they could trade with either the French or English as they saw fit. Finally, and emphatically, the plot excluded the Ottawas from this arrangement, and sought to shut them out from this commercial network altogether. The Ottawas were

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<sup>143</sup> “l’alliance qu’il médite avec l’Anglois,” “Quarante-Sols aura la choix des Anglois ou des Français pour la traite,” Mermet à Cadillac, 19 April 1702, in *ibid.*, 220.

<sup>144</sup> Joseph Marest à Cadillac, 30 May 1702, in *ibid.*, 227-28.

conspicuously absent at this meeting, as they were from subsequent meetings between the Hurons and Miamis.

Although some Miamis opposed the plan and leaked it to Mermet, others apparently supported his proposal.<sup>145</sup> Accordingly, joint Miami-Huron delegations made two critical embassies in the spring of 1702, one to the Seneca village of Sonnontuan and the other to the English entrepôt of Albany, where they met with the governor of New York. First a delegation of twenty-four Miamis and Hurons on their way to the trading fair in Montréal visited the Seneca village of Sonnontuan in the spring. Noting that the two nations had now “conclud<sup>d</sup> a firm Peace”—referring to the Great Peace of 1701—the delegates invited the Senecas to come to Détroit, where both nations now lived, to exchange captives as per the terms of the Great Peace.<sup>146</sup> The delegates hoped thereby to finalize the emerging alliance between them and the Senecas as well as “all y<sup>e</sup> five nations...as also y<sup>e</sup> Governour of New York.” But they also sought to ensure that this alliance excluded their Ottawa rivals. They warned the Senecas that although the Ottawas had made peace in 1701, the Senecas must not “trust too much to y<sup>e</sup> Dowaganhaes [the Ottawas and probably other Anishinaabe peoples] for they are a brutish People.” Moreover, they asked them not to blame the Hurons and Miamis if “any of your men happen to be killed” by the Ottawas. The implication here was clear: the untrustworthy Ottawas might very well break the terms of the Great Peace.

Cheanonvouzon therefore sought to consolidate the ties between the Miamis, Hurons, and

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<sup>145</sup> Father Marest prematurely pronounced that this intervention had “caused his design to fail” (Marest à Cadillac, 23 July 1702, in *ibid.*, 243).

<sup>146</sup> The Iroquois satisfied this request in May. “Conference of Lord Cornbury with the Indians,” 20 July 1702, *NYCD*, 4: 989; “Conseil tenu dans le fort du Détroit entre les Iroquois, Outaouas, Hurons, Nepissings et Mississaguez,” 4 May 1702, *MDE*, 5:275-80.

Iroquois, while also sowing doubt and distrust between the Iroquois and the Ottawas.<sup>147</sup> Symbolizing this tripartite union, a joint party of Miamis, Iroquois, and Hurons left to attack the Dakotas.<sup>148</sup>

Shortly after the Miamis and Hurons met with the Senecas, Cheanonvouzon and the Miamis sent five delegates to Albany in the summer of 1702. Here, they met with Lord Cornbury. The delegates told Cornbury that the “Sachims” of the Détroit Hurons and Miamis had sent them to Albany to trade and “to see if goods be cheaper here than elsewhere.” For “where we find goods cheapest,” they promised, “thither we will bend our course.” Ecstatic about the prospect of wooing important allies from the French rivals, Lord Cornbury, the governor of New York, assured his guests that “y<sup>e</sup> Goods are farr cheaper here than at Canada.” The Hurons and Miamis were, of course, welcome to visit Albany whenever they liked, but Cornbury could more easily supply them if “you would come and live nearer us,” away from French intervention. Then, the governor assured them, they would have little need to go to Montréal. The governor finally presented them a wampum belt which showed the Hurons, Iroquois, and governor of New York linked hand-in-hand.<sup>149</sup> The Hurons carefully curated this belt for at least another fifty years, when they presented it to British officials.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Indeed earlier that year “Huron chiefs,” presumably including Cheanonvouzon, had floated rumors that the Iroquois had killed an Ottawa man in an apparent attempt to spark conflict between the Iroquois and Ottawas. *Ibid.*, 275-77 at 276; “Paroles de Alleouoyé, Huron envoyé par les Outaouas à M. de Lamothe,” in *ibid.*, 368-71.

<sup>148</sup> “Parolles des outaouïaes arrivez a Montreal Le Cinq juillet 1702,” CAOM, F3, vol. 8, fol. 311; “Parolles des kiskakons Saquis poux et puantes descendus a Montreal le 23 juillet 1702,” in *ibid.*, 312v.

<sup>149</sup> “Conference of Lord Cornbury with the Indians,” 10 July 1702, NYCD, 4:979-81; M de Callières to the Minister, 4 Nov. 1702, MPHSCR, 33:158.

<sup>150</sup> George Croghan, “Journal,” in Hazard, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 5:351.

These two meetings provided the groundwork for an emerging tripartite alliance between the Hurons, Miamis, and Iroquois. At Sonnentuan, the Hurons had explicitly articulated an alliance of the southern nations which explicitly excluded the Ottawas. At Albany, Huron and Miami deputies reiterated that proposal and sought to establish an exclusive relationship with the English, although the Iroquois were not “privy to this Conference.” These negotiations led directly to the formation of a commercial and strategic alliance between the conferees. In fact, that year some Hurons and Iroquois had joined a Miami war party against the Dakotas.<sup>151</sup> The Hurons visited the Seneca settlement of Sonnentuan in 1703, as they had in 1702, and discussed the message of a belt the Senecas had given them.<sup>152</sup> The Miamis and Hurons apparently tried to return to Albany in 1705.<sup>153</sup> Twelve Huron and Miami representatives returned to Albany in 1708 in order to “Trade & Traffick” with the British.<sup>154</sup> Satisfied with the prices they found at Albany, the representatives agreed to return the following spring. The six people of the “Farr Nations” who arrived at Albany the following June, therefore, may well have been Hurons and Miamis.<sup>155</sup> In addition to visiting Albany directly, the Hurons also traded with their Iroquois partners at the Iroquois entrepôts in Lake Ontario, Niagara and

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<sup>151</sup> “Parolles de kiskakons Sakis poux et puants dessendus à Montreal,” 23 July 1702, CAOM, F3, vol 8, fol. 312v.

<sup>152</sup> “Conseil tenu dans le fort Pontchartrain par les Hurons,” 3 June 1703, *MDE*, 5:290-1.

<sup>153</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 44-45. The Commissioners of trade reported that the French had dissuaded some unspecified Détroit natives from visiting Albany in 1705. Since the Ottawas and Senecas were currently on bad terms after an Ottawa attack in 1704, the would-be traders were probably the Miamis and Hurons. Moreover, Vaudreuil noted in the same year that the Hurons were considering moving to Seneca country and had communicated with them. Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 May 1705, CAOM, C11A, vol. 22, fol. 231v.

<sup>154</sup> Wraxall identifies these, not as Hurons and Miamis, but as “far or Western Indians settled about Lake Erie or Tughackrondie.” The following month, however, Cornbury clarified that these visitors were “Twigtwicks and Dionondadees,” or Miamis and Hurons. Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 56; “Lord Cornbury to Lords of Trade,” 20 Aug. 1708, *NYCD*, 5:65.

<sup>155</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 50.

Cataroquoi (Fort Frontenac). The Iroquois also visited their Huron allies at Détroit regularly, bringing with them British goods to exchange for Great Lakes peltry. By 1706, the Iroquois had already begun bringing British goods to Détroit. Cadillac complained that a Seneca man named Pimabauso frequently brought English rum to his relations at Détroit.<sup>156</sup>

Concerned about losing trading partners and military allies to their British rivals, the French testified to this emerging alliance. Even before their second visit to Albany, Vaudreuil had fretted in 1706 that the Hurons, Miamis, and Iroquois might “be united” and that the English and Dutch merchants at Albany would “profit from this opportunity.”<sup>157</sup> He fretted that “everything was to be feared from too close a connection between the Miamis and Hurons and the Iroquois.”<sup>158</sup> François Clairambault d’Aigremont, a French official and Vaudreuil’s protégé, witnessed this nascent trade first-hand in 1708. After his inspection tour of the western forts, Aigremont noted that the Hurons and Iroquois enjoyed “close relations” because of the “great resemblance” in the two groups’ language and culture.<sup>159</sup> This intimacy allowed the Hurons to “constantly pass through their [Iroquois] districts to take their beaver-skins to the English.” Aigremont elsewhere noted that, if the nations currently settled at Michilimackinac moved to Détroit, the beaver pelts “would almost all go to the English by the agency of the Iroquois, the Hurons, and even many other savages who have gone that way.” To make matters worse, the Hurons had proctored an alliance between the

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<sup>156</sup> Cadillac to Vaudreuil, 27 Aug. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 34: 278.

<sup>157</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minister, 4 Nov. 1706, *NYCD*, 9:979.

<sup>158</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minister, 24 juillet 1707, *MPHSCR*, 33:330.

<sup>159</sup> Jon Parmenter also argues that the Iroquois nations and other northern Iroquoian peoples maintained an important alliance in the eighteenth century (“At the Woods’ Edge”).

Miamis and Iroquois, creating a massive and potentially threatening alliance of southern nations. While Aigremont certainly exaggerated the frequency with which the Hurons visited Albany, his observations do attest to a growing trade network which, if unchecked, could seriously threaten French trade in the region. In fact, he noted that nearly all the goods at Détroit came from the English and that most of the furs coming from Détroit found their way to Albany, not Montréal.<sup>160</sup>

In 1711 François La Forest, formerly the third in command at the post and now its commandant, likewise pointed to the Hurons' centrality in linking the Miamis to the Iroquois and thus the British. La Forest lamented that the Miamis and Illinois, who lacked the boat-handling abilities of the Ottawas and others, seldom made the arduous trip to Montréal to trade. Instead, those peoples preferred to "to trade their pelts with the Iroquois, hurons and missaguez [Mississaugas] established at detroit who then carry them to the English."<sup>161</sup> Just as Aigremont had, then, La Forest testified to a powerful trading alliance which united the Iroquois and British with the Miamis and even Illinois, through Huron mediators strategically located at Détroit. In his formulation, the Hurons acted as agents or middlemen, mediating trade between the Iroquoian allies and other nations who came to Détroit to trade for British goods, much as their ancestors had mediated trade between Iroquoian and Algonquian groups before the fall of Huronia. Obtaining British goods either by trading with the British themselves or with the Iroquois, the Hurons then trafficked these goods to other nations in the pays d'en haut.

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<sup>160</sup> Aigremont to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, *MPHSCR*, 9:426, 431, 441, 450.

<sup>161</sup> La Forest au ministre, 1711, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 120, fol. 125.



An incident in 1711 further speaks to this Huron-Iroquois-Miami nexus and suggests the centrality of the Hurons to that alliance. In the summer of 1711, Vaudreuil received reports that the British planned to invade Canada and called upon the nations d'en haut to assemble in Montréal.<sup>162</sup> Most of the nations answered the call—including the Hurons, Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Foxes of Détroit. Yet when the governor asked the nations to declare war against the British, the delegates hesitated. According to Vaudreuil, the people of the pays d'en haut had “long fluttered between the Desire to declare themselves [against the British]” and the fear that by doing so they would close “the path going to the English.” Only when twenty Hurons “began to sing [the war song] and to take the hatchet” did the other nations follow suit.<sup>163</sup> The other nations’ reaction to the Hurons’ behavior is suggestive, if ambiguous. The Hurons’ show of bravery might have shamed their neighbors into declaring war against the British; if the Hurons, numerically reduced as they were, agreed to fight, then the Ottawas and other nations might have felt obliged as well. Yet Aigremont’s and La Forest’s testimony suggests another alternative. If the nations d'en haut, like the Miamis, Illinois, and Ottawas, saw the Hurons as uniquely attached to the British and Iroquois, then the Hurons’ reaction to Vaudreuil’s invitation would be especially meaningful. As crucial mediators between Albany and Détroit, the Hurons’ position mattered profoundly, and therefore the others deferred to them. At the very least, the other nations might have looked to the Hurons to decide whether war with the British would, indeed, close the path to Albany as they

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<sup>162</sup> “Mémoire de Vaudreuil pour servir d’instruction à ceux qu’il envoie chez les nations des pays d’en haut,” 10 March 1711, *MPHSCR*, 33:497-502; “Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages...” [1711], in *ibid.*, 503-506.

<sup>163</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 Oct. 1711, CAOM, C11A, vol. 32, fols. 51-52v.

feared. If so, the incident demonstrates that Cheanonvouzon's design had worked exactly to plan; by forging ties with the Iroquois and British, the Hurons had improved their status in the pays d'en haut.

Even though Cheanonvouzon died in 1707, the alliance which he had proctored had outlived him. The Hurons and Iroquois continued to nurture their friendship and to keep their competitors—especially the Ottawas—away from the Iroquois. Although the southern alliance seems to have diminished, especially after the establishment of the British trading post at Oswego in the 1720s, echoes of the southern alliance continued to reverberate for years afterward. In 1758, as we have seen, the French commandant invited the peoples of Détroit to attack the Iroquois. When several nations, including the Miamis, accepted the war belt and agreed to strike the Iroquois, the latest Huron elder to bear the title of Sastaresty angrily erupted at their “Conduct & Readiness to take up the French Hatchet.” After refusing to accept the hatchet, he pointedly “kicked” the wampum belt “toward where the Twightwees sat, & desired they wou’d speak their Sentient.” Following a “short pause” the Miamis acknowledged that the Iroquois were “their old Friends and Allies” and therefore “kicked” the belt toward the Illinois leaders who had come. The episode demonstrates the lingering connections between the three nations. Sastaresty acknowledged his ties to his “Flesh and Blood” Iroquois kin, and the Miamis conceded that they had enjoyed a long relationship with their “old Friends.” More importantly, Sastaresty had reprised Cheanonvouzon's role as a mediator between his Miami and Iroquois allies. Even if the alliance no longer operated as it had, its remnants were still plain to be seen fifty years after Cheanonvouzon's death.

## Conclusion

As the 1711 and 1758 incidents testify, the southern alliance had allowed the Hurons to exercise an influence far beyond their numbers. In each incident, the Hurons' neighbors looked to them, and some even deferred to their judgement, before deciding how to proceed in regard to the Iroquois and British. As Payen de Noyan witnessed in 1721, "All the Savages [of Détroit] are guided exclusively by the feelings of the Hurons."<sup>164</sup> The Marquis de Beauharnois, governor of New France, explicitly drew the connection between the Huron-Iroquois alliance and Huron influence in the region. Noting the necessity to accommodate a recent conflict between the Hurons and Ottawas, the governor observed that "the hurons are allied with all the 5 Nations Iroquois" and worried that the Hurons and Iroquois might combine against the Ottawas. In a very explicit way, the Hurons had translated their relationship with regional allies into influence among their neighbors. They were able to do so because Cheanonvouzon had inserted himself into a regional network and a diplomatic reality. He had used diplomacy to compensate for the Hurons' weakness. No longer able to act as "lyons" who intimidated their neighbors through the threat of force, the Hurons acted like "foxes" that used diplomacy to compensate for the weakness and to project their influence in the region.

The Hurons' maneuvering after their arrival at Détroit defied all odds. That activity not only demonstrates that the Hurons remained a profoundly and defiantly distinct people, but also that relations between peoples like the Hurons, Miamis, and

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<sup>164</sup> Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et de Chavoy, "Mémoire," [1730], *MPHSCR*, 34:76.

Iroquois, shaped the region as much as the accommodative “middle ground” where French and native peoples negotiated. By all objective accounts, the Huron community should have been shattered and should have clung to the French and other allies in order to survive. Yet Cheanonvouzon’s dogged pursuit of autonomy from the Ottawas suggests that no matter how badly the Hurons had been battered since the epidemics and wars of the seventeenth century, the Huron community nonetheless remained distinct and separate from their neighbors in the region. Cheanonvouzon and his people were not orphaned refugees who needed Onontio to solve their problems, but wily and resourceful survivors who sought to retain their separate existence. Moreover, Cheanonvouzon was a Huron leader seeking to advance the ends of his own nation, even when that meant flouting his French or Ottawa allies. In fact, when Vaudreuil appeared ready to undermine Détroit in 1704, Cheanonvouzon brazenly declared Onontio to be a “liar” and refused to “listen any longer to his word.”<sup>165</sup> He clearly perceived himself to be a child of Aatentsic—the ancient mother of the Hurons—rather than of Onontio. Nor was he alone. Mekoua also railed against the French for deferring their vengeance on the nations which had attacked and killed his people.<sup>166</sup>

Both the Hurons’ survival as a discrete entity and their later ascendancy as a regional power were premised upon a set of relationships which were only partially connected to the French and which often undermined French interests. In fact, the Hurons’ alliances, and the activity it enabled, threatened to undermine New France

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<sup>165</sup> “Nous voyons bien que le Gouverneur est un menteur, ne nous tenan[t]s pas ce qu’il nous a promis puisqu’il nous a menty. Nous luy mentirons ainsy et nous n’ecouterons plus sa parole,” “Conseil tenu au fort Pontchartrain dans le Détroit du lac Erié le 8<sup>e</sup> juin 1704,” COAM, F3, vol. 2, fol. 301v.

<sup>166</sup> “Conseil Tenu au fort Pontchartrain le deux<sup>e</sup> juillet 1706,” in *ibid.*, fols. 232v-25

constantly. Although Cheanonvouzon worked to attract nations to *Détroit* when it suited him, his extracurricular activities proved much less conducive to Onontio's interest. His plotting against the Ottawas, for instance, threatened to ignite a regional war between the two nations which would have drawn the French into an unwinnable war. The intensity of the Huron-Ottawa rivalry continually overwhelmed French attempts to mediate it, and the two nations only came to terms when they saw fit to do so. By openly courting the British, furthermore, Cheanonvouzon threatened to send furs to France's imperial rivals, the English in Albany. Onontio continually demonstrated his inability to "arrange affairs" in the region. Cheanonvouzon, on the other hand, used his alliances with the Iroquois and Miamis to establish Huron ascendancy, humble his Ottawa rivals, and shape *Détroit* along Huron lines.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **“The Ottawa Confederation”: The Anishinaabeg during the Pax Vulpinae**

In late June 1717, a small Ottawa party left Détroit, ostensibly to attack the Flatheads, their perennial enemies. Instead of attacking the Flatheads, however, they headed for the Miami settlement on the Maumee River and murdered a Miami woman, her Iroquois husband, and two of the couple’s children. The murders threatened to engulf the pays d’en haut in war. In one fell swoop, the Ottawas had offended the Iroquois and the Miamis, two of the most powerful nations in the pays d’en haut. Noting that the Ottawas had already attacked them several times, the Miamis were disinclined to “listen to talk of peace.”<sup>1</sup> By August, they had reportedly mobilized a large war party against the Ottawas. Watching the crisis unfold, the Hurons, rivals of the Ottawas and friends of the Miamis, silently hoped that a “war would be ignited” between the two nations, just as they had a decade earlier, and tried to prevent delegates from visiting the Miamis. The events so roiled affairs at Détroit that the nations settled at the post dared not to descend to Montréal to attend peace talks with the Foxes that summer.<sup>2</sup>

Arriving in early July, Alphonse de Tonty, the new commandant at Détroit, desperately worked to prevent further bloodshed. He dispatched envoys to Saginaw Bay to apprehend the murderers and to invite the Miamis to come reconcile with the Ottawas. When a Miami delegation finally arrived in September, Tonty convoked an assembly

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<sup>1</sup> “La plus grande partye du village [des Miamis] ne voulant pas Entendre parler de Paix, et disant Pour raison qu’on [les Outaouais] les avoit tuéz tant de fois,” Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 Oct. 1718, CAOM, C11A, vol. 39, fol. 151; Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 Oct. 1718, Ibid., 149-56v.

<sup>2</sup> Vaudreuil to the Council of the Marine, 12 Oct. 1717, *MPHSCR*, 33:551; Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 Oct. 1718, CAOM, C11A, 39:149-56v; Alphonse de Tonty, “Estat de La Depense qui a esté faitte pour accommoder L’affaire des Outa8as de Saguinan qui avoient tuez les Myamis,” 15 Sept. 1718, Ibid., 30-31v.

with the Miamis and Ottawas, as well as the Potawatomis, Hurons, and Ojibwas at the fort. He then ordered musketeers to escort the perpetrators before the council. Speaking to the council, he dramatically offered to surrender the Ottawa men to the Miamis, but implored them to be merciful toward them. The Ottawas likewise apologized for the indiscretion of the reckless “young men” and presented the Miamis gifts to “cover” their dead symbolically. Despite the Hurons’ opposition to the terms of reconciliation, the Miamis reluctantly accepted the peace and surrendered the murderers to Tonty’s care. If the Ottawas attacked again, however, they promised swift retribution, regardless of Tonty’s intervention. Having kept the peace, Tonty convinced the assembled nations to sign a peace treaty.<sup>3</sup>

The Ottawas never really explained why they had attacked the Miamis and suggested that the crime was simply the work of uncontrollable “young men,” the ubiquitous excuse for bad behavior. Yet the identity of the victims and the timing of the attack suggest a more serious and intentional motive. The warriors had not attacked just any Miami family; they had targeted a mixed Iroquois-Miami household living near the Miami settlement. The Ottawas had long been concerned about the growing commercial and diplomatic intimacy between the Miamis, Iroquois, and Hurons. The Ottawas, the most powerful and well-connected nation in the region, worried that this emerging alliance might diminish Ottawa influence and commercial clout. They had repeatedly and unsuccessfully tried to disrupt this alliance and to forge their own partnership with the Iroquois. When they failed to do so once again in the spring of 1717, their frustration

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

became deadly. They struck out at the unfortunate mixed family, the physical and biological manifestation of this alliance.

The murders therefore constituted a skirmish between two rival blocs within the French-allied coalition: the southern alliance described in the preceding chapter and an alliance between the culturally and politically connected peoples of the Anishinaabe culture group—called Anishinaabeg in the plural—the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis, a group whom the British later referred to as the “Ottawawa Confederacy.”<sup>4</sup> Fearing that the southern alliance would successfully challenge Ottawa and Anishinaabe interests in the region and reorient the region toward the south and away from the core Anishinaabe settlements, the Ottawas and their allies sought to disrupt that coalition (see figure 7).

Gov. Vaudreuil observed this emerging rivalry in 1706 when he fretted that “if the Hurons, the Miamis and the Iroquois be united, they will accomplish the destruction of the Outtaouois.”<sup>5</sup> Thirty years later Vaudreuil’s successor, the Marquis de Beauharnois, observed the same rivalry. Emphasizing the importance of reconciling the Hurons and Ottawas, who had recently clashed again, he noted that the affair “is very delicate the hurons being allied with the 5 Nations Iroquois, and the Outaouïais with all of those in the païs d’en haut,” meaning chiefly the Anishinaabe peoples.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the intendant, Gilles Hocquart confirmed that the Hurons were allied “to all the Iroquois”—indicating both those in the St. Lawrence Valley settlements and those living in

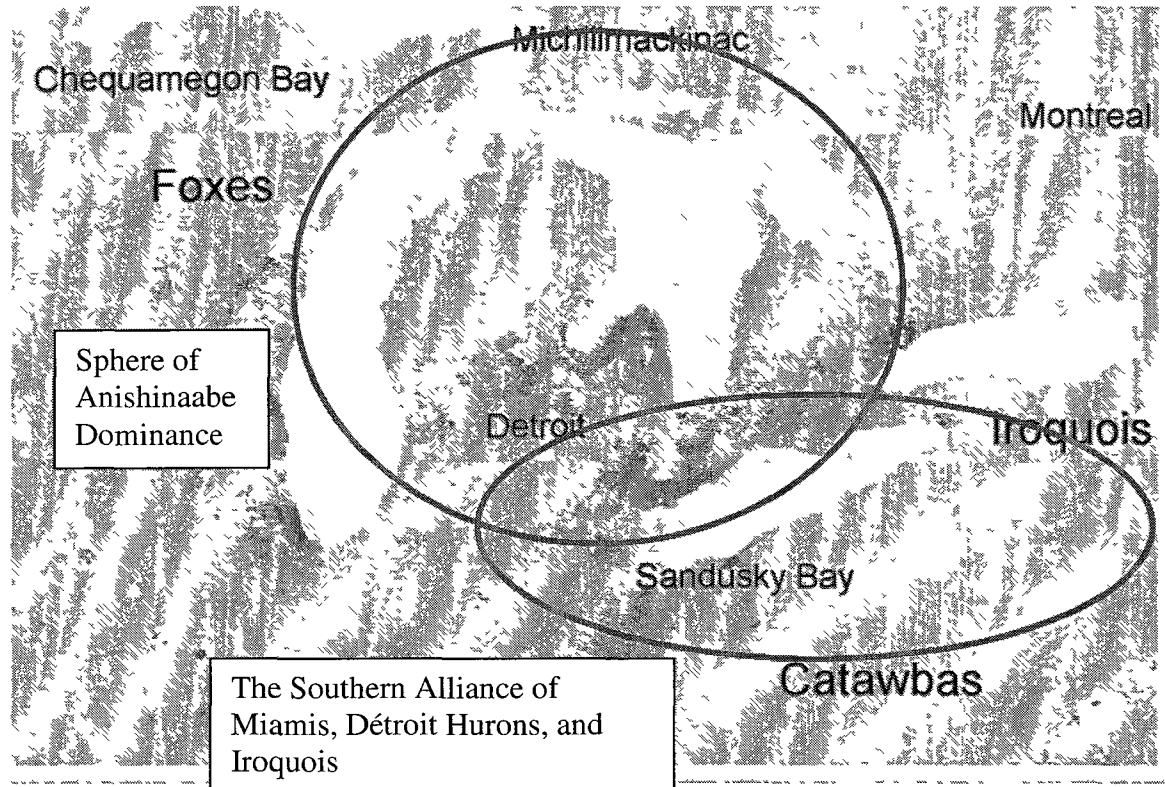
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<sup>4</sup> Sir William Johnson to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, 6 Oct. 1763, in *WJP*, 10:866

<sup>5</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minister, 4 July 1706, *NYCD*, 9:780

<sup>6</sup> “cette affaire qui est très delicat les hurons étant alliez avec les 5 Nations Iroquois, et les Outaouïais avec tous celles des païs d’en haut,” “Résumé des lettres de Beauharnois,” Jan. 1739, *COAM*, C11A, vol. 72, fol. 393v.





**Figure 7: The Southern and Anishinaabe Alliances, ca. 1700** The map shows the two competing spheres of influence within the pays d'en haut. One, dominated by the Ottawas, centered on Michilimackinac. The other, a southern alliance forged by the Hurons, Miamis, and Iroquois, linked Albany to Détroit and points west.

Iroquoia—and the Ottawas of Détroit were allied to the “Savages of the same name” living elsewhere and the “Sauteur of Michilimackinac”—an Ojibwa community.<sup>7</sup> These two blocs had been quarrelling ever since the Hurons moved to Détroit and begun negotiating with the Iroquois and Miamis and continued to do so long after 1717. At a council with the British commandant of Detroit, Henry Hamilton in 1779, an Ottawas orator spoke for “the Outawaas, Chippeweys and Poutwuattamies,” while a Huron leader

<sup>7</sup> “Ces deux Nations sont alliées, La premiere a tous les Iroquois, et les 8ta8acs le sont aux Sauvages du meme nom, et aux Sauteur de Michilimackinac,” Hocquart au ministre, 22 Oct. 1738, in *ibid.*, vol. 70, fol. 116.

spoke in the “name of the Wyandotts [Hurons] & Miamis.” Even at this late date, these two peoples acted as separate entities.<sup>8</sup>

Such commercial squabbles and fights over influence between these two blocs would not be surprising had they not come when they did, amidst a series of conflicts against the Foxes, also known as the Outagamis or Mesquakies. By all accounts, the era should have been one of harmony between the peoples of *Détroit* and in many respects it was. Engaged in a common effort against a common foe—the Foxes and their allies—the Ottawas, Hurons, Miamis, and other nations overlooked their differences and cooperated as they had not since the Iroquois wars. In the midst of these conflicts, these nations enjoyed an era of cooperation—a *Pax Vulpinae*, or Fox Peace. Indeed, the previous year those nations had issued a severe blow to the Foxes and the groups had promised to come to Montréal that very summer to conclude a treaty with the Foxes. Yet if the Fox threat drew them together, the 1717 murders remind us that other forces continued to separate them.

This chapter therefore charts the curious paradox between the harmony, engendered by both the Fox threat and the subsequent wars, and the sometimes violent competition between the peoples allied against the Foxes. The first section recounts how the common threat posed by the Foxes and their allies galvanized the peoples of *Détroit* to form a powerful military alliance against the Foxes in 1711 and 1712. This threat, and the anti-Fox campaigns that followed, provided these peoples with common ground from 1711 until the 1730s. Yet, as the remainder of the chapter shows, this temporary cooperation neither melted the boundaries separating the different members of the

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<sup>8</sup> “Council held at Detroit,” June 1779, *MPHSCR*, 9:449.

alliance nor implied a greater political fusion. In particular, the Anishinaabeg saw the rise of the Huron-led southern alliance as a threat to their traditional dominance of the region. Exploring the dynamic of the Anishinaabe alliance—the so called “Three Fires”—the second section sketches out the ways in which the Anishinaabe communities used their cultural and familial ties to control the pays d’en haut. Finally, the third section describes the ways in which the Anishinaabe challenged the southern alliance, first by seeking to disrupt Iroquois-Huron relations, and then by trying to supersede that relationship. This rivalry led, in 1717, to the doorstep of the unfortunate Miami-Iroquois family.

This juxtaposition between peace and conflict, between cooperation and competition, reveals the durability and stubborn independence of the peoples living in the pays d’en haut. The Fox threat, like the Iroquois threat the previous century, could have spurred these communities to forget their past difficulties and to remain in harmony. The common endeavor in the following years could have suppressed the struggles for influence in the region. Instead the two rival blocs continued to spar and compete even as they faced challenges from a mutual enemy. Such competition reveals not only the depth of the antipathy between different groups, but also the natives’ loyalty and commitment to their own nations’ well-being. Happy to cooperate when conditions called for such cooperation, these groups nonetheless maintained their sense of separateness and never heeded French calls to live in harmony and to fuse into one cozy family. Not even an external threat could completely overcome the friction between the peoples of the pays d’en haut.

## **I. Pax Vulpinae**

Beginning in 1710, the nations of the pays d'en haut, although fractured and wary after the conflicts of the previous decade, coalesced in an alliance against their longtime foes, the Foxes, Sauks, and Mascoutins. To be sure, these nations had long shared common enemies, like the Sioux in the north and the Flatheads in the south. Yet none of them posed the threat that the Foxes did in 1711 and 1712. In those years, the Foxes and their allies, who had sometimes clashed with other nations, adopted an especially aggressive and menacing stance. Moving eastward from Green Bay, bands of Foxes and their allies settled at Détroit, the Saint Joseph River and elsewhere. At the same time, they collaborated, or at least appeared to collaborate, with the Five Nations Iroquois—the all-purpose bogeymen of the region—against the peoples of the pays d'en haut. Threatened by an external enemy who posed a real and imminent danger to their common interests, most of the peoples of the pays d'en haut banded together to attack the Foxes in the winter and spring of 1712. Once the nations had allied, the continuing menace presented by the Foxes worked to unify the people of the region. The common endeavor against a common foe moreover counteracted their tendency toward distrust and gave them a shared project and common ground. This collective fear, shared suffering, and a common enemy created conditional harmony, a flawed and fragile Pax Vulpinae, which extended from 1712 until the 1730s.

By 1712, relations among those nations d'en haut certainly needed some repair.<sup>9</sup> Speaking to an assembly of nations in Montréal late in 1711, Governor Vaudreuil acknowledged that the previous decade had been one of discord and conflict among his allies in the pays d'en haut. In a palpably weary tone, Vaudreuil recounted “how much trouble and care I have taken... to keep you at peace and in union with one another” and noted that their “dissensions” had deeply troubled him.<sup>10</sup> Despite the high hopes and lofty promises of 1701, the peoples had spent the subsequent decade squabbling. The Ottawas had attacked the Iroquois just three years after the conference, casting doubt on the durability of the peace. More troubling, the Miami raids on the Ojibwas and Ottawas in 1704 and 1705 triggered the confrontation at Détroit in 1706. That violence threatened to permanently poison relations among Ontario’s children and to split the pays d'en haut into two blocs—one dominated by the Miamis and Hurons and the other by the Ottawas and their Anishinaabeg allies. Lamothe Cadillac’s pardon of Mekoua had then triggered retaliation from the Miamis and a French-led retaliatory campaign in 1708. Since then the Miamis and Ottawas had observed a tentative cease-fire without fully reconciling.<sup>11</sup> The Ottawas’ allies and Miamis’ erstwhile targets, the Mississaugas, an Ojibwa group, had attacked a group of Miamis on their way to the 1711 conference. Before dismissing

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<sup>9</sup> Following contemporary usage, I use the term “nations d'en haut” to refer to the nations living in the pays d'en haut.

<sup>10</sup> “Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages who Came down from the Upper Country.” [1711], *MPHSCR*, 33:503.

<sup>11</sup> The acting commandant of Détroit, Charles Regnault, Sieur du Dubuisson, attested to that enduring animosity in 1712 and the Miamis objected in 1717 that the Ottawas had attacked them “so many times” (“tant de fois.”) Sieur du Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR* 33:550; Vaudreuil au conseil, 30 Oct. 1718, CAOM, C11A, vol. 39, fol. 151v.



**Figure 8: Detail of De Couagne, “Carte du Canada,” 1711. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.**

The Foxes and Mascoutins settled south of the Huron fort (see “Fort des renards”) and immediately began positioning themselves as key players in the French alliance.

his allies to return home, Vaudreuil once more enjoined his children “to reunite your minds and to induce you to live together as brothers.”<sup>12</sup>

Most of these nations did in fact reunite their minds in the autumn and winter of 1712, but this unity had more to do with the threat of a Fox incursion than acquiescence to Onontio’s pleas. At the invitation of Lamothe Cadillac, two bands of Foxes, as well as many closely allied Mascoutins and Kickapoos—some seven or eight hundred souls all told—had moved eastward in 1710 (see figure 8).<sup>13</sup> While some of these settled near the home quickly, establishing a camp in the shadow of Fort Pontchartrain and—to ingratiate themselves to their French neighbors—presenting many of their children for baptism by the post’s Recollect missionary.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minister, [1711], *MPHSCR*, 33:503.

<sup>13</sup> [Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry], “Mémoire, 1712,” in Législature de Québec, *Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires, et autres documents historiques relatifs à la Nouvelle-France, recueillis aux Archives de la Province de Québec, ou copiés à l’étranger*. 4 vols. (Québec: Coté et C., 1883), 1:623.

<sup>14</sup> Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June, 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:537. Father Cherubin de Nian, the Seminarian missionary to Détroit, baptized a staggering forty-six children listed as either “Renard,” “8tagames,” or “8’tames” between 13 Nov. 1709 and the beginning of the Fox Wars in June 1712. No existing records indicate that Foxes had been baptized at Détroit prior to 1709. Cherubin de Nian, “Seconde Livre des Baptêmes du Sauvages,” *Registre de paroisse, Detroit, 1703-1800*, 96-130.

The Foxes' arrival at Détroit troubled many of the peoples the region, especially the Ojibwas and Illinois, who had been fighting with the Foxes for decades. This conflict only intensified when the Fox settled in the midst of their Ottawa, Huron, and Potawatomi enemies at Détroit.<sup>15</sup> The Foxes, already on bad terms with their long-time enemies, the Ojibwas of Sault-Ste.-Marie, with whom they had been fighting since at least 1708, defiantly “menaced” the Saginaw Ottawas.<sup>16</sup> At the same time they moved eastward in 1710 and 1711, the Foxes also provoked conflicts with the Illinois.<sup>17</sup> In 1711 the Foxes attacked some Miamis at Détroit, killing two of that nation—a Wea and Piankshaw.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the Kickapoos, close allies of the Foxes, and, to the minds of the nations' d'en haut, inseparable from them, attacked the Miamis as well in the spring of 1711.<sup>19</sup> In addition to insulting the Hurons at Détroit in 1711, the Foxes reportedly planned to ambush both the Hurons and Miamis, on their return trip from Montréal to Détroit.<sup>20</sup> Although the Foxes did not succeed in this attack, a Kickapoo leader settled on the Maumee River, whom the Hurons regarded as “really an Outagami,” captured and

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<sup>15</sup> Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1715, *MPHSCR*, 33:537.

<sup>16</sup> William Newbigging, “The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance” (PhD. diss. Dept. of History, University of Toronto, 1995), 304-308. The Miami attacks on the Ojibwas had likewise angered the Ottawas in 1704 and 1705, and the Ottawas had promised to revenge their Ojibwa “comrades” for the indignity. “Conseil tenu au fort Pontchartrain le 8. March 1706,” CAOM, F3, vol. 2, fol. 320v; “Parolles de Makisabé chef P8t8atamis du 17 aout 1712,” CAOM, C11A, 33:88.

<sup>17</sup> “Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages...” [1711], *MPHSCR*, 33: 505-506; “Reply to Cadillac’s Claim,” 17 July 1711, in *Ibid*, 515-16.

<sup>18</sup> “Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages...” [1711], in *ibid.*, 504-505; Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1715, in *Ibid.*, 539.

<sup>19</sup> “Parolles de Makisabé chef P8t8atamis le 8. March 1706,” CAOM, C11A, vol. 33, fols. 85v-86.

<sup>20</sup> “Parolles de [Vaudreuil] en reponce de celles que luy ont dit K8tasiliboé, 8ilamek, et monet chefs 8ta8as, Pot8atamis et Sakis du 28<sup>e</sup> julliet 1712,” *ibid.*, 81-81v.; “Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages...” [1711], *MPHSCR*, 33:506. The following year, several leaders thanked Dubuisson for “saving” them from the Foxes, perhaps referring to his role in preventing the attack. Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, in *Ibid.*, 541.

killed a Huron man and two of his Iroquois companions the following winter.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the Foxes attacked the Potawatomi settlement at Fort St. Joseph in the autumn or winter of 1712.<sup>22</sup> Surveying the damage brought by the Foxes in late 1711, Vaudreuil enjoined the Foxes and Mascoutins to return to Green Bay, lest they “draw down upon [themselves] all the tribes in the land.”<sup>23</sup>

If the Foxes’ and Mascoutins’ arrival at the post and subsequent aggression were not alarming enough, the nations d’en haut thought they discerned even more sinister motives in those nations’ behavior. Piecing together scraps of information and rumors, the nations d’en haut concluded that the Foxes’ aggression was part of a larger conspiracy, hatched with the Iroquois and the British, to destroy Détroit and the nations d’en haut entirely.

First, the Iroquois and British had been acting more aggressively in recent years. Early in 1710, representatives had complained both to the English and the French that the “Wagenhaes”—the Iroquois name for the Ottawas—had frequently murdered their people and that the Five Nations were “determined to take Revenge” against them.<sup>24</sup> Some Senecas and Onondagas confirmed this to Vaudreuil in 1710, complaining that the Ottawas had repeatedly attacked them since 1701 and that they would no longer defer

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 550-51. Dubuisson later noted that the Hurons were especially resentful of the Foxes and would not accept an accommodation with them (“Résumé des lettres de Vaudreuil au ministre,” Nov. 1712 [5 May 1713], CAOM, C11A, vol. 123, fol. 19v).

<sup>22</sup> “Parolles de Makisabé chef P8t8atamis du 17 aout 1712,” in Ibid., 33:85-85v.

<sup>23</sup> “Words of Vaudreuil to the Savages...,” [1711], *MPHSCR*, 33:505-506.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Wraxall, *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs*, ed. Charles McIlwain (New York: Benjamin Blom, [1915] 1968), 80-84.



their vengeance.<sup>25</sup> In the summer of 1712 the Senecas reported that the Onondaga headman, Teganissorens, had spent the previous winter plotting an attack on Détroit and had invited the other four nations to join him.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Vaudreuil learned of an anticipated British invasion of New France in 1711 and had called all the nations d'en haut to protect Montréal from invasion, which added to the sense of alarm and gave credence to the rumor that the Foxes were in league with the British.<sup>27</sup>

These rumors of Iroquois and British aggression coincided with evidence of collusion between the Fox and their allies and the Iroquois and British. The Foxes and Mascoutins had visited the Iroquois in 1710 and “renewed their alliance” and the Iroquois had placed the nation “under their protection.”<sup>28</sup> In fact, Vaudreuil feared that they would fuse into “one body with the Iroquois.”<sup>29</sup> In seeming confirmation of this new, troublesome alliance, a band of Foxes abruptly abandoned Détroit in the spring of 1712 and took refuge among the Five Nations.<sup>30</sup> This alliance, moreover, extended to the Iroquois’ partners, the British. In 1712 Claude Dubuisson, acting commandant at Détroit, claimed that the Foxes had accepted “many presents and belts from the English.”<sup>31</sup> An

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<sup>25</sup> The Iroquois were also at odds with the Potawatomis who had recently attacked them. “Paroles des Tsonnontuans et Onontagués...et Réponse de Vaudreuil,” 8 Aug. 1710, CAOM, C11A, vol. 31, fols. 99-100v.

<sup>26</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 Nov. 1712, Ibid., 33:57-58; “Résumé des lettres de Vaudreuil au ministre,” in Ibid., vol. 123, fols.24-28.

<sup>27</sup> “Memorandum to Serve as Instructions from the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Officers and *Voyageurs* Despatched to Bring Down to Montreal the Savages of the Upper Country,” 10 March 1711, *MPHSCR*, 33:497.

<sup>28</sup> According to Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire, the French officer stationed at Niagara, the Foxes and Mascoutins had visited the Iroquois around 1710. Les Foxes et Mascoutins “avoient esté renouveler alliance avec Eux [les Iroquois] et Se mettre sous leur protection.” Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 Nov. 1712, CAOM, C11A, fol. 32, fol. 54v.

<sup>29</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 Nov. 1711, Ibid., fols. 72v-73.

<sup>30</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 Nov. 1711, in Ibid., fol. 54v.

<sup>31</sup> Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:537.

official in New York confirmed in 1715 that the Foxes had “made an Alliance with this Gv<sup>b</sup>” several years earlier.<sup>32</sup>

Aware of the intensified British and Iroquois aggression toward New France and its allies and the rumored dealings between the Iroquois, British, and Foxes, many observers reasonably interpreted the Foxes’ aggression in 1711 as definitive proof of a conspiracy. Specifically, they feared that the Foxes and Mascoutins, on orders from Albany, would attack Détroit in 1712 and immediately flee to the Iroquois, who would shelter them from any recriminations. Thereafter, the Five Nations and Foxes would scour the pays d’en haut. Dubuisson articulated this theory in his report in the spring 1712. Citing the testimony of a Fox defector, the officer claimed that the Foxes had received orders from the British “to destroy the post...and then certain tribes allied to us.”<sup>33</sup> More importantly, native observers also believed that the Foxes had colluded with the British to attack Détroit. In the spring of 1712 an Illinois leader told the Foxes that, despite their subterfuge, he knew about “the messages that [they had] received from the English to slaughter our father and the children here”—the nations of Détroit. The Potawatomi elder Makasabé likewise chastised the Foxes for betraying their French father for a British one and for countenancing the Protestant “enemy of prayer.”<sup>34</sup> According to Joseph Marest, the Jesuit missionary at Michilimackinac, the Ottawas had attacked the Mascoutins “so as not to be attacked by them first,” suggesting that they

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<sup>32</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 115.

<sup>33</sup> Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:537-38; This may well be Joseph Nimenso, a Fox man who presented his daughter to be baptized on 22 March, 1711. Cherubin de Nian, “Seconde Livre des Baptêmes du Sauvages,” RPD, 111.

<sup>34</sup> Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:542-45.

believed the rumors about a coordinated assault on Détroit and the nations d'en haut.<sup>35</sup> Whether the Foxes truly had conspired with the British—something they apparently claimed during the siege—the nations d'en haut clearly believed that they had and the prospect terrified them.<sup>36</sup>

By creating a common threat—specifically one that involved the powerful Iroquois—the Foxes had curiously and unintentionally given those nations common ground (their resentment and fear of the Foxes) and a common cause (the ultimate destruction of the Foxes). The emergence of a threatening external enemy quickly eclipsed the conflict that had separated the nations d'en haut in the previous decade. If the Foxes really planned to sack Détroit then unite with the Iroquois, all of the nations d'en haut would suffer the consequences. The suspected involvement of the British and Five Nations was critical because it made what would have otherwise been a serious threat a potentially devastating one. Facing this common threat, moreover, these nations remembered the ties which had long bound them. They recalled their shared struggle against the Five Nations during the seventeenth century. Accordingly, the Fox threat propelled the nations d'en haut into a harmony not seen since the seventeenth century.

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<sup>35</sup> Marest to Vaudreuil, 21 June 1712, in *Ibid.*, 555; As late as 1714, the Ottawas still feared that the Foxes and Iroquois might cooperate. Learning that the Foxes, Mascoutins, and Kickapoos had visited the Senecas, Ottawa delegates visited Sonnontuan and demanded to know the meaning of the meeting. "Paroles des députés tsonnontouans," 25 Sept. 1714, CAOM, C11A, vol.34, fol. 297.

<sup>36</sup> Dubuisson clearly presented this position in his letter to Vaudreuil after the violence of 1712, arguing that the Foxes were poised to attack Détroit in June 1712, and that the violence barely prevented this. Yet Dubuisson, having been unable to prevent the violence or control the allies, had a vested interest in presenting the conflict as inevitable and as justified. Accordingly, the attack was a preemptive strike against a treacherous foe. Other evidence argues against such a conspiracy. The British, in fact, had discouraged the Five Nations from attacking the nations d'en haut and described their current conflict with the French—Queen Anne's War—as a fight between "Christians." Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 84. Iroquois warriors even participated in the siege and showed no effort to help the Foxes after their defeat. Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:551. Yet the reality of the threat mattered less than the perception of the threat.

Ironically, the Foxes had done in a few short months what French officials had been trying to do for years—they unified the peoples of the pays d'en haut.

While the nations d'en haut certainly worried about an alliance between the Foxes, Iroquois, and British, they may also worried that the Foxes and other nations at Green Bay threatened their position within the pays d'en haut. French traders had been travelling to Green Bay more frequently, and the eastward migration of the Foxes, Kickapoos, and Mascoutins might have triggered worries, especially among the Ottawas, that the Foxes would displace them as crucial traders in the alliance. The Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis certainly had no interest in seeing their longtime enemies settled and trading with their French partners. They accordingly sought to impose their “vision of a more limited alliance” that excluded the Foxes.<sup>37</sup>

Capitalizing on the almost universal ill-will toward the Foxes and their allies and hoping to prevent a Fox attack, the peoples d'en haut built a formidable anti-Fox coalition during the autumn and winter of 1711-1712 and resolved to attack the Foxes and Mascoutins at Détroit in the spring of 1712. As Dubuisson noted, the war against the Foxes had been “well planned during all the autumn and winter, with all the tribes and presents given.”<sup>38</sup> According to the St. Joseph Potawatomi war leader, Makisabé, Sagima, the Saginaw Ottawa headman coordinated the affair, inviting first the Potawatomis, and then the Illinois to join the coalition. By late spring the coalition included “almost all the other nations,” such as the Hurons and Miamis as well, in

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<sup>37</sup> Brett Rushforth, “Slavery, the Fox Wars, and the Limits of Alliance,” *WMQ*, 63:1 (Jan. 2006): 58-60 at 60.

<sup>38</sup> Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:540 ; [Léry], “Mémoire,” 1712, in *Législature de Québec, Collection de manuscrits*. 1:623.

addition to nations as distant as the Osage of the Missouri River Valley.<sup>39</sup> Together these peoples aimed to “Entirely destroy” the Foxes and their friends.<sup>40</sup>

The new coalition wasted little time implementing its strategy. Claiming to act, not just for themselves but for “all the upper nations,” the Potawatomis and Ottawas combined to attack some Mascoutins who were wintering near Saginaw.<sup>41</sup> Proceeding to Détroit, the Ottawas and Potawatomis joined with Illinois, Miamis, Huron, Osage, and Sauk warriors to attack a party of Foxes and Mascoutins encamped at the fort. Numbering some six hundred and perhaps as many as nine hundred warriors, the allies arrived at Détroit in May 1712.<sup>42</sup> Taking up positions both in the fort and around the Fox and Mascoutin camp, the allies besieged the shabby enclosure for nineteen days. Although the Foxes finally managed to escape the siege on a dark night, the hapless refugees only made it a few miles north of Fort Pontchartrain before a combined force of Ottawas, Hurons, Potawatomis, and Mississaugas reached them and easily defeated the weary refugees. According to Dubuisson, the allies killed all the men and enslaved the women and children.<sup>43</sup> Demonstrating the depth of their hatred toward the Foxes, the Hurons murdered their captives rather than retain them as slaves.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> “Car le nommé Saguina ayant trouvé Le Secret pendant l’hiver de Se joindre aux P8t8atamis pour faire la guerre Ensemble aux Mask8tins et aux 8tagamis...ayant Encor trouvé Le Secret de mettre dans ses interest [intérêt] presque toutes les autres nations.” Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 Nov. 1712, CAOM, C11A, vol.32, fol. 51v.

<sup>40</sup> “pour detuire Entieremens L8tagamis et Le Mask8tins.” in Ibid., fols. 86-87v at 87v.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 87v-90v; “Résumé des lettres de Vaudreuil au ministre,” Nov. 1712 [May 1713], in *ibid.*, vol. 123, fols. 19-20v.

<sup>42</sup> Dubuisson and Makisabé put the number at six hundred, while another French official, who was not present at the siege, claimed that there were nine hundred warriors. Dubuisson à Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:539; [Léry], “Mémoire,” 1712, in *Législature de Québec, Collection de manuscrits*. 1:623.

<sup>43</sup> Father Nian christened a nine-year-old Fox slave, a boy belonging to the Ottawa interpreter and trader, Pierre Chêne La Butte, on 16 July 1712, shortly after the siege. Nian, “Seconde Livre,” *RPD*, 132.

<sup>44</sup> Dubuisson à Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:537-52.

Dubuisson noted that the attack on the Foxes had immediately improved relations among the nations d'en haut. During the siege, the allies had coexisted and cooperated "in peace, union, and good understanding" in the cramped French fort and had cooperated to defeat a common foe. In the warm afterglow of their victory, furthermore, the nations seemed poised to forget their ancient troubles altogether. Dubuisson asserted that this "general assembly of all the tribes" had "put them all at peace with one another, and has renewed their former alliance."<sup>45</sup> The Potawatomis, impressed with the bravery and sacrifice of some St. Lawrence Iroquois, reconciled with their erstwhile enemies.<sup>46</sup> Dubuisson also took credit for making a "firm peace" between the Miamis and the Ottawas. The two nations—estranged since the violent encounter in 1706—finally created "a strong alliance with one another." Dubuisson even hoped that the Illinois and Miamis might finally reconcile.<sup>47</sup> Violence had begotten harmony.

If the threat of a Fox attack in the winter of 1711-1712 had bridged the rifts opened by the violence of 1706, the subsequent violence, lasting intermittently for the following two decades, cemented that alliance. Within weeks of the siege, a Kickapoo delegation arrived at Détroit to address the nations settled there. The Hurons and Ottawas, seeking vengeance for an attack on the Hurons the previous winter and

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 541.

<sup>46</sup> Dubuisson refers to "about twenty-five Iroquois in this fight, who had joined the Hurons from the foot of the lake," probably the mission, or Canadian, Iroquois for the Lac de Deux Montagnes mission. "Paroles des Tsonnontouans et Onontagués venus à Montréal avec Longueuil et Joncaire," 8 Aug. 1710, CAOM, C11A, vol. 31, fol. 100. Furthermore, Father Cherubin de Nian baptized a Cayuga Iroquois baby in June of that year, strongly implying that Iroquois warriors—and even their wives—had been present at the fight. "Seconde Livre des Baptêmes du Sauvages," *RPD*, 132.

<sup>47</sup> Dubuisson à Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:550-51. The Miamis and Illinois did eventually reach an accommodation. Vaudreuil and Michel Bégon de Picardière to the Minister, 20 Sept. 1714, in *WHC*, 16:303-304.

regarding the Kickapoos as virtual Foxes, intercepted and slaughtered them.<sup>48</sup> Learning of the siege later that summer, the Mascoutins and Kickapoos from the Green Bay settlements mobilized war parties to Détroit and elsewhere, scattering the allies, “who dared not hold at their approach.”<sup>49</sup> Rather than directly attacking the fort, these parties lurked in the outskirts of the post, ambushing hapless victims and occasionally skirmishing with the peoples of the post. Hostilities resumed in the summer of 1713. A Fox party led by the ominously named *Le Tonnerre*—or *The Thunderer*—launched a raid on Détroit early that year. The Hurons intercepted the party on the *Île aux Dindes*—a small island in the Detroit River about six miles from Fort Pontchartrain still known as Turkey Island—and killed the chief and two other Foxes.<sup>50</sup> Later that summer, a Kickapoo warrior killed a Huron on the outskirts of Détroit. By the end of the year, war parties had killed five Hurons and three French people in the vicinity of Détroit.<sup>51</sup> The Foxes returned in the spring of 1714, sending “several small parties toward Détroit.” In September of that year, Vaudreuil reported that these parties had killed thirteen people around the post.<sup>52</sup> Between the autumn of 1714 and the summer of 1715 alone, the Foxes had made five raids around Détroit.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Dubuisson à Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:550-51; Marest à Vaudreuil, 2 July 1712, in *Ibid.*, 559.

<sup>49</sup> [Léry], “Mémoire,” 1712, in Législature de Québec, *Collection de manuscrits*. 1:625.

<sup>50</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minsiter, 6 Sept. 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:561; “Paroles des Hurons descendus du fort Pontchartrain du Détroit à Vaudreuil,” 7 Nov. 1713, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 34, fol. 66; Jacques-Charles de Sabrevois, “Mémoire of Sabrevois on the Tribes of the West,” 1718, *NYCD*, 9:886.

<sup>51</sup> “Reponse ofe M<sup>r</sup> Le marquis de Vaudreuil to the hurons,” 7 Nov. 1713, in *Ibid.*, 89; Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 Nov. 1713, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 34, fols. 49v, 51v.

<sup>52</sup> “Les Renards ont aussy envoyé plusieurs petit partis vers le detroit, et depuis ce printêm[p]s ils ont pris ou Tué treize personnes, et ont perdu onze,” (Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 Sept. 1714, *Ibid.*, fols. 283-384).

<sup>53</sup> In an impassioned plea for help, Sasteretsy noted that his people had suffered five attacks at Détroit since he had returned from visiting Montréal the previous autumn. “Parolles que les hurons ont prié M<sup>r</sup> Dubuisson d’écrire a M<sup>r</sup> Le gouverneur general a qui elle L’adresse dittes devant Orangesse chef des p8te8atemis,” *CAOM*, série C11E, vol. 22, fols. 62-62v. Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil, a lieutenant in

These attacks inflicted a crippling psychological blow far beyond what the death toll would suggest. Carrying on a guerrilla war and randomly attacking anyone who strayed too far from their forts, the Foxes traumatized the peoples of Détroit. The Hurons, who seemed to bear the brunt of these attacks, complained in 1713 that the Fox incursions forced them to remain close to Fort Pontchartrain for “fear of having their heads broken every time” they ventured too far from it.<sup>54</sup> Commandant La Forest reported in October of the following year that Hurons and Ottawas remained sequestered in their forts and that the frequent “alarms” of imminent attack disturbed the peace at the place and that the Ottawas, Hurons, and Potawatomis remained confined to their forts.<sup>55</sup> The Governor of Montréal, Claude de Ramezay, likewise noticed that the peoples of Détroit did not go hunting “on account of their well-grounded fear that the Reynards will destroy them all, one after the other.”<sup>56</sup> As one clearly rattled Huron headman lamented, the Foxes were killing them “one by one.”<sup>57</sup>

The continued Fox incursions only bound the peoples of Détroit closer. At the very least, the continual threat of Fox or Kickapoo incursions dampened the rivalry which had sometimes separated these nations. The nations of Détroit had enemies aplenty and therefore saw no reason to alienate their allies and neighbors. Yet the conflict did more than simply reduce quarrels among the peoples of Détroit. The violence provided a shared experience of suffering and psychological torment, which encouraged the Miamis,

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the French Marines, saw evidence of a Fox war party headed toward Détroit in the summer of 1715.

“Copie d’une lettre par Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil (D’Adoucourt) à son père, Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil, Baron de Longueuil,” 22 Aug. 1715, CAOM, C11A, vol. 35, fol. 57v.

<sup>54</sup> Vaudreuil and Bégon to the Minsiter, 15 Nov., 1713, in *WHC*, 16:298.

<sup>55</sup> [La Forest], *Mémoire sur le Détroit*, 1 Oct. 1714, *NYCD*, 9:866.

<sup>56</sup> Claude de Ramezay to the Minister, 18 Sept., 1714, in *WHC*, 16:301.

<sup>57</sup> “Paroles que les Hurons ont prié M. Dubuisson d’envoyer à M. le gouverneur général,” [1715], CAOM, C11E, vol. 22, fol. 62.



Ottawas, Hurons, Ojibwas, and others to put aside their differences and to see each other as allies rather than rivals. More importantly, the continual violence—and the vulnerability it engendered—bred a deepening animosity toward the Foxes and their allies. Constantly alert for potential attacks and confined to their forts, the peoples of Détroit felt vulnerable and increasingly resented their Fox tormentors. Indeed their resentment of the Foxes ripened into a genocidal hatred of the Foxes and anyone who dared side with them.<sup>58</sup> As their hatred of the Foxes grew, their resentment of one another abated. The animosity toward the Foxes drew attention away from their old grievances and rivalries and pulled them into ever greater harmony.

United in their hatred of the Foxes, the nations d'en haut once again joined forces to destroy their common enemies. In 1713, eight hundred Ottawa, Huron, and Miami warriors amassed to launch a raid against the Foxes and apparently inflicted a blow on them.<sup>59</sup> In 1715, the French and their allies launched a formal campaign against the Foxes, supported by several hundred French coureurs de bois. When an outbreak of measles in the pays d'en haut and a poor harvest derailed the campaign, the nations d'en haut took their own initiative.<sup>60</sup> The Hurons and Détroit Potawatomis, joined by a

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<sup>58</sup> A growing chorus of native leaders called for the “entire destruction” of the Foxes and their allies. Makisabé confessed that he hoped to “entirely destroy” the nations (“d[é]tuire Enti[è]remen[t]s L8tagamis et Le Mask8tins”). “Parolles de Makisabé chef P8t8atamis du 17 aout 1712,” CAOM, C11A, vol. 33, fol. 87v. For similar statements, see Marest à Vaudreuil, 19 June 1713, in *Ibid.*, vol. 34, fol. 80; “Réponses de Vaudreuil au paroles du Brochet, de Saguima et de Miscouaky,” 28 Aug. 1713, in *ibid.*, 34:73v; Dubuisson à Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:540; Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 Sept. 1712, in *ibid.*, 559-60; [Léry], “Mémoire,” 1712, in *Législature de Québec, Collection de manuscrits*. 1:625.

<sup>59</sup> Claude Michel Bégon, “Reestablishment of Michilimackinac,” 20 Sept., 1713, in *WHC*, 16:296; Ramezay to the Minister, 18 Sept. 1714, in *ibid.*, 300; Council of the Marine, “Plans for Settling Difficulties with Fox Indians,” 28 March 1716, in *ibid.*, 339.

<sup>60</sup> Vaudreuil and Bégon to the Minister, 20 Sept. 1714, in *WHC*, 16:303-306; Ramezay, “Reponces aux parole des hurons adressez à M<sup>r</sup>. Le marquis de Vaudreuil par M<sup>r</sup>. Dubuisson à M<sup>r</sup>. de Ramezay,” [1715], CAOM, C11E, vol. 22, fols. 62-62v; Ramezay, “Response aux parole d'onangessé chef des p8te8atamis,” [1715], in *Ibid.*, fols. 64-64v; Copie de la lettre de D'Adoucourt à Longueuil, 22 Aug. 1715, CAOM,

contingent of Canadian Iroquois warriors and a few French soldiers, traveled to the Illinois village of Kaskaskia, where they invited the Illinois to attack a nearby Mascoutin and Kickapoo camp. In late November of that year, the combined force attacked the village and killed or captured 150 men and uncounted women and children.<sup>61</sup> Buoyed by this success, the French launched another campaign in the summer of 1716. The combined force defeated a Fox settlement near Green Bay and imposed rigorous conditions on them.<sup>62</sup>

Although the decisive victory in 1716 quieted the Foxes' aggressive stance, the nations of Détroit remained wary and distrustful of the Green Bay nations. In August 1720, Alphonse de Tonty, now commandant at Détroit, reported that the Détroit Potawatomis had agreed to attack the Foxes and that he thought the Miamis, Illinois, and other nations would join them.<sup>63</sup> When Vaudreuil invited these nations to attack and "destroy" the Foxes the following year, the Hurons, Ottawas, and Potawatomis agreed that such a war was necessary.<sup>64</sup> Tonty reported in 1722 that the peoples of Détroit intended to attack the Foxes in the spring of the following year and in fact the Saginaw Ottawas did make a raid in 1723.<sup>65</sup> In 1728, the Ottawas, Potawatomis, Hurons and other

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C11A, vol. 35, fols. 56-60v; Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 13 Sept. 1715, in *ibid.*, vol. 34, fols. 5-8v; Louvigny au ministre, 3 Oct. 1715, in *ibid.*, fols. 220-23v.

<sup>61</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minister, 14 Oct. 1716, *MPHSCR*, 33:576-77.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 577-79; Louvigny to the Council of the Marine, 13 Oct. 1716, in *WHC*, 5:78-80; Vaudreuil to the Council of the Marine, 30 Oct. 1716, in *ibid.*, 80-81; Vaudreuil to the Council of the Marine, 30 Oct. 1730, *ibid.*, 16:377-78.

<sup>63</sup> Vaudreuil to the Council of the Marine, 22 Oct. 1720, in *ibid.*, 393.

<sup>64</sup> Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amérique Septentrionale adressé à Madame la Duchesse de Lesdiguières* (Paris: Chez Rollin Fils, 1744), 383.

<sup>65</sup> After the Ottawas' raid, the nations of Détroit apparently backed away from their plans to attack the Foxes. In the summer of 1723 they told Foxes that they planned only to remain on their mats. According to Vaudreuil, the allies feared that the Foxes would attack Détroit in retribution for the Saginaw Ottawas' attack, suggesting that they still feared the Fox and their allies. Tonty à Ramezay, (10 March 1723), *MPHSCR*, 33:710; Vaudreuil au ministre, 2 Oct. 1723, in *WHC*, 16:528-30.

nations joined a French expedition commanded by Lignery against the Foxes and participated in other attacks on the Foxes and their allies in subsequent years.<sup>66</sup>

The net effect of these conflicts, then, was a period of sustained cooperation and relative harmony among the peoples of Détroit that lasted from 1712 until the early 1730s. During these years, the quarrels of the proceeding decades abated. The nations of Détroit seemed to forget, or at least subordinated, their old animosities. Hatred of the Foxes washed clean the blood spilled in 1706 and following years. Groups which had previously promised the destruction of their neighbors now sent their young men in common raiding parties against the Foxes, their allies, and Onontio's enemies to the south. In the face of intimidating and foreign enemies, the nations reaffirmed their old friendships. As Ramezay noted in the aftermath of the 1716 Fox defeat, the Ottawas and other nations d'en haut had been "peaceably disposed" and "their relations with each other have been amicable."<sup>67</sup>

Within months of Ramezay's observation, however, the Ottawas had killed the Iroquois-Miami family. Even while conflict with the Foxes healed the wounds opened in 1706 and drew the nations of Détroit in closer harmony, other forces continued to reopen them. Amidst this Pax Vulpinae, the nations of Détroit and their neighbors in the region

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<sup>66</sup> Louis Crespel, ed., *Voyages du R.P. Emmanuel Crespel dans le Canada et son naufrage en revenant en France* (Frankfurt, 1752), 5; Constant le Marchand de Lignery to François de Beauharnois de La Boische, Marquis de Beauharnois, 30 Aug. 1728, in *WHC*, 17:31; Jean Baptiste de St. Ours, sieur Deschallions to Beauharnois, 22 Aug. 1728, *MPHSCR*, 34:69; Le président du conseil de marine au Père Duparc, 2 May 1729, CAOM, série B, 53:541; Nicolas Joseph des Noyelles to Beauharnois, [1731], *MPHSCR*, 34:122-28; Beauharnois and Hocquart to the Minister, 1 Oct. 1732, in *ibid.*, 97-100; Louis Henri Deschamps, sieur de Boishébert to Beauharnois, 2 Nov. 1732, in *ibid.*, 104-105. These renewed hostilities with the Foxes merged with new conflicts against the Chickasaws. Deschallions à Beauharnois, 22 Aug. 1728, in *ibid.*, 69; Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre, 1 Oct. 1732, in *ibid.*, 100; Beauharnois to the Minister, 30 May 1733, *WHC*, 17:181-82; Beauharnois to the Minister, 24 July 1733, *MPHSCR*, 34:108-109.

<sup>67</sup> "Indian Affairs in the West," 6 Jan., 1717, in *WHC*, 345.

continued to wage a desperate contest to establish commercial and strategic prominence begun in the previous decade. Each nation tried, with whatever resources they could muster, to shape the region in their interests, often at the expense of their neighbors.

## **II. The Iroquois of the North: The Anishinaabe Alliance**

The violence on the Maumee in 1717 was part of an Anishinaabe response to what they perceived to be a serious challenge to their long-held dominance in the region: the southern alliance. Connected by ties of real and fictive kinship and united by a common language and culture, the Anishinaabe peoples—the various Ottawa, Ojibwa, and Potawatomi communities that lived throughout the region—formed a powerful commercial and diplomatic network which had allowed them to dominate the region since at least the fall of Huronia. As one historian has put it, the Anishinaabe were the “dominant people” in the region during the eighteenth century.<sup>68</sup> Yet the emergence of the southern alliance had threatened to undermine Ottawa commercial and diplomatic dominance in the region by creating a rival network which explicitly excluded the Ottawas and their Anishinaabe partners. If successful, the Miami-Iroquois-Huron configuration could provide a serious military and commercial threat to the Anishinaabe.<sup>69</sup> In response to this threat, the Anishinaabe mounted a coordinated effort to maintain control of the region. This section explores how the Anishinaabe, united by

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<sup>68</sup> Peter MacLeod, “The Anishinabeg Point of View: The History of the Great Lakes Region to 1800 in Nineteenth-Century Mississauga, Odawa, and Ojibwa Historiography,” *Canadian Historical Review* 73 (1992): 209.

<sup>69</sup> As the Ottawas understood well, this alliance could defeat them militarily as well. Vaudreuil explicitly worried that a coalition of the Hurons, Miamis, and Iroquois, could destroy the Ottawas. Vaudreuil to the Minister, 4 Nov. 1706, *NYCD*, 9:780.

culture and ties of real and fictive kinship, cooperated to dominate the pays d'en haut. The following section narrates their joint response to the threat raised by the southern alliance between 1704 and 1717.

Shortly before the fall of New France in 1760, an anonymous British official compiled a rough census of the peoples occupying the pays d'en haut. Referring to the "Ottawas, Chepaways [Ojibwas], Putuvatimies [Potawatomis], Melkomineys, or Shockeys," he suggested that the "Nations are in confederacy somewhat like the Six Nations" Iroquois.<sup>70</sup> While the analogy exaggerates the formality of the Anishinaabe alliance—or "Ottawa Confederacy" as other British officials sometimes called it—the official nonetheless recognized that the Anishinaabe people had formed a powerful strategic and commercial alliance.<sup>71</sup> By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Anishinaabe peoples had formed a loose coalition of culturally similar, interrelated, and diplomatically allied peoples which their descents would later call the "Three Fires."<sup>72</sup> This Anishinaabe network allowed goods, information, and people to flow easily throughout the region from Anishinaabe settlements at Sault Ste. Marie, Manitoulin Island, Michilimackinac, Saginaw Bay, the St. Joseph River, Green Bay, and Détroit. The "Three Fires" also formed an intimidating military alliance which worked together to

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<sup>70</sup> "Accounts of the Western Indians," in *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, ed. Sylvester Stevens and Donald Kent, Northwestern Pennsylvania Historical Series (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1942-1943), Series 21655:86.

<sup>71</sup> "Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson Bart with the Indians on his Way to, and at the Détroit in 1761," in *WJP*, 2:487, 490, 494; Johnson to Amherst, 6 Oct. 1763, in *WJP*, 10:866; "Enumeration of Indians within the Northern Department," 18 Nov. 1763, *NYCD*, 7:583.

<sup>72</sup> Peter MacLeod. "Une conspiration générale: The Exercise of Power by the Amerindians during the War of Austrian Secession" (Ph.D. diss., Dept. of History, University of Ottawa, 1992), 6-10, 18-20; Donald Fixico, "The Alliance of the Three Fires in Trade and War, 1630-1812," *Michigan Historical Review*, 20:2 (Fall 1994):1-25; Newbigging, "The French-Ottawa Alliance," 337-47; Havard, *Empire et métissages*, 206-209.

fight external threats, such as the Dakotas, Iroquois, Foxes, and, in the eighteenth century, the southern alliance. This section argues that the Anishinaabe alliance was built on a common Anishinaabe cultural tradition, nourished and sustained through intermarriage between peoples and frequent travel between villages, and expressed in strategic cooperation and trade. This cooperation allowed the Anishinaabe people to dominate affairs in the pays d'en haut.

As it had for the Hurons and Iroquois, a common cultural tradition served as the basis for the relationship between the Anishinaabe peoples. Nineteenth century accounts even suggest that, by that time at least, the Anishinaabe peoples claimed a common ancestral people. Just as they did among the Iroquois in the seventeenth century, this shared mythic past created a sense of exclusive kinship and familiarity.<sup>73</sup> The Potawatomis, Ojibwas, and Ottawas moreover spoke very similar Algonquian dialects, which both facilitated communication between them and confirmed their sense of commonality.<sup>74</sup> James Smith, a British colonist captured by Kahnawake Iroquois, pronounced the Ottawa and Ojibwa dialects “nearly the same.”<sup>75</sup> Indeed, the languages

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<sup>73</sup> James Clifton, *The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture, 1665-1695* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977), 32-35; Newbigging, “The French-Ottawa Alliance,” 343-44; Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534-1701* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 81.

<sup>74</sup> The Ottawa language is in fact a dialect of eastern Ojibwa. Although previously classified as an Ojibwa dialect, Potawatomi is now recognized as a distinct language. Still it “shows many parallels” with Ojibwa and Ottawa. James Clifton, “Potawatomi,” in Trigger, *The Northwest*, vol. 15, *HNAI*, 725.

<sup>75</sup> “An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Colonel James Smith...during His Captivity with the Indians, in the Years, 1755, '56, '57, '58, and '59,” in Samuel G. Drake. Ed. *Indian Captivities, or Life in the Wigwam* (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1852), 213; Mémoire de Sabrevois, 1718, COAM, C11A, 39:358.

were closely related enough that the French Crown only maintained one Algonquian-speaking interpreter at the post.<sup>76</sup>

In addition to language, the Anishinaabe peoples shared other cultural traditions. In 1718 Jacques Charles Sabrevois, Sieur de Bleury, the commandant at Détroit, asserted that the Mississauga Ojibwas' "manners are the same" as the Ottawas.<sup>77</sup> The Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas were so similar, in fact, that Charles Stuart, an Anglo-American colonist taken to Détroit by his Huron captors, could not differentiate between the Anishinaabeg he met at the post. Stuart berated Lewis Evans's influential "General map of the middle British colonies in America," for listing the "Poutewatamis," "Outawas," and "Sississogaes [Mississaugas]" separately.<sup>78</sup> These were not distinct nations, Stuart insisted, but only "different Names given to the Same Nation." He likewise referred to the Potawatomi village at Détroit as "an Outotoway Town."<sup>79</sup> Given the close proximity in language and culture, Stuart confused the different peoples and called them all "Outotoway." As they had among the Hurons and Iroquois, these common bonds of culture facilitated, although they did not dictate, diplomatic cooperation between these peoples.

If this common cultural tradition served as a basis for cooperation, the exogamous marriage between different Anishinaabe peoples facilitated cooperation between these peoples. When the Shawnees and Delawares threatened the Potawatomis in 1771, for

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<sup>76</sup> "Reply of the Governor-General to the Memorial Presented by Monsieur de la Mothe Cadillac on the 31st of March, 1706," *MPHSCR*, 33:256.

<sup>77</sup> *Mémoire de Sabrevois*, 1718, CAOM, C11A, vol. 39, fol. 358.

<sup>78</sup> Lewis Evans, "A General Map of the Middle British Colonies, in America," 1755, Newberry Library, ChicagoMap4F3790.

<sup>79</sup> "The Captivity of Charles Stuart, 1755-57," in Beverley W. Bond, Jr., ed., *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* vol. 13 (1926-1927): 75-76, 80.

example, the Potawatomis gave the Ottawas a wampum belt asking for safe harbor for their women and children. As the Potawatomi put it, the Ottawas and Ojibwas were “all Relations, being intermarry’d with one another.”<sup>80</sup> Such unions, of course, created diplomatic and personal bonds between the peoples, and created webs of loyalty and kinship which enhanced the connections between peoples. Their relations were never distant strategic alliances between peoples, but real, affective bonds connecting peoples.<sup>81</sup>

These connections of loyalty and marriage, then, knit the Anishinaabe peoples together into a regional alliance. In many important respects, the Anishinaabe alliance resembled Jon Parmenter’s description of the Iroquois League in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Like the Iroquois League, the Anishinaabe recognized a common culture, perhaps one derived from a common ancestor, and spoke mutually comprehensible languages. Exogamous marriage between individuals from different communities, moreover, fostered loyalty and kinship networks that extended past the village and wove the villages together. These connections created what Parmenter, referring to the Iroquois communities, calls a “geography of solidarity” which connected Anishinaabe across a wide swath of the Great Lakes.<sup>82</sup> Anishinaabe people easily moved through an Anishinaabe social world which stretched from Sault Ste.-Marie and other Ojibwa settlements in Lake Superior, down to Saginaw Bay, Détroit, Toronto, and west to the St. Joseph River and Green Bay. These connections allowed goods and

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<sup>80</sup> George Turnbull to Thomas Gage, 29 May 1771, in *WJP*, 8:116-18.

<sup>81</sup> Donald Fixico emphasizes the “socio-kinship nature” of the Three Fires (“The Alliance of the Three Fires in Trade and War, 1630-1812,” 2, 10).

<sup>82</sup> In addition to resembling Parmenter’s description of the Iroquois, the Anishinaabe enjoyed a predominance in the Great Lakes not unlike that achieved by the Comanche, although neither can realistically be called an “empire.” Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods*, xi; Pekka, Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).



information to pass quickly through the region, and allowed the peoples to pursue commercial and military strategies in their common interest. Anishinaabe leaders constantly met together to discuss joint issues, and Anishinaabe warriors left Détroit in joint war parties destined for the Flatheads, Foxes, or other enemies. The Ottawas, for example, helped the Sauteur Ojibwas fight the Dakotas in the early eighteenth century and sought to revenge the Miami attack on their Mississauga Ojibwa “comrades” in 1706.<sup>83</sup> Capable of fielding a joint army of nearly twelve hundred warriors by the 1750, the Anishinaabe alliance could easily face any challenge to its authority.<sup>84</sup> By these means, the Anishinaabe established a powerful grip on the region, one that they were loath to surrender the Hurons, Miamis, and Iroquois.

Yet to say that the Anishinaabe cooperated and frequently intermarried is not to suggest that the nations abandoned their separate identities in favor of a pan-Anishinaabe one, any more than the Senecas or Mohawks jettisoned their autonomy by joining the Iroquois Confederacy. Indeed the Ojibwas, Potawatomis, and Ottawas maintained separate villages at Détroit, indicating a spatial and psychological boundary between the peoples. These villages squared off against one another on the lacrosse field; as Sabrevois observed they “play village against village, the [Potawatomi] against the [Ottawas] or the Hurons.”<sup>85</sup> While it might be facile to liken such competition to an inter-city rivalry between two sports teams, the practice does suggest that Anishinaabe attributed meaning to the differences separating them.

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<sup>83</sup> “Conseil tenu au fort Pontchartrain le 8 March 1706,” CAOM, F3, vol. 2, fol. 320v.

<sup>84</sup> MacLeod estimates that there were “460 Odawas, 480 Ojibwas, and 220 Potawatomis” warriors (MacLeod, “*Une conspiration générale*,” 7).

<sup>85</sup> “il jeux vilage contre vilage; les poux contre les outaouac ou les hurons,” “Mémoire de Sabrevois,” 1718, COAM, C11A, vol. 38, fol. 356v.

More seriously, two eerily similar Ottawa attacks on the Potawatomis at St. Joseph separated by twenty years reveal much about relations among Anishinaabe communities. In 1734 a Saginaw Ottawa party encountered and murdered two Potawatomi men and a woman, and, as the commandant at St. Joseph reported, the Potawatomis were “determined to Avenge their deaths on the Outa8acs.”<sup>86</sup> Twenty years later, after another Ottawa party killed a Potawatomi man and woman, the French learned that the Ottawas and Ojibwas from Saginaw were planning “to make war on the Potawatomis of the St. Joseph River.”<sup>87</sup> That such conflict between Anishinaabe peoples was rare and easily resolved without bloodshed tells us much about the relationship among those groups. That it could happen at all tells us more. The Anishinaabe, bound by close cultural and kinship ties, coordinated their movements and deployed a geographic strategy which ensured Anishinaabe dominance in the pays d’en haut and influence far beyond. Yet, as the Ottawas’ willingness to attack the Potawatomis demonstrates, these separate Anishinaabe peoples continued to act with a great deal of autonomy. This, then, was the central dynamic of the Anishinaabe alliance—no matter how much they cooperated or how often they married one another, they continued to view each other as closely related, but ultimately different peoples.

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<sup>86</sup> “les Poutoüatamis sont determines a Venger leur morts sur les Outa8acs du Saguinan,” Beauharnois au ministre, 11 Oct. 1734, COAM, C11A, vol. 61, fols. 314v-315; “Entierement racomodée,” Beauharnois au ministre, 15 Oct. 1736, in *ibid.*, vol. 65, 135; “Mémoire des frais que moy le Verchere Commandant a Missilimakina ait fait en mil Sept Cens trente,” 1730, in *ibid.*, vol. 76, fol. 240; Newbigging, “The French-Ottawa Alliance,” 342-43.

<sup>87</sup> Joseph-Gaspar Chaussegros de Léry, “Journal,” 1754-1755, *RAPQ*, 8:406-407, 414.

### III. The Anishinaabe Response

Their alliance had allowed the Anishinaabe people to dominate affairs in the Great Lakes Region, yet the Huron-Iroquois-Miami configuration threat posed a serious challenge to that dominance. That alliance had, after all, explicitly excluded the Ottawas and their Anishinaabe partners. Cheanonvouzon had snubbed his Ottawa rivals in 1702 and 1708 by visiting Albany with the Miamis, and actively sought to distance the Ottawas from the Iroquois and their British partners.<sup>88</sup> Cheanonvouzon had positioned the southern alliance as an explicit rival to the Anishinaabe.

Not only would an alliance of Miamis, Iroquois, and Hurons rival the military might of the Anishinaabe, it would also threaten their commercial monopoly on the region. Since the fall of Huronia, the Ottawas had worked carefully to dominate the trade of the region. In addition to strengthening ties with the Anishinaabe neighbors, many Ottawas had married into French mercantile families, who recognized the Ottawas' connections.<sup>89</sup> They therefore stood to lose much from the southern alliance. If successful, the Miami-Iroquois-Huron configuration promised to reorient the political landscape of the pays d'en haut away from Michilimackinac and from Anishinaabe hegemony toward the south.<sup>90</sup> Détroit—positioned much closer to the entrepôts of Fort St. Joseph, home of the Miamis and Potawatomis, as well as the Iroquois trading posts in Lake Ontario, and Albany itself—would slowly displace or at least compete with

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<sup>88</sup> “Conference of Lord Cornbury with the Indians, Albany,” 20 July 1702, *NYCD*, 4:981.

<sup>89</sup> Newbigging argues against the portrayal of the Ottawas as the commercial “middlemen” of the pays d'en haut. Newbigging “The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance.” 3-8.

<sup>90</sup> As the Ottawas understood well, this alliance could defeat them militarily as well. Vaudreuil explicitly worried that a coalition of the Hurons, Miamis, and Iroquois, could destroy the Ottawas. Vaudreuil to the Minister, 4 Nov. 1706, *NYCD*, 9:780.

Michilimackinac (see figure 7). In turn, the Miamis and Hurons would no longer play second fiddle to the Ottawas. To be sure, the competing alliance would never displace the Ottawas entirely; the French demanded the high-quality furs only found in northern climes. Yet the Miami and Huron ascendancy would erode the Ottawas' profound influence in the region.

In order to undermine the southern alliance, the Anishinaabeg, led by the Ottawas, pursued an evolving geopolitical strategy. The Ottawas first sought, through diplomatic maneuvering, to disrupt the alliance by fostering animosity between the Hurons and Senecas in 1704. When this failed, the Ottawas hoped that they might subvert the relationship by forging their own ties with the Senecas, as well as with the other four Iroquois nations and the British in 1708. Blunted by a continuing hostility between Ottawas and Senecas, the Ottawas finally sought to circumvent the southern alliance altogether. Calling upon their Anishinaabe allies, a group of Ojibwas whom they called the Mississaugas, for help, they tried to establish their own relationship with the British and hence mitigate the influence of the Hurons and Miamis. The Mississaugas, who maintained villages both at *Détroit* and near the Iroquois outposts on Lake Ontario, seemed perfectly poised to help their Ottawa allies form their own trading alliance with the British. After this attempt, too, failed, the Ottawas took their revenge on the hapless Iroquois and Miami couple in 1717. The Ottawas' unwillingness to acquiesce their control over the region to their Huron and Miami neighbors, the lengths to which they were prepared to blunt those nations' influence, and especially their willingness to attack their erstwhile partners in 1717, shows the level of animosity which separated the peoples

of the pays d'en haut. The Ottawas seemed willing to sacrifice solidarity in the face of the Fox threat if it meant retaining their dominance of the region.

The Ottawas first tried to disrupt the southern alliance. They first struck in 1704. Distressed by the Huron-Miami trip to Albany two years earlier, they hoped to poison the nascent relationship. Accordingly, some Ottawas from Michilimackinac and Détroit accompanied the Hurons and Miamis to Seneca territory in August, where they offered condolences for recent Wea attacks on the Iroquois.<sup>91</sup> Once they arrived in Iroquoia, however, the Ottawa warriors abruptly attacked the Senecas and Onondagas “without giving any reason for doing so” and took six Iroquois prisoners.<sup>92</sup> They took these captives first to Détroit, where they ostentatiously paraded them for all the nations to see and then distributed the prisoners to their allies.<sup>93</sup> The Ottawas apparently hoped that the Iroquois would blame the Hurons and Miamis for the attack and judge them guilty by association with the Ottawas. According to Lamothe Cadillac, the Ottawas even planted a distinctive Huron club on a slain Iroquois warrior.<sup>94</sup> Once the Five Nations realized the Hurons’ apparent betrayal, the Ottawas surmised, the emerging alliance would collapse.<sup>95</sup> At the same time, the Ottawa leader identified only as Tyhadagro, sent a representative to Albany, escorted Mohawks, to meet with the English and Dutch traders and find a “good

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<sup>91</sup> “Paroles des Hurons, Outaouais et Miamis de Détroit aux Tsonnontouans,” 30-31 July 1704, *MPHSCR*, 33:190-91.

<sup>92</sup> “Parolles des Sauvages Sonnontou8ans à Monsieur le Gouverneur general et les reponses,” 12 Sept. 1704, in *CAOM*, F3, vol. 2, fols. 315-216; “Parolles de la grande terre Chef Onontagué a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 18e octobre 1704, et les réponses,” 18 Oct. 1704, in *ibid.*, fols. 317-17v. The Ottawas later claimed that they had carried out the attack because the Iroquois had failed to return Ottawa captives, as they had promised to do in the Great Peace of 1701. “Reponses de Monsieur le Gouverneur general [aux Iroquois],” 15 Aug. 1705, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 22, fols. 276v-77.

<sup>93</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minister, 4 Nov. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:301-302.

<sup>94</sup> “Memoir of Lamothe Cadillac,” 19 Nov. 1704, in *Ibid.*, 235. For the Iroquois use of distinctive clubs to communicate messages, see Jon Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods*, xl, 243.

<sup>95</sup> Newbigging presents this reading of the attack (“History of the French-Ottawa Alliance,” 267-69).

Market” for the furs.<sup>96</sup> By simultaneously courting the English and Iroquois and framing the Hurons, the Ottawas hoped to disrupt the southern alliance and forge their own connections to the Iroquois and English.

Far from sundering the Hurons and Miamis from the Iroquois, however, the Ottawas’ 1704 attack only provoked the Iroquois wrath against the Ottawas. The Iroquois blamed the Ottawas, and not the Hurons, for their perfidy and for breaking the terms of the Great Peace.<sup>97</sup> Traveling to Montréal in the fall of that year, the Senecas and Onondagas denounced the Ottawas’ aggression and only grudgingly agreed to defer their revenge.<sup>98</sup> That winter the Senecas caught and killed an Ottawa warrior whom they found lurking near Cataroquoi.<sup>99</sup> In late May 1706, the Senecas informed colonial officials in Albany that some of the “farr Indians [e.g. the Ottawas] have taken up the hatchet against the 5 Nations” and that the confederacy planned to meet in Onondaga to discuss the situation.<sup>100</sup> Afraid of the resumption of war with the Iroquois, Vaudreuil sought to reconcile the Ottawas and Iroquois. He convinced the Ottawas to “replace” the

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<sup>96</sup> “Propositions made by three Mohogs and Some River Indians and Waganher [Ottawa] Come from Tiogsagrondie [Détroit],” 20 June 1704, in Lawrence Leder, ed., *The Livingston Records, 1666-1723* (Gettysburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956), 196-97.

<sup>97</sup> Newbigging claims that the Ottawas’ stratagem succeeded in alienating the Hurons and Iroquois. Yet the Iroquois neither blamed the Hurons for the strike nor explicitly implicated them in the attack when speaking to the French. Instead, they specifically and exclusively blamed the “outa8as.” Indeed, the following year, an Iroquois messenger reported that the Hurons were considering moving to Iroquois territory, suggesting that the two nations were not at odds. The Iroquois cooperation with the Hurons in 1706 and their conference in 1708 demonstrate further that the alliance remained quite intact. (Les Outaouais “ayant frapéz sur Nous, sans leur en avoir donné aucun sujet). “Parolles des Sauvages Sonnontou8ans a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 12<sup>e</sup> Sept. 1704”, CAOM, F3, vol. 2, fols. 315-315v; “Parolles de la grande terre Chef Onontagué a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 18<sup>e</sup> octobre 1704,” in *ibid.*, fols. 317-17v.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> “Parolles des Iroquois à Mons<sup>r</sup> le gouverneur general le 4<sup>e</sup> aoust 1705,” CAOM, C11A, vol. 22, fol. 276v; “Parolles des Iroquois a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 16<sup>e</sup> aoust 1705,” in *ibid.*, fol. 268v.

<sup>100</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 43.

dead Iroquois warriors with captives, which they did in the summer of 1706.<sup>101</sup> Yet the Ottawa attack on Détroit that summer shattered the fragile peace.<sup>102</sup> The Senecas visited Vaudreuil in August and demanded justice for their offended Miami and Huron allies. Huffing that it was the Ottawas' "usual manner" to attack without reason, the Five Nations bluntly informed Vaudreuil that they planned to attack the Ottawas and that they would not be dissuaded.<sup>103</sup> A delegation of Senecas also traveled to Détroit, where they joined with the Hurons and Miamis in demanding vengeance. Assembled together at Détroit, the Huron, Miami, and Seneca allies agreed that "We will not have peace [with the Ottawas]; that must not be spoken of."<sup>104</sup> When Lamothe Cadillac pardoned Mekoua the following year, the Iroquois apparently conspired with the Miamis and Hurons to attack the Ottawas and to murder Lamothe Cadillac.<sup>105</sup>

Having catastrophically failed to estrange the Iroquois from the Miamis and the Hurons, the Ottawas revisited their strategy. Their efforts to estrange the Miamis and Hurons from the Iroquois had only strengthened that southern bond. The Ottawas

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<sup>101</sup> The Ottawas insisted upon calling the Iroquois, their younger brothers ["cadets"], suggesting a rivalry for status within the French alliance and the Ottawa conceit that they remained closest to Onontio's heart. "Parolles du Pesant a Monsieur le Gouverneur general le 4<sup>e</sup> aoust 1705," CAOM, C11A, vol. 22, fols. 257-59; "Parolles des Iroquois à Mons<sup>r</sup> le gouverneur general le 4<sup>e</sup> aoust 1705," in *ibid.*, fols. 276-77v; "Parolles des Iroquois a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 16<sup>e</sup> aoust 1705," in *ibid.*, fols. 269-70; "Parolles des outaouois de Michilimakina a Monsieur le Gouverneur general du 22<sup>e</sup> aoust 1705," in *ibid.*, fols. 260-61v; "Parolles de Mons<sup>r</sup> le gouverneur aux Iroquois, [22 Aug. 1705]," in *ibid.*, fols. 272-72v; "Parolles des outaouois aux Iroquois du 23<sup>e</sup> aoust 1705," in *ibid.*, fols. 255-55v; "Parolles adressées a monsieur le marquis de Vaudreuil par Onáskin Chef des outaouas," 1 Aug. 1705, in *ibid.*, fols. 238-42.

<sup>102</sup> The Senecas might have actually helped plan the attack. The Ottawas claimed that a Seneca woman had warned them of an imminent Miami and Huron attack in the spring of 1706, suggesting that the Senecas had at least been aware of Cheanonvuzon's plot. Aigremont to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:434.

<sup>103</sup> "Words of the Sonnotuans with the replies of the Marquis de Vaudreuil," Aug. 1705, in *ibid.*, 285-88.

<sup>104</sup> Cadillac to Vaudreuil, 27 Aug. 1706, in *ibid.*, 280-81.

<sup>105</sup> The missionary, Jean Marest, repeated a rumor that the Miamis had given the Iroquois presents inviting them to attack the Ottawas and this alliance had made the Miamis "bold." Lord Cornbury confirmed that the Miamis and Hurons met with the Iroquois and British in Albany in 1708. Marest to Vaudreuil, 4 June 1708, in *ibid.*, 385; Aigremont to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 33:436; Lord Cornbury to the Board of Trade, 20 Aug. 1705, *NYCD*, 5:65.

decided that, if they could not destroy that alliance, perhaps they could supersede it by creating their own, separate relationship with the Iroquois and British. Beginning in 1708, they tried to forge their own relationship with the Iroquois, concluding a peace with the Five Nations and visiting Albany in 1711. Despite their best efforts and constant French hand-wringing about the possibility of an Ottawa-Iroquois trade, lingering animosity between the Ottawas and the Iroquois frustrated Ottawa attempts to establish a relationship with the Iroquois and British like that enjoyed by the Hurons and Miamis.<sup>106</sup>

In hopes of forming their own separate peace with the Five Nations, the Ottawas sent messengers to the Senecas in August 1708 and asked them to clear the “Path that was formerly opened to them down to Albany” through Seneca country.<sup>107</sup> The following year the Ottawas and Senecas agreed to purge “all past evil thoughts” and to unite in a “fast & everlasting peace.” In 1710, the Ottawas ratified this peace with the Senecas and with the other four Iroquois nations assembled at Onondaga and proceeded to Albany where they met with British officials and merchants. The Ottawas promised to visit Albany again the following year, which they might have done.<sup>108</sup>

The “everlasting Peace” lasted scarcely the year. Despite their diplomatic overtures to the Ottawas, many Iroquois still had substantial misgivings about their new

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<sup>106</sup> French officials often invoked the threat of an Ottawa-Iroquois-British trade in order to justify their pet projects, such as the reinstatement of the licensing, or *cong *, system or war against the Foxes. For their part, the Ottawas used the threat of trade with the Iroquois to manipulate the French. Yet these very warnings suggest that the Ottawas had not yet formed such alliances, even if they threatened or wanted to do so. The potential for such commerce—not its actual denouement—bothered the French. Nor would the Ottawas’ threats to trade with the British mean much if they already did so frequently. Aigremont to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:402-403; Claude Michel B gon to the Minister, 20 Sept. 1713, in *WHC*, 16:297; Ramezay and B gon to the Minister, 12 Nov. 1714, *MPHSCR*, 33:572; “Paroles des chefs outaouais Saguima et Miscouaky   Vaudreuil,” 26 Aug. 1713, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 34, fols. 70v-71.

<sup>107</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 59.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-76. Unidentified natives from D troit visited Albany in July 1711 (*ibid.*, 90). The Potawatomi leader, Mikisab , alluded to the Ottawas’ trade with the British in 1712. “Paroles de Makisabi, chef pot ouatami, au Vaudreuil,” *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 33, fol. 89.



allies. The Ottawas had, after all, attacked the Iroquois at Cataroquoi without cause and had subsequently attacked the Miamis and Hurons. As the Iroquois bitterly observed, the untrustworthy Ottawas did not customarily speak from the “bottom of their hearts,” but from other, less pleasant, quarters.<sup>109</sup> Aware of this lingering animosity, indeed, British officials prohibited the Iroquois from drinking rum at the 1710 conference, lest they attack the Ottawa delegates in a drunken rage.<sup>110</sup> In August 1710, a scant two months after the peace negotiations at Onondaga, Seneca and Onondaga representatives complained to Vaudreuil about the Ottawas. The Ottawas had attacked them several times since the Great Peace in 1701, including the unprovoked attack in 1704 and the 1706 conflict. Until now, the Iroquois had followed Vaudreuil’s will and postponed their vengeance, but now they demanded justice. The Great Peace had declared, after all, that if any nation attack another and fail to make amends, then the others would unite to punish the offenders.<sup>111</sup>

In January 1711, representatives of all Five Nations told the Albany Commissioners much the same thing. The Ottawas had “at several Times murdered sundry of their People & offered them repeated Insults.” They had decided, accordingly, to “take Revenge” against the Ottawas.<sup>112</sup> Regardless of French and British opposition, the Iroquois proceeded with their preparations. Either that year or the following, the Senecas reportedly invited the Weas to join an Iroquois attack on Détroit and explicitly

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<sup>109</sup> “il [l’Outaouais] parle du fond du Cœur, et non pas du bout des leurs, comme il a coutume de faire,” “Parolles des outaouais aux Iroquois du 23<sup>e</sup> aoust 1705 et Reponces des Iroquois,” CAOM, C11A, vol. 22, fol. 255.

<sup>110</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 71.

<sup>111</sup> “Paroles des Tsonnontuans et Onontagués...et Réponse de Vaudreuil,” 8 Aug. 1710, CAOM, C11A, vol. 31, fols. 100-100v.

<sup>112</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 80.

warned them not to tell the French or the Hurons about the plans.<sup>113</sup> In the summer of 1712, rumor had it that the Five Nations, led by the Onondaga leader Teganissorens, planned an attack on Détroit<sup>114</sup>

Although the Iroquois' plans never came to fruition, thanks to intervention from the French, British, and ultimately the Senecas, the threat of war nonetheless slammed shut the symbolic path that the Ottawas and the Iroquois had opened between them. The following year, Paul Marest, the Jesuit missionary at Michillimackinac, reported that the Ottawas were "menaced" by the Iroquois and therefore dared not attack the Foxes.<sup>115</sup> And, of course, the Ottawas suspected Iroquois and British collaboration with the Foxes. In 1714, a Détroit Ottawa delegation confronted the Senecas and demanded to know why a group of Foxes, Mascoutins, and Kickapoos had visited Seneca early that year, suggesting they still suspected collusion between the Iroquois and the Green Bay nations.<sup>116</sup> The mutual suspicion guaranteed, at least for the short term, that the Hurons and Miamis would continue to enjoy access to the Iroquois and the British, and that the Ottawas would not. The Ottawas had been on the verge of superseding the southern alliance, but their long and problematic history with the Five Nations ultimately scuttled their détente. No matter how much the French might fear it, the Ottawa-Iroquois alliance remained incomplete.

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<sup>113</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 17 Sept. 1712, CAOM, C11A, vol. 34, fol. 281.

<sup>114</sup> "Résumé des lettres de Vaudreuil au ministre," Nov. 1712 [May 1713], in *ibid.*, vol. 123, fols. 24-28.

<sup>115</sup> "Copie d'une lettre du missionnaire Joseph-Jacques Marest à Vaudreuil," 19 June 1713, in *ibid.*, vol. 34, fol. 81v.

<sup>116</sup> The Senecas confirmed that the Foxes, Mascoutins, and Kickapoos had indeed visited them and invited them to attack the Illinois. The Senecas told the Ottawas that they had declined the offer and later offered Vaudreuil some "medicine" to purge the differences between them and the Ottawas. "Parolle des deutes sononta8ans [Senecas] qui ont voulu parler a Montreal le 25<sup>e</sup> Sept. 1714," *Ibid.*, vol. 34, fols. 297-97v; "Reponce de M<sup>r</sup> de Longueuil aux Sononta8ans [Senecas] de la part de Monsieur De Ramezay du 30<sup>e</sup> Sept. 1714," in *ibid.*, fols. 298-98v; Ramezay and Bégon to the Minister, 23 Oct. 1712, in *WHC*, 16:310.

Early in 1710, representatives had complained both to the English and the French that the “Wagenhaes”—the Iroquois name for the Ottawas—had frequently murdered their people and that the Five Nations were “determined to take Revenge” against them.<sup>117</sup> Some Senecas and Onondagas confirmed this to Vaudreuil in 1710, complaining that the Ottawas had repeatedly attacked them since 1701 and that they would no longer defer their vengeance. They also reported trouble with the Potawatomis, the Ottawas’ Anishinaabe allies.<sup>118</sup> In the summer of 1712 the Senecas reported that the Onondaga headman, Teganissorens, had spent the previous winter plotting an attack on Détroit and had invited the other four nations to join him.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, Vaudreuil learned of an anticipated British invasion of New France in 1711 and had called all the nations d’en haut to protect Montréal from invasion, which added to the sense of alarm and gave credence to the rumor that the Foxes were in league with the British.<sup>120</sup>

The Ottawas had thus tried in 1704 to alienate the Iroquois and Hurons and in 1711 to forge their own alliance with the Five Nations and failed on both accounts. Now, they and the Potawatomis looked to their old friends and fellow Anishinaabe people, the Mississaugas, for help. Since the turn of the century, the Mississaugas, who had established villages at Détroit as well as the Iroquois entrepôts of Niagara and

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<sup>117</sup> Peter Wraxall, *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs*, 80-84.

<sup>118</sup> The Iroquois were also at odds with the Potawatomis who had recently attacked them. “Paroles des Tsonnontuans et Onontagués...et Réponse de Vaudreuil,” 8 Aug. 1710, CAOM, C11A, vol. 31, fols. 99-100v.

<sup>119</sup> Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 Nov. 1712, in *ibid.*, vol. 33, fols. 57-58; “Résumé des lettres de Vaudreuil au ministre,” in *ibid.*, vol. 123, fols. 24-28.

<sup>120</sup> “Memorandum to Serve as Instructions from the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Officers and *Voyageurs* Despatched to Bring Down to Montreal the Savages of the Upper Country,” 10 March 1711, *MPHSCR*, 33:497.

Cataroqui, had developed powerful economic ties with the Iroquois and the British.<sup>121</sup> The Ottawas therefore hoped that their old allies might help them finally make a meaningful and sustained partnership with the Iroquois and, in the process, disrupt the southern alliance. Although the Mississaugas enthusiastically cooperated and the Ottawas nearly reached Albany in 1717, however, their attempts failed yet again, thanks to an unfortunate twist of fate. This latest disappointment apparently motivated the Ottawa warriors to attack and kill the Iroquois/Miami family later that summer.

In the first decade of the eighteenth century, the Mississaugas deployed a sophisticated geographic and commercial strategy. By maintaining villages both on Lake Ontario and at Détroit, they insinuated themselves as crucial intermediaries in the region. They began by establishing settlements near the Iroquois on Lake Ontario. Having fought viciously to expel the Iroquois from the northern shore of the lake during the seventeenth century, the Mississaugas settled at the key Iroquois trading posts in the pays d'en haut—Cataroqui (the site of the French post, Fort Frontenac), at the eastern entrance to Lake Ontario, and Niagara, at the western terminus of the lake—as well as smaller settlements (see figure 9).<sup>122</sup> Having settled at Niagara and Cataroqui, the Mississaugas established another settlement near Détroit, just north of Lake St. Clair,

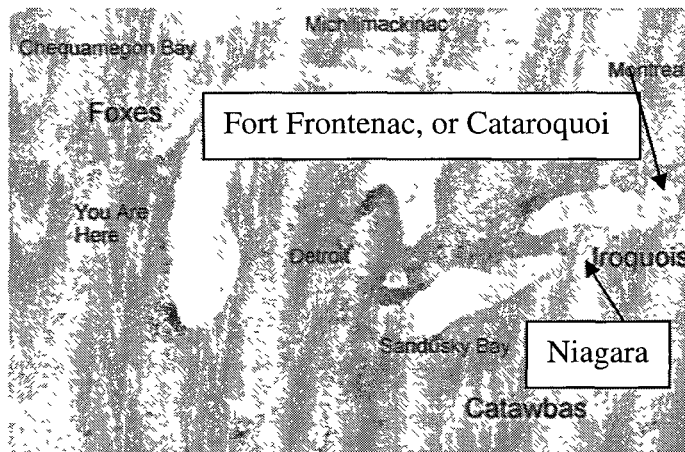
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<sup>121</sup> Richard Haan. "The Covenant Chain : Iroquois Diplomacy on the Niagara Frontier, 1697-1730," (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1976).

<sup>122</sup> Donald Smith, "Who are the Mississaugas?," *Ontario History*, 67:4 (1974) :211-22, Leroy Eid, "The Ojibwa-Iroquois War: The War the Five Nations Did Not Win," *Ethnohistory*, 26:4 (fall 1979): 297-324; Peter Schmalz, "Role of the Ojibwa in the Conquest of Southern Ontario," *Ontario History*, 76:4 (Dec. 1984): 325-7; Representatives of Five Nations and "Protestant Maquase Indians" and Bellomont, 30 Aug. 1700, *NYCD*, 4:737; Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 52; Charlevoix, *Journal*, 5:288, 332-37; "Dénombrement des nations sauvages qui ont rapport au gouvernement du Canada, des guerriers de chacune avec leurs armoiries," 1736, CAOM, C11A, vol. 66, fol. 255v; Hocquart, "Détail de tout la colonie," 1737, in *ibid.*, vol. 67, fol. 103v; "Conseil Tenu assés les Missisaguéz par Monsieur de Bourmont Commandant du fort pontchartrain ce 26 mars 1706," in *ibid.*, F3, vol. 2, fol. 323.

with other Ojibwa groups in the early eighteenth century.<sup>123</sup> From Lake St. Clair, the Mississaugas could easily and quickly ascend the river which the French referred to as the Duluth, portage to the Grand (Thames) River, and continue down to the vicinity of Toronto.<sup>124</sup>

With villages both at Détroit and on Lake Ontario, the Mississaugas positioned themselves as essential couriers carrying furs from the Upper Great Lakes to Albany and British products (especially Caribbean rum) to Détroit. Not only did they trade with the Iroquois who lived in Lake Ontario, but, more troubling to the French, the Mississaugas actually went to Albany itself, where they traded their furs for British goods and particularly Caribbean rum. The Commissioners of Trade in Albany reported that the headman Kaucka and four others of the “Mesasaga Nation” had arrived in May 1709. Kaucka framed his visit as a business trip, telling the Commissioners of Indian Affairs that he was seeking “the best Market” for his furs. He promised that, if the rates at



**Figure 9: Major settlements in Lakes Ontario and Erie.** The Mississaugas occupied the crucial entrances to Lake Ontario, Niagara in the west and Cataroquoi, site of Fort Frontenac, in the east.

<sup>123</sup> Cadillac to the Minister, 31 Aug. 1703, *MPHSCR*, 33:162; [Sabrevois], *Memoir on the Indians between Lake Erie and the Mississippi* [1718], in *WHC*, 16:370; Charlevoix, *Journal*, 409-10.

<sup>124</sup> The Mississaugas could also use the Thames River to gain access to Lake Huron (Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, “Journal de la Campagne que le Sr de Léry,” 1749, *RAPQ*, 7:335, 339-40).

Albany pleased him, more of his people would return there. When the delegation left two weeks later, the commissioners gave the Mississaugas a wampum belt “to come to Albany & Trade.”<sup>125</sup>

The Mississaugas, in turn, traded British goods to their neighbors at Détroit. As early as 1708, Joncaire, a French officer stationed at Niagara, complained that the Mississaugas of Détroit frequently brought their pelts to the Iroquois, who proceeded to trade these to the Albany merchants.<sup>126</sup> That the Détroit Mississaugas—those from Lake St. Clair—regularly traded in Lake Ontario suggests that the Mississaugas settled at Détroit cooperated with those living at Niagara and Cataroquoi to shuttle goods between Détroit and Albany. The Albany Commissioners confirmed in 1711 that the Mississaugas “from the Country about Tuchsakrondie,” or Détroit, came to Albany to trade.<sup>127</sup> That year Commandant La Forest identified the Mississaugas, along with the Hurons and Iroquois, as purveyors of British goods at Détroit.<sup>128</sup> In 1714 Vaudreuil and Intendant Michel Bégon de la Picardière claimed that the Mississaugas, unable to obtain French brandy, had traded all their beaver pelts to the British for rum.<sup>129</sup> The following year, Claude de Ramezay, governor of Montréal and acting governor-general, complained that Mississaugas and Amikwas—another Ojibwa people—traded with the

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<sup>125</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 66-67.

<sup>126</sup> Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, CAOM, C11A, vol. 29, fol. 31v.

<sup>127</sup> The British only identified these visitors as “Farr Indians from the Country about Tuchsakrondie.” They indicated, however, that the nation had been to Détroit two years beforehand and that they brought back a belt that they had been given at that time. Since the Mississaugas had visited in 1709 and had been given a belt, which had belonged to Montour, these “farr Indians” were probably the Détroit Mississaugas. Moreover, Vaudreuil noted that the Mississaugas had attacked the Miamis that year as they returned from Albany, confirming that they visited the British post that year. Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 87; “Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages...” [1711], *MPHSCR*, 33:503.

<sup>128</sup> La Forest au ministre, 1711, CAOM, C11A, vol. 120, fol. 125.

<sup>129</sup> Vaudreuil et Bégon, au ministre 20 Sept., 1714, in *ibid.*, vol. 34, fol. 235v.

Iroquois when they ventured into Lake Erie to hunt. When Ramezay confronted them about trading with the British, the Mississaugas remained defiant. They told him that they preferred trading with the French at Frontenac to trading with the British, but that the British offered them better rates and, significantly, provided them with sufficient liquor.<sup>130</sup> Three years later, the commandant of Détroit, reported that the Mississauga man, Itacougik, had brought some of this liquor to his neighbors at the post.<sup>131</sup>

Calling upon their Anishinaabe allies, the Ottawas hoped to turn the Mississaugas' position and relationship with the Iroquois to their advantage. The Ottawas living at Michilimackinac and Manitoulin Island had long lived near and traded with the Mississaugas living northwest of Lake Huron and the Sauteurs, Ojibwas living at Sault Ste. Marie on Lake Superior. The groups continued that alliance at Détroit, both establishing villages near the post. The Ottawas acknowledged their close association with the Mississaugas in 1706 when they complained of the Miami attacks on their Ojibwa "comrades" in 1704 and 1705.<sup>132</sup> After the 1706 clash, the Mississaugas aided the bloodied Ottawa refugees and considered counterattacking the Miamis and Hurons.<sup>133</sup> The Ottawas' aggressive stance toward the Foxes had also been premised on that nation's conflict with the Ojibwas.<sup>134</sup>

Shortly after the Ottawa-Iroquois truce collapsed, then, the Ottawas and Mississaugas collaborated to open a trading network with the Iroquois and the British. The Mississaugas, at the prompting of the British, had actually been endeavoring to do

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<sup>130</sup> Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 7 Nov. 1715, *Ibid.*, vol. 35, fol. 27v-28v.

<sup>131</sup> Sabrevois to Vaudreuil, 8 April 1718, *MPHSCR*, 33:582-83.

<sup>132</sup> "Conseil tenu au fort pontchartain 9<sup>e</sup>. mars" 1706, CAOM, F3, vol. 2, fol. 320-20v.

<sup>133</sup> Lamothe Cadillac à Vaudreuil, 27 Aug. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:279.

<sup>134</sup> Newbigging, "The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance," 304-308.

this for some time. Hoping to establish themselves as intermediaries between the Iroquois and the Ottawas, the Mississaugas had frequently invited the Ottawas to trade with the British and Iroquois. As early as 1711, they gave the Ottawas four belts on behalf of the British, inviting them to trade with the Iroquois and British.<sup>135</sup> Three years later, Ramezay alleged that the British had sent messages and gifts to the Ottawas through their “emissary,” a Mississauga man named Itacougik.<sup>136</sup> The British had even floated the idea of establishing a trading post at the Mississauga settlement on Lake Ontario in order to trade more directly with the Ottawas and other Anishinaabeg.<sup>137</sup> Itacougik returned to Détroit again in 1716 with a shipment of rum and a message for the Ottawas and Potawatomis living at the post. Distributing some wampum belts, the Mississauga go-between told his Anishinaabe cousins that they were “very foolish to adhere to the French, that they rob them.” The British, in contrast, offered cheap trade goods, would accept all of their furs, and would grant them liquor in abundance. The Mississaugas’ invitation found a willing reception.

The Ottawas had tried and failed to establish a relationship with the Iroquois for years. The Mississaugas now offered them an opportunity to finally succeed. Holding secret councils during the autumn and winter of 1716 and 1717, the Ottawas and Potawatomis decided to try yet again to establish a relationship with the Iroquois. In order to accomplish their goals, the Ottawas had turned to their longtime allies and Anishinaabe cousins. Moreover, they involved the third member of the triple alliance,

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<sup>135</sup> Ramezay au ministre, 1 Nov. 1711, CAOM, C11A, vol. 32, fol. 110v.

<sup>136</sup> Ramezay and Bégon to the Minister, 12 Nov. 1714, *MPHSCR*, 33:572; Ramezay to the Minister, 16 Sept. 1715, in *WHC*, 16:320-21.

<sup>137</sup> Ramezay au ministre, 28 Oct 1715, CAOM, C11A, vol. 35, fol. 91v.



the Potawatomis, but not the Hurons, in the project.<sup>138</sup> In doing so, the Ottawas explicitly acknowledged the ties which connected the Anishinaabe peoples and the growing gulf between the Anishinaabe and the Hurons, who had tried to and partially succeeded in establishing a rival alliance.

Yet this attempt, like the previous ones, was ill-fated. A convoy of seventeen Détroit and Saginaw Ottawa and Potawatomi canoes left Détroit in the spring of 1717 headed for Albany. Serendipitously for the French, the would-be traders made it no further than Lake Ontario, where they met Alphonse de Tonty, the new commandant of Détroit, on his way to assume command of the post. Alarmed that the Ottawas and Potawatomis might take their furs to Albany, the officer held a series of councils. He offered sixty blankets at the bargain price of five beaver pelts per blanket—the price they fetched at Albany—and other presents to dissuade the Ottawas and Potawatomis from continuing to New York. At length, the convoy agreed and some returned to Détroit with the commandant while others continued to Montréal to do more trading and to speak with the governor.<sup>139</sup>

Once again the Ottawas had tried to establish their own ties with the Iroquois and British and once again their attempts had failed miserably. They would have to continue trading with Mississauga and Iroquois middlemen for British goods and liquor. More importantly, they had failed to split or outmaneuver the southern alliance. The Miamis and Hurons maintained good relations with the Iroquois and continued to trade with

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<sup>138</sup> Sabrevois à Vaudreuil, 8 April 1717, *MPHSCR*, 33:582-83.

<sup>139</sup> “Paroles des Outaouais et des Potéouatamis arrivés de Détroit à Montréal, en route pour aller faire la traite à Orange, et réponses de M. de Vaudreuil,” 24 June 1717, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 38, fol. 172-75; Vaudreuil to the Council of the Marine, 12 Oct 1717, *MPHSCR*, 33:490-92.

them. This latest failure clearly incensed the Ottawas. They had tried several times to gain access to the British but such an alliance remained out of their reach, hampered by poor relations with the Iroquois and by determined French opposition. The Ottawas could only sit by quietly while the Hurons and Miamis progressively reoriented the region toward the Iroquois and Albany. The Ottawas feared that they would lose their coveted dominance in the region.

If the Ottawas repeatedly failed to cultivate ties to the Iroquois and the British, the Miamis had no such problem.<sup>140</sup> After the Hurons proctored an alliance between the Iroquois and Miamis, the Miamis and Iroquois had formed an important commercial partnership. In 1707, in fact, the St. Joseph River Miamis moved closer to the Iroquois, establishing a village at the portage of the Maumee River.<sup>141</sup> Uneasy about the Miamis' physical and diplomatic proximity to the Iroquois, the Mississaugas attacked some Miamis in 1711, as the Mississaugas returned from trading with the British.<sup>142</sup> This rivalry actually may explain the Miami attacks on the Mississaugas going back to 1704. Noting that the Miamis had "long wished" to trade with the British, Gov. Vaudreuil sent François-Marie Bissot de Vincennes (Vincennes) in 1711 to prevent them from doing so. Three years later, Dubuisson, still commanding at Détroit, again sent a Huron delegation to the Miamis to prevent them from concluding an "alliance that they would like to make

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<sup>140</sup> MacLeod, "*Une conspiration générale*," 33.

<sup>141</sup> Cadillac invited them to move to this place, which brought them closer to Détroit than they were at the St. Joseph River settlement. The new settlement was twelve leagues (around twenty-six miles) from Fort Pontchartrain. "Résumé of Letters from Lamothe Cadillac with commentaries, 10, 15 Sept., 1 Oct. 1707," *MPHSCR*, 33:338; "Parolles de M<sup>r</sup> de la Motte que M<sup>r</sup> de Boucherville fait dire au miamis en general," 24 Nov. 1705, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 24, fols. 365-66. The Weas also moved to Ouiatenon, a settlement on the Wabash near present-day West Lafayette, Indiana.

<sup>142</sup> "Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages..." [1711], *MPHSCR*, 33:503-504. The resentment continued after 1711. The Mississaugas refused to make peace with the Miamis in the aftermath of the 1712 siege. Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:551.

with the English and the Savages, their friends.”<sup>143</sup> Despite these precautions, however, the French could not prevent the Miamis and Iroquois from forming an alliance or from trading together. Senecas allegedly met with the Weas and Miamis in 1713 and invited them to attack Détroit with them.<sup>144</sup> In 1715, the Miamis, as well as the Weas and Illinois, reportedly met with traders from North Carolina.<sup>145</sup> The following year, just months before the Ottawa warriors attacked and killed the Miami-Iroquois family, the Iroquois had secretly sent the Miamis and Weas wampum belts inviting them to trade at a new post on the Wabash River.<sup>146</sup> These embassies eventually bore fruit for the Iroquois and British. In 1717, Tonty reported that “an Iroquois man and a miami man” had brought 200 pots of rum to Détroit “from the English,” suggesting the maturation of a powerful Miami-Iroquois alliance.<sup>147</sup> In 1719, moreover, Iroquois ambassadors escorted between eight and ten Miami canoes to Albany, and Vaudreuil conceded that the Miamis were “very much under the influence of the English and Iroquois.”<sup>148</sup> By 1721, Vaudreuil averred that the Iroquois traveled to the Maumee settlement “almost every year” to trade and to invite them to go to Albany and to new British trading posts in the Ohio Valley.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>“ l’alliance qu’ils Vouloient faire avec les anglois et les Sauvages leurs amis,” ”Délibération du conseil,” 9 April 1717, CAOM, C11A, vol. 123, fol. 272 -272v.

<sup>144</sup> “Paroles des Hurons descendus du fort Pontchartrain du Détroit à Vaudreuil,” 7 Nov. 1713, in *ibid.*, vol. 34, fol. 66-66v.

<sup>145</sup> Ramezay au conseil, 28 Oct. 1715, in *ibid.*, vol. 35, fol. 90v.

<sup>146</sup> “Indian Affairs in the West,” 6 Jan. 1717, in *WHC*, 16:345.

<sup>147</sup> “Délibération du Conseil de Marine sur une lettre de Vaudreuil et Bégon datée du 20 octobre 1717,” 7 Dec. 1717, CAOM, C11A, vol. 37, fol. 379v.

<sup>148</sup> Vaudreuil to the Council of Marine, 22 Sept. 1720, in *WHC* 16:394; Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 122.

<sup>149</sup> “Proceedings of Council regarding letter (dated Oct. 6, 1721) of Governor Vaudreuil,” 2 Dec. 1721, in *WHC*, 16:399.

The Miamis' reported discussions with the Iroquois and British in 1716 coincided with the Ottawas' latest failure to reach Albany themselves. This unhappy concurrence meant disaster for the hapless Iroquois-Miami family. The family, after all, represented the kind of relationship that the Ottawas had long coveted and repeatedly failed to create—a commercial alliance with the Iroquois and thereby with the British. Not only did the warriors resent the Miamis' success in trading with the Iroquois and British, but they also feared what that relationship might ultimately mean for their position in the pays d'en haut. The warriors might have hoped that the attack would have strained relations between the Iroquois and Miamis, disrupting their intimacy. Iroquois custom may have held the Miamis liable for the death, since it occurred at their village.<sup>150</sup> More likely, however, the Ottawas acted as they did simply out of anger. They had launched their attack, after all, right after the botched attempt to reach Albany earlier that summer. The murder—rather than enslavement—of the couples' children also bespeaks an irrational rage directed at their parents' nations and the political and sexual intimacy that produced them. No matter how much fear and hatred of the Foxes pulled the nations together, their competition for ascendancy in the pays d'en haut pushed the Miamis, Ottawas, and other nations apart.

## Conclusion

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<sup>150</sup> In 1681 an Illinois warrior had murdered a Seneca headman in the Kiskakon Ottawa village at Michilimackinac in the presence of the Hurons. According to missionaries, Iroquois custom held both the Kiskakous and Hurons culpable for the attack, since they did not immediately kill the Iroquois perpetrator. The same might have applied to the Miamis, who were present at the death of the Iroquois man. Jacques Chesneau de la Doussinière et d'Ambault, "M. du Duchesneau to the Minister concerning the Indian nations," 13 Nov. 1681, *NYCD*, 9:163-65; "Extracts of the Advice Given at the Conference held with the Reverend Jesuit Fathers on the Subject of News from the Iroquois," 23 March 1681; in *Ibid.*, 171.

Although the Miamis, Ottawas, and Hurons made a “good peace” in September 1717, the nations did not thereby stop competing for commercial or political ascendancy. Indeed, events in the pays d’en haut made the British and Iroquois even more attractive. The peoples of Détroit found the prices there poor and the conduct of the commandants disrespectful. During his tenure as commandant, Jacques-Charles de Sabrevois, Sieur de Bleurry, had disregarded commercial and diplomatic protocol by refusing to treat the local headmen to feasts.<sup>151</sup> Tonty proved little better than his predecessor.<sup>152</sup> The Hurons later confided that they could no longer abide Tonty and demanded that the new governor, the Marquis de Beauharnois, relieve the man of his command.<sup>153</sup> Both Sabrevois and Tonty, furthermore, had restricted the natives’ access to French brandy.<sup>154</sup>

Impelled by these forces, the Ottawas, now more determined than ever, finally “broke thro” the French obstacles and reached Albany in the early 1720s. The Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs reported that sixteen “Ottowawa Indians” reached the post in 1722.<sup>155</sup> In 1723, a much larger convoy of eighty Ottawa, Potawatomi, and even Huron traders, along with their wives and children, finally arrived in Albany. Speaking for the convoy, Sagima told the British that the inability of the French to provide adequate goods prompted him to come to Albany. If the British would give them “goods cheape,” the Ottawas would forsake their French allies and even consider joining the vaunted Covenant Chain. The British happily consented and sent them back to Détroit

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<sup>151</sup> Paroles des outa8as du saguinan, et des poute8atamis, [1717], CAOM, C11A, vol. 38, fols. 172-75.

<sup>152</sup> Sabrevois to Cadillac, [ca. 1718], *MPHSCR*, 33:694.

<sup>153</sup> “Ordonnance du gouverneur Beauharnois accédant à la demande des Hurons de rétablir la liberté du commerce à Détroit,” 21 Aug. 1727, CAOM, C11A, vol. 48, fol. 122; “Paroles des Hurons de Détroit,” 9 Aug. 1727, in *Ibid.*, vol. 34, fols. 49-51.

<sup>154</sup> Louvigny au conseil, 15 Oct. 1720, *Ibid.*, vol. 41, vols. 238-240; Vaudreuil et Bégon au conseil, 26 Oct. 1720, in *ibid.*, vol. 41, fol. 19v; Charlevoix, *Journal*, 381-82.

<sup>155</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 136, 140.

laden with twenty-six gallons of rum among other goods.<sup>156</sup> After the 1724 assembly, the Ottawas returned to Albany. During a trip to Iroquois country in 1725, Charles le Moyne de Longueuil, a French captain, counted a hundred canoes of various nations, including the Ottawas and Mississaugas, either destined for or returning from trading with the British.<sup>157</sup> Vaudreuil owned that the Ottawas appeared to be “as much in the interest of the English and Iroquois as they appear to be in ours.”<sup>158</sup> After 1727, the Ottawas also frequently traded with the British at the new trading post south of Lake Ontario, Oswego.<sup>159</sup> At long last the Ottawas had forged a commercial relationship with the Iroquois and the British. They could, with little French interference, trade for scarlet woolens, rum, and other necessities. In some measure, the Ottawas had circumvented the southern alliance. Yet if the Ottawas had finally gained access to the British, they had not dismantled the Huron-Miami-Iroquois alliance that had long troubled them. Although some Hurons had accompanied Sagima’s delegation in 1723, the Hurons arrived again the following two years without the Ottawas.<sup>160</sup> The Hurons and Iroquois continued to collaborate through the next four decades.

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<sup>156</sup> Gov. Burnett (New York) to Lords of Trade, 25 June 1723, *NYCD* 5:684; “Conference between the Commissioners of Indian Affairs and some Western Tribes,” 29 May 1723, in *Ibid.*, 693-97; Cadwallader Colden, “Account of the Trade of New-York,” in *Ibid.*, 5:687; Burnett to Lords of Trade, 9 August 1724, in *Ibid.*, 5:709-10.

<sup>157</sup> Lettre de Longueuil et Bégon au ministre, 31 Oct. 1725, CAOM, C11A, vol. 47, fols. 136-26v.

<sup>158</sup> “les 8ta8acs des pays d’En haut qui sont auoird’huy autant dans les interêts des Anglois et des Iroquois qu’ils paroissent être dans les nôistres,” Vaudreuil au ministre, 22 May 1725, in *ibid.*, vol. 47, fol. 167v.

<sup>159</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 197; The British Superintendent for Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson, noted that the Ottawas traded there regularly, but only for goods that they could not obtain from the French. Sir William Johnson, “A Review of the progressive State of the Trade, Politics and proceedings of the Indians in the Northern district,” *NYCD*, 7:957. The Hurons told an English captive that they could reach the post in ten days. “An Account of the Captivity of Charles Stuart,” 1757, Beverley W. Bond, ed., in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 13 (1936), 75. For more on the establishment of Oswego, see Parmenter, “The Edge of the Woods,” 43.

<sup>160</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 152, 159.

This narrative of competition and strife, in the midst of a period of common alarm, provides insight into the political and cultural tapestry of the pays d'en haut. Since the seventeenth century, tremendous pressures had threatened to obliterate the distinct ethnic communities in the region and to refashion them into one large French-allied polity. In many respects they appeared to have done so. They had cooperated during the long struggle against the Five Nations throughout the latter half of the seventeenth century. When those struggles ended in 1701, these peoples pledged to subordinate their individual interests to the interests of the whole, to bring their disputes to Onontio to mediate, and to remain in harmony. In subsequent years they (sometimes) heeded these requests, seeking out the governor's guidance to resolve their quarrels. Moreover, they addressed each other as "brothers" and often professed to share a "single body." In many ways, they seem to have substituted their individual identities for a larger regional "French" one.

In 1717, however, the nations d'en haut did not act like "French" Indians, but as members of individual communities pursuing distinct and explicitly incompatible goals. Even in the face of a determined external threat, they responded, not by collapsing into an undifferentiated mass, or by abandoning their ethnic distinction, or even by suppressing their animosity for one another any longer than absolutely necessary. Instead they continued to vie for advantage even when that competition might threaten their collective safety against a common foe. That they did so suggests that they continued to define themselves as members of separate and competing ethnic groups. This recognition goes a long way to explaining the communities' behavior. Seeing themselves as members of

distinct nations, they sought to advance themselves at the expense of the others, by force if necessary, and only cooperated with their neighbors when it suited them. Their identities as members of distinct communities fundamentally ordered how they interacted with each other and with the French.



## CHAPTER THREE

### “Inseparable Companions” and Irreconcilable Enemies: The Huron and Ottawas

The Détroit Hurons were terrified. Huddling behind their hastily-repaired palisade in 1738, they listened as the Ottawas, their neighbors and erstwhile allies, insulted and threatened them. And, when the Hurons ventured from their walls, the Ottawas made good on their bloody promises. As the elder Hurons trembling within their enclosure knew well, the current conflict with the Ottawas was but the most recent in a long and complicated relationship between the groups. That relationship had long oscillated between heart-felt affection and alliance and equally genuine disdain and conflict. In 1738 the pendulum swung decidedly toward animosity, threatening to rend the alliance permanently and to destroy the fragile French-led native alliance in the *pays d'en haut*. The longtime allies—once identified as “inseparable companions”—had become, in short order, irreconcilable enemies.<sup>1</sup> Even these groups, arguably the two most important allies in the French alliance, remained so fundamentally distinct, that they nearly came to war in 1738.

As near as the Marquis de Beauharnois, governor of New France, could tell, the most recent trouble between the Hurons and Ottawas had begun sometime in the spring of 1738. The Hurons settled near the French post of Détroit had called a conference with the other native groups settled at the post, the Potawatomis, Ojibwas, and Ottawas, to

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<sup>1</sup> Les Ottawas étaient “ Compagnons inséparables des Hurons, depuis que les Iroquois [Haudenosaunee] ont obligé les uns & les autres, à abandonner leur Pays.” Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Journal d'un Voyage*, 2 ed. Pierre Berthiaume, 2 vols. (Montréal : Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, [1744], 1994), 1:547.

announce that they had made peace with the Flatheads and to invite their neighbors to do the same. For years the Hurons had joined their allies in attacking the Flatheads, the Iroquois' name for several southeastern nations.<sup>2</sup> Now the Hurons cautioned their neighbors that, if they continued attacking the Flatheads, the Hurons would send couriers to warn their newfound friends. The Ottawas scoffed at the Hurons' suggestion. Did the Hurons not remember that the Flatheads had tortured and killed Ottawa warriors and that no one less than the Governor of New France had "given this Nation to be devoured by all the others"?<sup>3</sup>

The Ottawas and other Détroit groups soon gave the Hurons an opportunity to prove their loyalty to the Flatheads. In the summer of 1738 they organized a party of seventeen warriors to attack the southern nation. True to their word, the Hurons dispatched two parties to warn their southern allies and the Flatheads thus easily routed the Détroit natives, killing all but three of the invaders. If the loss of fourteen warriors was troubling, the news that the survivors brought was even more so; the Ottawa men had seen familiar faces among their attackers. Not only had the Hurons warned the Flatheads of the imminent attack, they had fought alongside them. The Hurons, the Ottawas'

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<sup>2</sup> The French tended to use the term "Tête-Plate," or Flathead, casually and promiscuously. Following the Iroquois, the French referred to several southeastern groups, including the Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws, as well as to a specific group bearing that name, as "Têtes-Plates." Daniel Richter concludes that the "Têtes-Plates" were probably the Catawbas of the Carolina Piedmont. The group with whom the Hurons allied, however, seems more numerous than the Catawbas—it consisted of at least ten villages—and thus probably included both the Catawbas and other allied nations. See Anon., "Dénombrement des nations sauvages qui ont rapport au gouvernement du Canada," in COAM, C11A, vol. 66 fol. 254v; Guillaume De L'Isle, "Carte du Canada et du Mississippi," 1702, photostatic reproduction, Louis C. Karpinski Map Collection, Box 1, Fol. 2, Aff. Étrangers, Newberry Library, Chicago; Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *WMQ*, 40:4 (Oct., 1983): 557; Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1739, in CAOM, série C<sup>11</sup>E, vol. 16, fols. 224, 227.

<sup>3</sup> "Notre Père Onnontio a donné cette Nation [à] manger [à] toutes les autres," Charles de Beauharnois de la Boische, Marquis de Beauharnois, au ministre, 6 Oct. 1738, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 69, fols. 125-126v.

neighbors and close allies for centuries, had, as the Ottawas complained, spilled the “blood of their brothers.”<sup>4</sup>

The fallout was swift. The Ottawas angrily confronted their neighbors, calling them “dogs” who were “capable of killing...your brothers.”<sup>5</sup> Terrified, the Hurons took refuge in their fortified village, scrambling to repair breaches in the walls and abandoning their fields to the crows and weeds.<sup>6</sup> That fall, the Hurons retreated to Sandusky, on the southern shore of Lake Erie, where they hoped to find some peace.<sup>7</sup> Although some Hurons returned to Détroit the following summer, the situation there remained tense. As late as the summer of 1740, some Ottawas warriors, who were destroying a Huron field, shot at a Huron women and, with “knife in hand,” chased two Huron children.<sup>8</sup> Despite Governor Beauharnois’ efforts to mend the rift, the Hurons ultimately decided that they could have no peace as long as they were “within sight of the [Ottawas]” and other groups. They implored the governor to grant them leave to join their fellow Hurons near Québec, where they could be safe from their enemies. When Beauharnois dithered, the Hurons finally decided to leave Détroit and settle on Bois Blanc Island, south of Détroit, where they hoped to be safe from the Ottawas’ wrath.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “le sang de leurs freres, L’outa8ais [Ottawas],” in *ibid.*, 126v-130v at 127v; “Résumé de lettres de Noyelles, Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et La Richardie,” 17 Sept. 1741, in *ibid.*, vol. 75, fol. 130-137v.

<sup>5</sup> “vous Etes des chiens non seulement vous Etes Capables de tüer vos freres, mais Encore Votre Pere,” Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1738, in *ibid.*, vol. 69, fol. 127v.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 128.

<sup>7</sup> Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1739, in CAOM, C11E, vol. 16, fol. 224; Roland-Michel Barrin de la Galissonière, Marquis de Galissonière et Gilles Hocquart, “Journal concernant ‘ce qui s’est passé d’intéressant dans la colonie...,” 7 Oct. 1747, *NYCD*, 10:114.

<sup>8</sup> “le couteau à la main,” Armand de la Richardie à Beauharnois, 26 Aug. 1740, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 75, fols. 136v-137

<sup>9</sup> Les Hurons cherchaient “un lieu de Sureté, n’en trouvant autant dans cet Endroit, à la vüe des les outaüiacs et sauteurs,” *Ibid.*; La Richardie to Jean-Baptiste de Saint-Pé, 26 Aug. 1740, *MPHSCR*, 34 :172.

The rift demonstrated a profound ambivalence of Huron-Ottawa relations. By 1738, the Hurons and Ottawas, especially the Kiskakons, had long been trading partners and close neighbors. The Hurons and the neighboring Tionnontatés, had lived to the east of Lake Huron, while the Kiskakon Ottawas settled nearby on the Bruce Peninsula. Living in such close proximity, the Ottawas traded furs, meat, and other goods for the Hurons' and Tionnontatés grain and produce.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the Tionnontatés welcomed Ottawa hunters to winter near their villages. When the Iroquois finally defeated the Hurons in 1649 some of the Hurons thus sought refuge with the Ottawas on Manitoulin Island and at Michilimackinac. Eventually these Hurons and some of the Ottawas moved to Chequamegon Bay in Lake Superior, where they settled in a single village, and, in the 1670s, to Michilimackinac.<sup>11</sup> On the northern shore of the Mackinaw Strait, the Hurons and Ottawas built their villages next to one another, separated only by a single palisade of stakes.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the groups had lived in intimate proximity for more than three decades by the early eighteenth century when they moved again, this time to a new French post established on the strait connecting Lakes Erie and Huron. Arriving at the post in the early eighteenth century, the Hurons and Ottawas continued their close relationship, born

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<sup>10</sup> Bruce Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*. 2 vols (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976), 62-65.

<sup>11</sup> Garrad and Heidenreich, "Khionontateronon (Petun)," in *HNAI*, 15:394-97; Johanna E. Feest and Christian F. Feest, "Ottawa," in *Ibid*, 772-86. The Jesuit missions of St. Ignace (Huron) and St. François de Borgia (Ottawa) sat on the northern shore of the Straits of Mackinac, which became an important strategic and commercial center. Cadillac, "Relation du Sieur de Lamothe Cadillac," *MDE*, 5:75-76. According to Margry, this manuscript was dated 1718 in another hand than Cadillac's. The description of Michilimackinac and the reference to Cadillac as commandant of Michilimackinac, however, suggests that the document dates to the captain's tenure at that post, from 1694-1698.

<sup>12</sup> Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, *New Voyages to North-America* (London, 1703 ; reprint, Chicago : A.C. McClurg, 1905), 143, 147.

of centuries of interaction in the Georgian Bay region and decades of cohabitation at Chequamegon Bay and Michilimackinac.<sup>13</sup> These long-time allies continued to interact as they long had, sending their young men on raids against common enemies, hunting game in the winter, playing lacrosse when there was no more work to be done, and, on occasion, as all neighbors, quarrelling and fighting. They were, by French observers' reckoning, "allies," "friends," even "brothers."<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, however, a persistent undercurrent of hostility permeated the Hurons' and Ottawas' relationship. Nicolas Perrot, an explorer, interpreter, and fur trader well-versed in native affairs, reported what had become general knowledge by 1689; "the Hurons [Hurons] have always sought to destroy the nations" of the pays d'en haut, and especially the Ottawas.<sup>15</sup> The Hurons themselves even testified to this animosity, warning the Iroquois in 1702 "not to trust the [Ottawas] for they are a brutish People."<sup>16</sup> Around the same time, the mission Indians of the Sault-Saint-Louis and Lac des Deux Montagnes noted that the Hurons had settled among "nations who do not love you."<sup>17</sup> In

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<sup>13</sup> William Newbigging contends that both some Hurons and some Ottawas had moved to the area as early as the 1690s and discounts Cadillac's claims that the groups came to settle there in the early eighteenth century ("The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance" (PhD. diss. Dept. of History, University of Toronto, 1995), 226).

<sup>14</sup> "Speech of Miscouaky...", 26 Sept. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:291; "Words of the Outaouais of Michillimackinac to Vaudreuil," 18-20 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 323.

<sup>15</sup> "On sçait bien que les Hurons ont toujours cherché à détruire les nations d'en haut." Nicolas Perrot, *Mémoire sur les moeurs, coutumes, et religion des sauvages de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, ed. J. Tailhan (Leipzig: A. Franck, 1864), 145.

<sup>16</sup> The Hurons, speaking to the British in Albany in 1702, referred to the Ottawas as "Dowaganhaes," the Iroquois name for that group. Lord Cornbury to the Board of Trade, 20 July 1702, *NYCD*, 4:989.

<sup>17</sup> "vous êtes au-milieu d'une multitude de nations qui ne vous aiment point, et dont vous ignorés les moeurs." In 1742, the Hurons recalled that these nations had come to them before they left Michilimackinac, but after the Marquis de Vaudreuil had become governor, meaning the exchange came in the first years of the eighteenth century. At the same conference, the Hurons noted that Vaudreuil had long ago invited them to leave "the Nations who hate" them and come live near him ("M. de Vaudreuil nous Exhorta dans ce tem[p]s, [à] quitter au plustôt des Nations qui nos haïssoient, et qu'il nous dit, ..retirés vous auprès de moy, vous y trouvons un agile assuré, un Père, un Protecteur"). "Paroles de Beauharnois à trois chefs hurons," 28 June, 1742, in *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 77, fol. 163v.

1705, Governor Philippe Rigaud de Vaudreuil fretted that the Hurons “are only waiting for an opportunity to avenge themselves” against the Ottawas and that they hoped to abscond to the Iroquois.<sup>18</sup> In 1707 he reiterated that the Hurons “would have very much liked to destroy the Outavois.”<sup>19</sup> This long-running Huron “animosity” against the Ottawas remained in 1718 when, according to Alphonse de Tonty, then commandant of Détroit, the Hurons silently hoped for a war between the Miamis and the Ottawas.<sup>20</sup> Even more than these observations, however, a series of sometimes violent clashes between the groups forcefully bespeaks an endearing mutual animosity. Born of ethno-cultural differences, exacerbated by the pressures of colonialism, and finally triggered by the immediate context of the Hurons’ reconciliation with the Flatheads, this nagging mistrust led to confrontation in 1738.

### **I. “people of whose customs you are ignorant”: Culture and Politics**

This animosity was premised, fundamentally, on a number of cultural and ethnic differences. This diversity, especially evident among the Iroquoian Hurons and the Algonquian-speaking Ottawas, survived the upheaval of the seventeenth century. Even after living “so close” to one another for some six decades, a colonial official reported in 1710, the two nations still retained distinct “customs.”<sup>21</sup> Cadillac also testified to the

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<sup>18</sup> “ils n’attendons que l’occasion pour se venger,” Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 May 1705, in *ibid.*, vol. 22, fol. 231v.

<sup>19</sup> Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 24 July 1707, in *ibid.*, 328.

<sup>20</sup> “l’animosité qu’ils [les Hurons] ont depuis Longtem[p]s Contre les 8ta8ais [Ottawas], qui désoir la guerre aluminée entre celles derniers et les Miamis,” Vaudreuil au Conseil de Marine, 30 Oct. 1718, *ibid.*, vol. 39, fols. 150v-151 ; Claude de Ramezay and Michel Bégon de la Picardière to the Minister, 7 Nov. 1715, *WHC*, 16:333.

<sup>21</sup> “les coutumes de ces derniers [les Hurons] sont différentes de celles des sauvages dont je vous ay parlé jusqu’à présent [les Ottawas] et quoyqu’ils fussent si proches de l’Outavois et quasi sous leur domination,

differences separating the Ottawas and the Hurons. While the four Ottawa nations shared much in common, he emphasized that “the Huron nation does not form a body” with them. Not only were the villages “separated one from the other by a palisade,” but the two spoke different languages and held different cultural traditions.<sup>22</sup> These cultural differences worked to separate the two nations and created an environment of mistrust and mutual incomprehension that, under the right circumstances, bred conflict.

Language was, of course, the most obvious difference. While the Hurons spoke an Iroquoian tongue, the Ottawa language belonged to the Algonquian language family. The Hurons could speak with other Iroquoians easily—the languages being as similar, by one estimation, as Norman and French—and the Ottawas could understand Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and certain other Algonquian languages.<sup>23</sup> But the differences between Huron and Ottawa were so great that the two groups could “only understand one another through interpreters.”<sup>24</sup> The inability to communicate presented a considerable challenge to the groups. Even the most mundane interactions required translation.<sup>25</sup> The net effect was to enforce a sense of separateness between the two neighbors. For this reason, the Jesuits assigned separate missionaries to the Hurons and Ottawas at Michilimackinac, and the

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ils ne les ont point changées,” Antoine Denys Raudot, and Antoine Silvy, *Relation par lettres de l'Amérique Septentrionale (années 1709 et 1710)*, ed. Camille de Rochemonteix (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, editeurs, 1904), 131.

<sup>22</sup> “Rélacion de Lamothe Cadillac,” [ca. 1694], *MDE*, 5 :80-81.

<sup>23</sup> In fact, Iroquois people often served as interpreters at conferences between the Hurons and British, Lahontan, *New Voyages*, 733; “Conference between the Commissioners of Indian Affairs and some Western Tribes,” 29 May 1723, *NYCD*, 5:693.

<sup>24</sup> “Elle [la nation Huronne] parle une langue différente, en sorte que les uns et les autres ne s’entendent que par les interprètes,” Cadillac, “Relation du Sieur de Lamothe Cadillac,” [ca. 1698], *MDE*, 5:80.

<sup>25</sup> François Clairambault d’Aigremont, “Letter of Sr. d’Aigremont,” 14 Nov. 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:433.

French later maintained separate interpreters for each group at Détroit.<sup>26</sup> This isolation could easily breed mistrust. The Hurons found the Ottawas incomprehensible, and therefore unpredictable, and vice versa.<sup>27</sup>

More abstractly, language became a marker of difference and, to the Hurons' minds at least, inferiority. According to Gabriel Sagard, the Hurons did not bother to learn the Algonquian languages of their neighbors before the fall of Huronia because they did not "feel the need to learn another."<sup>28</sup> Sagard's observation indicates that the Hurons may have seen the Algonquian-speakers' language as an indicator of cultural backwardness. Their cultural cousins, the Iroquois certainly did. Philological evidence suggests that "Dowaganhaw"—the generic Iroquoian term for a western Algonquian-speaker—meant "one who rolls (or gulps) their words."<sup>29</sup> In contrast, the Iroquois referred to another Iroquoian-speaking people "those who speak the language of men."<sup>30</sup> This wording communicates much about the Iroquois' attitudes toward Algonquian peoples. Not only did the Algonquian-speakers mumble and swallow their words, their inability to speak an Iroquoian tongue classified them as non-humans, and thus perhaps as other-than-human persons like animals and slaves. Just as the ancient Greeks mocked

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<sup>26</sup> Vaudreuil, "[Reply of the Governor-General to the Memorial Presented by Monsieur de la Mothe Cadillac on the 31st of March, 1706]," in *ibid.*, 256.

<sup>27</sup> James Axtell describes the intrinsic hazards of the inscrutable other. See *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 42-43.

<sup>28</sup> Gabriel Sagard Theodat, *Histoire du Canada et Voyages que les Freres mineurs Recollects y ont faicts pour la conversion des infidelles*, 4 vols. (Paris : Librairie Tross, 1866), 1:226. I would like to thank my colleague Céline Carayon for bringing this quotation to my attention.

<sup>29</sup> Frederick Hodge, "Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico in Two Parts," in Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin*, 2 vols. (Government Printing Office, 1912), 2:136.

<sup>30</sup> The specific reference is to the "ontati on□a," which bears at least a passing resemblance to "Tontady-haga," the Iroquois name for the Hurons or "Tionontaté" ("les ontati on□é, c'est des hommes ainsi nommés par les iroquois parcequils s'entendent"). "Dénombrement des nations sauvages qui ont rapport au gouvernement du Canada, des guerriers de chacune avec leurs armoiries," 1736, CAOM, C11A, vol.66, fol. 254v.



the indecipherable “barbarians” at their borders, the Iroquois, and perhaps their Huron cousins and relatives, discounted those foreigners who grunted and murmured like animals rather than speaking like humans.

If language was the most noticeable difference, the subsistence strategies each group employed, and the resulting social, cultural, and political structures, proved to be the most important and far-reaching divergence. While the Hurons focused on growing food, the Ottawas, occupying a slightly different ecological niche, developed a much more diversified economy that relied less upon cultivation. These economic preferences shaped the two nations’ cultures in profound ways.

The Hurons, like other northern Iroquoian culture groups, focused extensively on horticulture, and relied on hunting, fishing, and gathering only to supplement their crops.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly they developed a somewhat sedentary lifestyle, built substantial and permanent villages, and settled in greater density than their neighbors. The Hurons brought this preference west after they abandoned Lake Huron. In western Lake Superior, they tried—and failed—to create a horticultural homeland by attacking the Dakotas.<sup>32</sup> Later, living at the relatively infertile Straits of Mackinaw, they grew and sold surplus corn to their neighbors. They may have even decided to move Détroit in order to take advantage of the comparatively rich soils there.<sup>33</sup> Cadillac noted that, after a fire at the fort in 1704, the Hurons generously gave Cadillac fifty minots of grain and sold more

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<sup>31</sup> Some estimates suggest that some three-quarters of the Hurons’ food supply came from cultigens, and this was also true of the neighboring Tionnontatés (*Children of Aataentsic*, 52-54). More recent archaeological evidence suggests that cultigens accounted for a smaller, but still significant, amount of the Huron diet. Stephen Monckton, “Huron Paleoethnobotany,” (PhD. diss., Dept. of Anthropology, University of Toronto, 1990), 122.

<sup>32</sup> Perrot, *Mémoire*, 87.

<sup>33</sup> Newbigging, “The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance,” 230.

“at the usual price,” suggesting that the Hurons had become market farmers.<sup>34</sup> In addition to the traditional maize and beans, the Hurons also grew French peas and wheat.<sup>35</sup>

Few French observers passed an opportunity to praise the Hurons’ agricultural ability, often at the expense of the Ottawas and other nations. François Clairambault d’Aigremont, a French official, noted in 1708 that the Huron nation had “applied itself most diligently to cultivating land” and thus agricultural production at Michilimackinac had fallen sharply when the Hurons left for Détroit.<sup>36</sup> Noting that the Hurons were “naturally industrious,” the trader Nicolas Perrot claimed that Huron men helped their women farm, “contrary to the customs of the [other] savages.”<sup>37</sup> Observing the Hurons first-hand in 1721, Father Charlevoix concluded that Hurons were “always more occupied than the others in the culture of the soil.” Indeed, the Hurons boasted to the Jesuit that “without the Hurons the other Savages of Détroit would die of hunger.” According to the Hurons, the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis, had little desire to cultivate the lands they occupied, and the Hurons were happy to sell their surplus grain to them.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Cadillac, “Mémoire,” 19 Nov. 1704, *MPHSCR*, 33:233; Aigremont to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 429; The Hurons were apparently selling corn to the French as early as 1688. The Baron de Lahontan reported that the natives of Michilimackinac charged more for their crops in years of poor beaver harvests, indicating market farming had already become part their economic strategy. Lahontan, *New Voyages*, 148 ; Raudot and Silvy, *Relation par lettres de l’Amérique Septentrionale*, 175.

<sup>35</sup> [Sabrevois], “Memoire on the Indians between Lake Erie and the Mississippi,” 1718, *WHC*, 16:368.

<sup>36</sup> Aigremont to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:447.

<sup>37</sup> “[les Hurons] sont sortis, homes et femmes ensemble, travailler dans leurs terres, pour parmi ce nation, qui sont industrieux naturelles, les hommes aident les femmes dans leurs travailles, contre les coutumes des sauvages,” Perrot, *Mémoires*, 192-93.

<sup>38</sup> Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:448.

In contrast to the Hurons, the Ottawas chose a more diversified economy. Although the Ottawas did cultivate crops, a skill probably acquired from their interactions with the Tionnontatés themselves, agriculture played a much smaller role in Ottawa subsistence. Lying north of Huronia, the Ottawa's original territory proved less hospitable to cultivation. The Ottawas could count on a growing season just long enough to grow corn, but not long enough to provide a reliable harvest. If the region was less suited to agriculture, it nonetheless provided sustenance for the Ottawas in other ways. Occupying the boundary between Carolinian and Canadian forest ecosystems, the region offered a wide diversity of resources. Moving around the region in an intricate seasonal rhythm, the Ottawas fished for whitefish near Michilimackinac, hunted for moose and beaver north of Lake Huron, and gathered berries and other plants.<sup>39</sup> The Ottawas carried these preferences with them when they left Georgian Bay. Even in the apparently fertile Détroit River Valley, the Ottawas left the farming to the Hurons, preferring to buy grain than to grow it.<sup>40</sup>

The Hurons' and Ottawas' subsistence strategies and preferences trickled down to every corner of their cultures. The Hurons' commitment to farming, in particular, shaped their culture and society and set it apart from that of the Ottawas. Because they relied so heavily on cultigens, the Hurons adopted a more sedentary lifestyle than the Ottawas, who moved frequently to take advantage of a wider range of resources. Since the Hurons spent more time in their villages, they constructed more substantial—and less mobile lodgings—and larger and more impressive fortifications. The Ottawas, in contrast,

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<sup>39</sup> Newbigging, "The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance," 28, 41, 47-53.

<sup>40</sup> Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:543.

moved frequently and so preferred portable structures.<sup>41</sup> Because agriculture allowed them to sustain a larger population on less land and stimulated their fertility rates, the Hurons formed larger towns and settled more densely than the Ottawas. To mediate the conflicts and manage the difficulties of these denser settlements, the Hurons formed “a more marked form of government” than their neighbors.<sup>42</sup> The Hurons’ subsistence patterns even influenced the position of women within society. Because of their importance to agriculture and thus to survival, Huron women, even more than Ottawa women, enjoyed “principle authority” and were “absolutely the mistresses” of their communities.<sup>43</sup>

Their relatively sedentary economic patterns and denser populations made the Hurons the darlings of the French. French praise for the Hurons reflected the perceived proximity of Huron culture to that of early-modern France. As well as being “the wisest, most industrious, hardworking, and provident” people of the pays d’en haut, the Hurons were the “most civilized and trustworthy” of France’s allies.<sup>44</sup> The Ottawas, committed to a lifestyle significantly different from the French, fared poorly in comparison. Indeed, reaching for familiar language, Father Gabriel Sagard pronounced the Hurons “nobility,”

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<sup>41</sup> Brian L. Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit, 1701-1838*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 30.

<sup>42</sup> “une forme de gouvernement plus marquée.” Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:451 ; Newbigging, “The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance,” 28, 50-2 ; Garrad and Heidenreich, “Khionontateronon (Petun),” in HNAI, 15:394-7.

<sup>43</sup> “Les Femmes ont la principale autorité chez tous les Peuples de la Langue Huronne.” Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:557; “elles [les femmes Huronnes] sont absolument les maistresses, en sort que les hommes ne font quasi rien sans leur consentement,” Lamothe Cadillac, “Relation du Sieur de Lamothe,” [ca. 1698], *MDE*, 5:119-20. The fur trade furthermore enhanced native women’s status as they became intermediaries between their communities and French husbands. See Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870*. (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Watson & Dwyer Publishing, 1980).

<sup>44</sup> “le plus sage, plus industrieux, plus laborieux, plus prévoyant.” Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:448 ; Perrot, *Mémoires*, 192-93.

while the Ottawas were merely humble “bourgeois.”<sup>45</sup> The baron de Lahontan went even further, dismissing the Ottawas as “cowardly, ugly, ungainly Fellows,” while the Hurons were “a brave, active, and daring People.”<sup>46</sup> The Hurons’ greater “civilization” and closer proximity to French social and cultural ideals clearly shaped French perception of the groups.

More importantly the Hurons attributed meaning to this cultural difference. In 1721 they boasted to Father Charlevoix that “without the Hurons the other savages of Détroit would die of starvation.”<sup>47</sup> Sneering at the Ottawas’ inability to grow enough to feed themselves, the Hurons contemptuously reported that the Ottawas “thought about nothing more than amassing Pelts” suggesting that the Ottawas continued to rely more on hunting than the agricultural Hurons.<sup>48</sup> The Hurons, already accomplished market farmers, thus drew a sharp distinction between themselves, the provident farmers, and the Ottawas, the wandering hunters. The Hurons used such differences to define themselves as ethnically distinct and to measure the distance between them and their Ottawa neighbors.

While the first two cultural wedges separating the Hurons and Ottawas—language and subsistence strategies—had existed well before the French arrived, the third was a product of the colonial encounter. While some Ottawas welcomed the black robes, the Hurons seemed more disposed toward the new religion than did the Ottawas, and many

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<sup>45</sup> Gabriel Sagard, *Le grand voyage du pays des Hurons situé en l'Amérique* (Paris: Denys Moreau, 1632), 184.

<sup>46</sup> Lahontan, *New Voyages*, 415.

<sup>47</sup> “Ceux, qui m’avoient conduit dans ce [Huron] Village, m’assürerent que sans les Hurons les autres Sauvages du Détroit mourroient de faim.” Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:543.

<sup>48</sup> In 1711, a French official confirmed the Hurons’ claim, noting that they grew a surplus which they sold both the French and other natives (Raudot and Silvy, *Relation par lettres de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, 174).

Hurons became willing acolytes of their adopted faith. No less than in contemporary Europe, religious heterogeneity—or the perception thereof—divided and alienated natives who retained traditional beliefs and those who converted to some form of Christianity.

To be sure, Jesuit missionaries enjoyed some success among the Ottawas. In 1668, Father Claude Allouez reported that the Kiskakon Ottawas living at the mission of Saint Esprit at Chequamegon Bay had converted en masse, and the Jesuits long maintained a mission to the Ottawas at Michilimackinac.<sup>49</sup> Yet other French observers found the Ottawas only marginally committed to Christianity. Cadillac, always happy to take a cut at the Jesuits, sniped that the Ottawas “would have themselves baptized a hundred times a day for a glass of brandy.” More troubling still, every Ottawa cabin recognized “its own private divinity” to which they regularly offered sacrifices.<sup>50</sup> A more dispassionate witness, Father Charlevoix, confirmed that there “were no Christians among” the Ottawas at Détroit in 1721.<sup>51</sup> Three decades later, the court itself confirmed that the Ottawas and most other natives in the pays d’en haut still had not “embraced the

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<sup>49</sup> *JR*, 52:206, 208. While Neal Leavelle argues that this Kiskakon conversion was heartfelt, Newbigging dismisses it as a stunt meant to please and manipulate the French. Immediately before the conversion, Allouez had reported that he planned to abandon the Chequamegon mission, and the Kiskakons probably feared losing their tenuous tie to the French. Regardless of the Kiskakons’ sincerity, however, the Ottawas, as a whole, appeared less interested in Christianity than the Hurons. See Leavelle, “Religion, Encounter, and Community in French and Indian North America” (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, Arizona State University, 2001), 168-183, and Newbigging, “History of the French-Ottawa Alliance,” 156-157.

<sup>50</sup> Cadillac, “Mémoire,” 19 Nov. 1704, *MPHSCR*, 33:219, 238-39.

<sup>51</sup> “Il n’y a point de Chrétiens parmi eux,” Charlevoix, *Journal*, 537.

Christian religion.”<sup>52</sup> Nor were the Détroit Ottawas likely to convert any time soon, since the Jesuits never opened an Ottawa mission at the post.<sup>53</sup>

While the Ottawas continued what Cadillac deemed “their deplorable sacrifices to Baal,” the Hurons proved more receptive to the black robes’ message.<sup>54</sup> From the beginning of their missions, the Jesuits had focused their attention more on the sedentary and comparatively “civilized” Hurons and the neighboring Tionnontatés than on the mobile Ottawas, and that effort continued at Chequamegon and the mission of St. Ignace at Michilimackinac.<sup>55</sup> The fathers’ hard work apparently bore fruit. In 1710, a colonial official averred that the Hurons had embraced Christianity with “the most intensity” and were the “best catholics” of all of the nations in the pays d’en haut.<sup>56</sup> Another observer opined in 1718 that, although the Hurons did not currently have a missionary, they nonetheless avoided ceremonial dancing—which the Jesuits pronounced demonic—and imbibed less liquor, which the fathers blamed for all sorts of villainy—than other nations.<sup>57</sup> Father Charlevoix declared them Christians as well and reported that most of the Hurons desired a missionary in 1721.<sup>58</sup> The Jesuits finally satisfied that request in the

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<sup>52</sup> “Instructions to the New Governor, the Marquis de la Jonquière,” 20 April 1749, *WHC*, 18:18-19.

<sup>53</sup> This absence was the product of a power struggle between Cadillac—who resented the Jesuits’ temporal meddling and pretensions to power—and the fathers, who saw the captain as a grasping tyrant. Father François Vaillant de Gueslis, a Huron-speaking Jesuit, had been deployed to Détroit in 1701 but had left the same year after Cadillac accused him of plotting the post’s destruction. Cadillac, “Mémoire,” 19 Nov. 1704, *MPHSCR*, 33:202-3. A priest from the Seminary in Québec served briefly at the post, but spoke neither Huron nor Ottawa and left after three years. “État des dépenses faites par Lamothe Cadillac,” 29 Sept. 1706, in *ibid.*, 297; “Cadillac Again Petitions to Be Put in Possession of Detroit,” 4 Nov. 1721, in *Ibid.*, 682-83. The Jesuits never established an Ottawa mission at the post, though they founded one for the Hurons in 1728, long after Cadillac had left.

<sup>54</sup> Cadillac au ministre, 18 Oct. 1700, *MDE*, 5:171.

<sup>55</sup> Newbigging, “The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance,” vii.

<sup>56</sup> Raudot and Silvy, *Relation par lettres de l’Amérique Septentrionale*, 175.

<sup>57</sup> Jacques-Charles de Sabrevois, “Memoir on the Indians between Lake Erie and the Mississippi,” 1718, *NYCD*, 9:887; Charlevoix, *Voyages*, 1:541.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

person of Armand de la Richardie, who arrived at Détroit in 1728 and established a mission to the Hurons. By 1741 he could report that “not even one person in the whole nation remained obdurate,” and they flocked to the Gospel with “unfeigned heart.”<sup>59</sup> Even while sequestered at Sandusky, the Hurons risked the Ottawas’ vengeance to return to Détroit for the saints’ days.<sup>60</sup> Richardie obviously overstated his point; many Hurons resolutely refused to convert, and those who did probably incorporated Christianity into more traditional religious constellations.<sup>61</sup> Yet the Hurons’ embrace of Christianity, especially in the decade before 1738, served to distance them even further from the Ottawas, and created potential grounds for dispute.

The Hurons, more importantly, perceived these differences to be meaningful. When a group of Détroit Hurons and mission Iroquois attacked a group of Foxes in 1732, they identified their enemies as “dogs who did not acknowledge the master of life.” The Hurons, then, had begun not only to identify themselves as Christians, but as defenders of the faith. In the aftermath of the 1738 encounter, furthermore, they fretted that they could never be “fully confirmed in their Religion” as long as they lived among the Ottawas and

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<sup>59</sup> Richardie’s claim that he had found “not a single savage professing the christian faith” when he arrived in 1728 contradicts Charlevoix’s earlier assessment. The Father very likely downplayed the Hurons’ initial piety to make his accomplishments seem all the more impressive. Indeed he wrote that assessment in a letter requesting aid from his Order’s leader in 1741. Richardie à Père Franciscus Retz, 21 June 1741, in *JR*, 69:50-53.

<sup>60</sup> Richardie to Jean-Baptiste de Saint-Pé, 26 Aug. 1740, *MPHSCR*, 34:173.

<sup>61</sup> For example, the Huron leader, Le Baron, suggested that the dead be placed upon above-ground biers rather than in graves, so that the deceased “may the more easily take the road to Heaven,” and mistakenly placed the Sabbath on the eighth day. “Narrative of the most remarkable Occurrences in Canada, 1694, 1695.,” *NYCD*, 9:607. In 1732, the Hurons, who had asked for and received a missionary in 1728, nonetheless practiced traditional ceremonies before engaging in battle. Henri-Louis Deschamps de Boishébert to the marquis de Beauharnois, 28 Feb. 1732, *WHC* 17:153. Recent studies confirm that other natives in New France synthesized new Catholic ideas and practices into more traditional belief systems and ceremonies. For the Ottawas and Illinois, see Neal Tracy Leavelle, “Religion, Encounter, and Community in French and Indian North America” (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, Arizona State University, 2001). For the Christian Mohawks of New France, see Alan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).



other unbelievers.<sup>62</sup> Granted, the Hurons issued this proclamation in part for the benefit of the French; they were trying to convince the governor to resettle them near Montréal. Yet it does suggest that they had begun to distinguish themselves as Christians and their neighbors as infidels.

The cultural distance that separated them allowed the Hurons and Ottawas to view each other both as alien and, to some degree, as culturally inadequate. The Hurons clearly saw the Ottawas as cultural inferiors; they were market hunters who could not feed themselves without the Hurons and heathens whose presence inhibited the Hurons' own conversion to Christianity. This may explain, in part, why the Hurons and Ottawas rarely married, even though they lived in close proximity (see Chapter One). In this sense, cultural distance was a necessary precondition to violence. The Canadian Iroquois of Kahnawake and the Two Mountains explicitly made this connection late in the seventeenth century. They noted that the Hurons lived among "a Multitude of Nations who do not love you, you do not Understand their language, you are ignorant their Customs, and by that, even Every day," the Hurons risked provoking some "bad affairs."<sup>63</sup> Yet the differences in Huron and Ottawa culture do not, by themselves, explain the enmity between the groups or the eruption of violence in 1738. Cultural difference, after all, does not necessarily lead to cultural conflict any more than cultural homogeneity guarantees peaceful relations. The Hurons and Iroquois spoke mutually

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<sup>62</sup> "ils disent que leur Religion ne sera jamais bien affermie qu'en se séparant des Nations qui ne sont pas Chrétiennes." "Résumé de lettres de Noyelles, Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et La Richardie," in CAOM, C11A, vol.75, fol. 133v.

<sup>63</sup> "Mes freres, Vous Etes icy au milieu d'une Multitude de Nations qui ne Vous aiment point, Vous n'Entendez point leur Langue, vous ignorer leurs Coutûmes, Et par la, Vous Etes a même Chaque jour, de vous faire de mauvaises affaires," "Paroles des Hurons de Détroit adressées à Noyelles pour le marquis de Beauharnois," CAOM, C11A, vol. 74, fol. 72; "Paroles de Beauharnois aux Hurons," 12 June 1741, *MPHSCR*, 34:192.

comprehensible languages and shared many cultural traits, but nevertheless spent much of the seventeenth century fighting. Necessary though it might have been to the Huron-Ottawa conflict, cultural difference, in itself, was not sufficient to spark violence. These potent differences needed the right catalyst to transform their animosity into conflict.

## **II: “Who are you, Huron, to make laws for me?”: Status at Détroit**

Disputes over power and status in the region provided just such a catalyst and gave added meaning to cultural differences. The disruptions of the mid-seventeenth century, particularly the defeat of Huronia, upset the traditional power relationships in the Great Lakes region. In a significantly changed world, each nation sought to assert its will and shape affairs in the pays d’en haut. The Hurons tried to regain the power and the dominance they had enjoyed before the fall of Huronia, while the Ottawas sought to exploit their new ascendancy in the region and their ties to the French.<sup>64</sup> As a result, the two nations found themselves entangled in a high-stakes zero-sum game. Unable to survive without one another and unwilling to submit to their neighbors, they each tried to gain the upper hand over and to shape events within the pays d’en haut. Such rivalry, of course, caused friction and gave added meaning to the cultural differences separating the nations.

The fall of Huronia in the mid-seventeenth century upset the traditional relationship between the Hurons and Ottawas. Before 1649, the Huron nations and their neighbors, the Tionnontatés, had been the undisputed senior partners in their relationship

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<sup>64</sup> Newbigging likewise attributes the violent encounter between the two nations in 1706 to competition between the two nations (“The French-Ottawa Alliance,” 262, 264).

with the Ottawas. Demographically powerful and strategically located, the Hurons dominated trade with the Ottawas, especially the Kiskakons who lived on the Bruce Peninsula in Lake Huron.<sup>65</sup> They were, according to Cadillac, “lyons” prowling the Great Lakes.<sup>66</sup>

All that changed, however, when the Five Nations finally defeated and dispersed the Hurons in 1649, allowing the Ottawas to step into the power vacuum left by the Hurons. With the Hurons in disarray and diaspora, the Ottawas, who had extensive connections with their Anishinaabe kinspeople, positioned themselves as intermediaries between the French and the nations of the pays d’en haut.<sup>67</sup> As a result, the Ottawas soon emerged as the most influential players in the region. Recognizing their standing among the nations of the region, the French regarded them as the “elder sons in my heart” and “eldest son,” and focused on courting them as strategic and commercial partners. When the British assumed control of the region in 1760, they also hailed the Ottawas as the “Oldest nation” and referred to the people of the region as the “Ottawa Confederation.” Contemporary scholars have likewise recognized the Ottawas as New France’s “most

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<sup>65</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 166-68.

<sup>66</sup> “C’estoit autrefois la nation la plus puissante, la plus forte et mesme la plus nombreuse, mais l’Iroquois, l’a destruite et l’a chassée de ses terres, en sorte qu’elle est à présent réduite à un fort petit nombre,” Cadillac, “Relation du Sieur de Lamothe,” [1690s], *MDE*, 5:80. Archaeologist Gary Warrick estimates that in 1615 some 21,600 Hurons lived in about twelve villages, while 6,500 Tionnontaté-Pétuns occupied at least seven more villages. Each of these villages probably housed 1000 denizens, considerably larger than the villages at Michilimackinac and Détroit. By the time they reached Détroit they numbered less than a thousand. (*A Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500-1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 218-20, 245, and Table 1, *infra*).

<sup>67</sup> Havard, *Empire et métissages: Indiens et Français dans le pays d’e haut, 1660-1715* (Québec: Septentrion and Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), 206; Donald Fixico, “The Alliance of the Three Fires in Trade and War, 1630-1812,” *Michigan Historical Review* 20:2 (Fall 1994), 1-25 at 9-10.

important ally,” and “principal intermediary for the French,” in the Great Lakes, and the “central nation of the alliance.”<sup>68</sup>

For their part the Hurons now found themselves dependent upon the Ottawas for their very survival. After leaving their homeland, the Huron and Tionontaté refugees sought refuge with the Ottawas, first at Manitoulin Island and Michilimackinac, before moving with the Ottawas to western Lake Superior. Here again, the Hurons depended on the Ottawas for protection. In the 1660s, they attacked the Dakotas, whom they considered their cultural inferiors because they lacked European tools, in order to establish a new horticultural homeland. When the numerically superior Dakotas easily routed them, the Hurons fled to the Ottawa settlement at Chequamegon Bay.<sup>69</sup> Years later, the Détroit Ottawa leader, Outoutagan, boasted that he had saved the ungrateful Hurons from destruction more than once.<sup>70</sup> Cadillac confirmed that “the Hurons [Hurons] are only friends with the Ottawas by necessity, being the weakest, [because] the other nations have killed and mistreated them so much.”<sup>71</sup>

Such protection, however, came at a price for the Hurons. They had to acknowledge, and submit to, Ottawa dominance. For their part, the Ottawas, long the junior partners in the relationship, likely reveled in the Hurons’ new-found weakness and dependence upon them. Nicolas Perrot reported that the Hurons at Michilimackinac lived

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<sup>68</sup> Newbigging, “The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance,” 1, 249; Dennis Delâge, “L’alliance franco-amérindienne, 1660-1701,” *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 19 (1989), 13; “la nations central de l’alliance,” Havard, *Empire et métissages*, 223.

<sup>69</sup> Perrot, *Mémoire*, 86-91.

<sup>70</sup> “Words of the Outavois on the 18th of June with the Answers,” 18-20 June 1707, *MPHSCR*, 33:323. Vaudreuil specifically enlisted the Ottawas to protect the Hurons in 1711 (“Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages who Came down from the Upper Country,” [1711], in *ibid.*, 505).

<sup>71</sup> “Les Hurons ne sont amis de Outavois [Ottawas] que par nécessité, estant les plus foibles, tant les autres les ont tuez et maltraitez,” Cadillac, “Relation du Sieur de Lamothe,” [1690s], *MDE*, 5:120.

in fear of the Ottawas whom they worried “would molest and aggrieve them” if the Hurons failed to “obey them.”<sup>72</sup> The Marquis de Vaudreuil vaguely alluded to the Hurons’ “just causes of complaint...against the [Ottawas]” in 1705.<sup>73</sup> François Clairambault d’Aigremont, a colonial official, reported in 1708 that the Ottawas had “held them [the Hurons] in a sort of slavery” at Michilimackinac and that this ill-treatment had inspired “a natural dislike” for the Ottawas.<sup>74</sup> Another French observer confirmed that the Hurons lived “almost under their [the Ottawas’] domination.”<sup>75</sup> Perhaps the Ottawas, themselves indifferent farmers, demanded that the green-thumbed Hurons provide grain for them, while they invested more extensively in hunting and trading. Indeed, crop production declined after the Hurons moved to Détroit, forcing the Ottawas still at Michilimackinac to feed their children grass in the summer of 1707.<sup>76</sup> The Hurons’ later claim to supply all Détroit with grain further suggests such a relationship.

For the Hurons, this position of weakness and subordination represented an embarrassing inversion. Finding themselves weak and vulnerable, the once-powerful “lions” and “aristocrats” now ingloriously submitted to their cultural “inferiors.” Numbering, by one 1711 estimate, only a meager 60 warriors to the Ottawas’ 500, the

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<sup>72</sup> Les Hurons “se trouvoient au milieu des François et des Outaoüas [Ottawas], qui les auroient molestez et chagrinez s’ils avoient refusé d’obéir.” Perrot, in fact, argued that the Huron only pretended to fight with the Iroquois, with whom the French and their allies were at war, out of fear of the Ottawas and French. Perrot, *Mémoire*, 145.

<sup>73</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minister, 4 Nov. 1705, *MPHSCR*, 33:306.

<sup>74</sup> Les Hurons “n’ont quite ce poste que par l’aversion naturelle qu’ils ont pour les [Ottawas], et que ceux cy les tenoient dans une espece d’esclavage,” Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, in *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 29, fol. 69.

<sup>75</sup> Raudot and Silvy, *Relation par lettres de l’Amérique Septentrionale*, 131.

<sup>76</sup> Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:447; “Council Held at Detroit on the 6th of August,” 6 Aug. 1707, in *ibid.*, 334.

Hurons had no choice but to endure this indignity and accept Ottawa protection.<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, the relationship had inescapable gender implications. Like most eastern woodland cultures, the Ottawas and Hurons observed a gendered division of labor, in which women grew the crops, while men hunted and fought enemies. The Hurons' responsibility for growing crops coupled with the Huron men's inability to protect themselves, therefore, created a symbolic marriage in which the Ottawa "men" fought while the Huron "women" farmed.<sup>78</sup>

To be sure, these gender divisions did not carry the same implications of domination and subordination for the Hurons and Ottawas as they did for contemporary Europeans. French observers like Cadillac disapprovingly noted that Huron and Ottawa women held considerable authority and that Huron and Ottawa "men do almost nothing without their consent."<sup>79</sup> Although such observations probably exaggerated the power that native women exercised, they nonetheless demonstrate that native men and women shared power.<sup>80</sup> But even if these gender divisions did not necessarily imply the

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<sup>77</sup> Raudot and Silvy, *Relation par lettres de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, 131, 176.

<sup>78</sup> The Iroquois explicitly entered a similar relationship with the Delawares, in which the Delawares were designated "women" who grew grain for the other nations in return for their protection. The Iroquois actually forbade the Delawares to wear breechcloths—a symbol of masculinity—and forced them to wear a machicotté or skirt. "Memoir of Bougainville," 1757, *WHC*, 18:193-194; Nancy Shoemaker, "An Alliance between Men: Gender Metaphors in Eighteenth-Century American Indian Diplomacy East of the Mississippi" *Ethnohistory*, 46:2 (Spring 1999), 241-45.

<sup>79</sup> "Les Outavois [Ottawas] ne sont pas jaloux de leurs femmes, les Hurons [Hurons] le sont encore moins, et elles sont absolument les maistresses, en sort que les hommes ne font quasi rien sans leur consentement." Cadillac, "Relation du Sieur de Lamothe," [ca. 1696], *MDE*, 5:119-20. Father Charlevoix confirmed that Huron women had "principle authority" ("Les Femmes ont la principale autorité chez tous les Peuples de la Langue Huronne"). Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:557; Chev. de Beauharnois to the marquis de Beauharnois, 2 Aug. 1741, *WHC* 17:354.

<sup>80</sup> Women's status and gender divisions within native cultures varied considerably. Among some groups, like the Illinois nations, men severely repressed women and graphically punished unfaithful wives. In others, like northern and southern Iroquoian nations, however, women enjoyed sexual freedom and even some authority over traditionally "male" spheres like warfare. Gender relations among the Ottawas and Hurons more closely followed the second pattern. See Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts

hierarchical relationship found in Europe, Huron men doubtlessly resented being styled as “women.” Huron and Ottawa warriors evidently used “women” as an epithet to mean “cowardly.”<sup>81</sup> The Ottawa man, Mekoua or Le Pesant, complained in 1706 that if Onontio did not allow him to revenge himself, the Ottawas’ neighbors would no longer “Esteem us, and they would regard us as women.”<sup>82</sup> Cadillac noted that only “two articles distinguish true men”: war and hunting.<sup>83</sup> Unable to protect themselves from their enemies and forced to grow food while the Ottawas hunted, the Hurons failed on both accounts. They therefore found their masculinity challenged and resented the Ottawas for forcing them into such a relationship.

If the Hurons no longer enjoyed the ancient strength, they refused to submit to their Ottawa “inferiors.” Haunted by memories of their ancient might and resentful of the Ottawas’ haughty pretensions, the Hurons struggled to reassert themselves. In the 1670s both the Hurons and Kiskakon Ottawas moved to Jesuit missions at Michilimackinac. By 1682, the two nations had begun to fight for ascendancy. In that year, the Hurons reported that, when the Hurons warriors were away from Michilimackinac, the Ottawas frequently harassed and insulted Huron women, children, and old men “without any

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Press, 2001); Sylvia Van Kirk, *“Many Tender Ties”: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870.* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Watson & Dwyer Publishing, 1980); Natalie Zemon Davis, “Iroquois Women, European Women,” ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker, *Women, “Race,” and Writing in the Early Modern Period.* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

<sup>81</sup> On at least two occasions, native warriors mocked their enemies as “women” when they sought refuge in their forts. The Hurons called the Ottawas “nothing but women” because they would not fight them in the open in 1706. “Speech of Miscouaky...” 26 Sept. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:292. In 1712, the Foxes likewise called the Ottawa, Huron, and other warriors fighting from the French fort “women.” Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, “Another Account of the siege of Detroit”, [1706], *WHC*, 17:294.

<sup>82</sup> Le Pesant (Mekoua): “on ne nous Estimeroit, et on nous regarderoit comme des femmes,” “Conseil tenu au fort Pontchartrain le 8 Mars 1706,” in *CAOM*, F3, vol. 2, fol. 321.

<sup>83</sup> “Deux articles font la distinction des véritables hommes : le premier c’est la guerre, le deuxième c’est la chasse.” Cadillac, “Relation du Sieur de Lamothe,” *MDE*, 5:86-87.

reasons or cause.” The Ottawas, well aware that the Hurons lacked the strength to resist them, treated their neighbors as they pleased and thus reminded them of their subordination. Resentful of the Ottawas’ “rashness and violent conduct” but unable to attack the Ottawas by themselves, the Hurons reportedly tried to enlist the Senecas to betray the Ottawas.<sup>84</sup> Six years later, after the Ottawas killed a Huron headman of some importance, the Hurons again appealed to the Iroquois to help them “destroy” the Ottawas. Fearing retaliation, the Ottawas constructed a more formidable fort “1000 or 1200 paces” from the Huron village.<sup>85</sup> Finally, a party of Sable Ottawas likewise assassinated a Huron leader in 1696.<sup>86</sup> In the context of such competition for status, the cultural gulf separating the two groups—their language, customs, and religion—became important markers separating the nations.

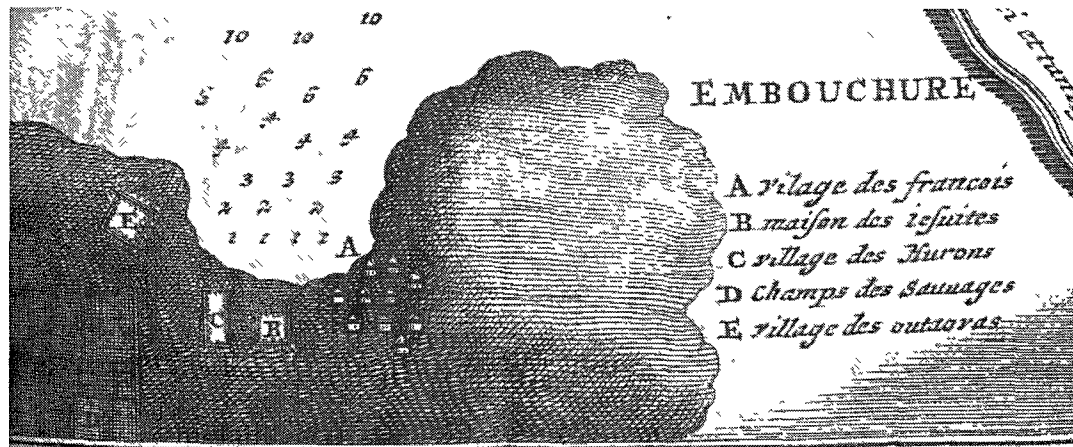


Figure 10: Detail of map of the Mackinac Straits by Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, printed in Lahontan, *Nouveau voyages de Mr. le baron de Lahontan dans l'Amérique Septentrionale*, (The Hague: les frères l'Honoré, 1703), vol. 1, between pages 116-117

<sup>84</sup> “Les hurons . . . ont beaucoup a souffrit tous Les jours & principalement quand ils sont absens de leurs Cabanes, ou ils [les Outaouais] vont faire des Insultes, et leurs Vieillards femmes et enfans qu’il maltraitent en toutes rencontres sans raison ny sans aucun fondement,” “Paroles échangées entre Frontenac et les alliés hurons [Hurons], outaouais [Ottawas] et miamis,” Aug. 1682, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 6, fols. 8-8v ; Lahontan, *New Voyages*, 149.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>86</sup> “Narrative of the most remarkable Occurences in Canada. 1695, 1696.,” NYCD, 9:648.



When deputies from the two nations arrived at Montréal for a peace conference in August 1701, then, they were already primed for confrontation. After signing the Great Peace of Montréal, the Ottawa man, Outoutagan addressed Gov. Callière. Claiming to speak for the Hurons and Ottawas—who, after all, formed “only one body,” despite their occasional disagreements—the Ottawa man asked Callière not to allow the traders to carry *eau-de-vie*, or brandy, to the pays d’en haut.<sup>87</sup> Ostensibly, Outoutagan’s speech testified to the Ottawas’ and Hurons’ enduring friendship—the two nations, after all, formed only one cozy family. Yet the Cheanonvouzon heard the address very differently. The Huron leader remonstrated that Outoutagan had not sought his input on the matter—in fact he was planning on taking a load of eau-de-vie to the pays d’en haut himself—and therefore did not speak for the Hurons. In this light, Outoutagan’s claim to speak in both the name of Ottawas and Hurons implied a power relationship: the Ottawas spoke for the Hurons. If they formed only a single body, then the Ottawas represented that body’s head. Moreover, the influential Huron headman, Sioüa, or Le Rat, had died just days earlier.<sup>88</sup> Sioüa had been, by French reckoning, the “first mover of his Nation and all the [Ottawas],” and his death had created a power vacuum at Michilimakinac.<sup>89</sup> Outoutagan and Cheanonvouzon thus sought to claim Sioüa’s mantle.

The two nations carried this considerable resentment with them when they moved to Détroit in the early years of the eighteenth century. In the spring of 1702

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<sup>87</sup> Outoutagan’s speech bears the unmistakable impression of the Jesuits, who had long railed against the effects of eau-de-vie among the natives, and whom Outoutagan had reason to flatter.

<sup>88</sup> “Le Rat,” or Sioüa, was also known as Kondiaronk and Adario. Lahontan, *New Voyages*, 149.

<sup>89</sup> Sioüa “étoit le premier mobile de sa Nation & de tous les Outaouaks [Ottawas],” Claude-Charles Bacqueville de Pothérie, *Histoire de l’Amérique*, 4 vols (Paris : Jean-Luc Nion...et François Didot, 1722), 4:222-23. See Chapter One, *infra*.

Cheanonvouzon grumbled that “the French were preventing him from revenging himself” on the Ottawas, and openly wondered if the English might be more obliging.”<sup>90</sup> Nor did the Ottawas do much to alleviate the Hurons’ resentment. After sacking an Iroquois village, Michilimackinac Ottawa warriors planted a distinctively Huron hatchet on one of the slain Iroquois men to cast suspicion on the Hurons.<sup>91</sup> The Hurons finally found an opportunity to avenge themselves in 1706, as chapter two narrates in depth. As much as the crisis of 1738, this breach threatened to destroy the alliance and to plunge New France into a war it could not win.

The Ottawas felt particularly betrayed by Cheanonvouzon’s treachery. The Ottawas and Hurons had been allies for a long time, after all, and had sent out a joint war party against the Flatheads earlier that spring. The Ottawas had even met frequently with the Hurons after the initial battle “without fear, always reckoning them among our allies.” As the Hurons put it when they invited the Ottawas to a feast in hopes of ambushing them, the Hurons and Ottawas had “been brothers for a long time and fought together against the Iroquois.”<sup>92</sup> When they learned of Cheanonvouzon’s role in the conflict, his torture of captive Ottawa warriors, and his attempts to betray them, therefore, the Ottawas were hurt and angry.<sup>93</sup> Their erstwhile allies and close neighbors had killed thirty of their men and threatened their destruction. The Ottawa headman, Miscouaky, seemed

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<sup>90</sup> Lamothe au gouverneur, 17 Feb., 1702, *MDE*, 5:266; Jean Mermet to Cadillac, 19 April 1702, *MPHSCR*, 33:118-119.

<sup>91</sup> Cadillac, “Mémoire,” 19 Nov. 1704, in *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>92</sup> “Speech of Miscouaky, Chief of the Outaouas to Marquis de Vaudreuil,” 26 Sept. 1706, in *ibid.*, 291.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 291-3, Aigremont to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, in *ibid.*, 435.

personally hurt by the Hurons' betrayal. "I am stricken to the heart" he reported to Governor Vaudreuil.<sup>94</sup>

In spite of Cadillac's fumbling statecraft, the Ottawas and Hurons apparently reached a reluctant *détent* on their own. Both nations participated in Cadillac's campaign against the Miamis, and some Ottawas returned to *Détroit* in the spring of 1708.<sup>95</sup> Yet neither nation had forgotten the conflict. As late as 1711, Gov. Vaudreuil enjoined the two nations to "cast off...the evil suspicions" that the two nations still harbored and to live in harmony.<sup>96</sup> Ultimately, only hostility toward the Foxes, and not Onontio's pleas, bound the wounds opened in 1706, and then only temporarily.<sup>97</sup>

The cultural differences separating the two nations, then, provided a basis for the Hurons' and Ottawas' conflict, and that conflict gave added meaning to those differences. Cultural difference proved essential to the two nations' struggle for power in that it created and reinforced a sense of differentness between the two nations. The Hurons and Ottawas had to perceive one another as separate, as distinct, in order to sustain such a determined and prolonged rivalry, and their cultural differences allowed them to see each other as alien. Indeed, had they not seen each other as separate, the nations might have integrated more fully—creating a composite group as the Huron refugees and *Tionnontatés* had. Moreover these cultural differences provided a sense of cultural superiority which animated the rivalry between the nations. Because of the Ottawas'

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<sup>94</sup> "Words of the Outavois on the 18th of June with the Answers," 18-20 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 323.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*; "Parolles que les hurons ont prié M<sup>r</sup> Dubuisson d'écrire à M<sup>r</sup> Le gouverneur," in CAOM, C11A 22 :62v.

<sup>96</sup> "[Words of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Savages]," [1711], *MPHSCR* 33:533.

<sup>97</sup> In the winter of 1711-1712, the two groups wintered together at Saginaw Bay, where they plotted to attack the Foxes during the following spring. Jacques-Charles Renaud Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, in *ibid.*, 538.

cultural traditions, the Hurons deemed them cultural inferiors and so fought bitterly against the Ottawas' attempts to dominate them and to shape the pays d'en haut. The competition for resources and status, in turn, intensified both the sense of separateness between the two nations and the cultural assumptions premised upon them. Engaged in a pitched battle for authority, the Hurons and Ottawas ascribed greater importance to these cultural differences.

The nations even drew the French into their rivalry. Each nation cultivated ties with the French in order to win access to French trading goods and military alliance, and to thereby gain an upper hand over its neighbors. For example, in 1703 the principal Détroit Huron leader, probably Cheanonvouzon, asked Gov. Callière to build him a house "in French fashion," and Onontio consented. The Ottawas, not to be outdone, demanded the same favor. These houses, after all, symbolized alliance with the French and the Ottawas demanded that the French show them as much regard as they had the Hurons.<sup>98</sup> Native leaders also asked for other tokens of French esteem—an ornate military coat or medals—to prove their standing within the region.<sup>99</sup> The "children of Onontio" thus vied for their "father's" affection, in order to outmaneuver their neighbors and ensure their own status within the region.

### **III. "evil suspicions": The Immediate Context of 1738**

Thus the Huron elders huddled behind their palisade in 1738 could recall a long-running hostility toward the Ottawas, reaching back several decades. Born of cultural

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<sup>98</sup> Cadillac to the Minister, 31 Aug. 1703, in *ibid.*, 166.

<sup>99</sup> "Paroles des Outaouais de Michillimakinac à Vaudreuil," 18-20 June 1707, in *ibid.*, 320; Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1739, in CAOM, C11E, vol. 16, fol. 225.

difference, this animosity had been aggravated by a competition for status and the difficulties inherent in cohabitation. Yet this tradition of conflict and strife cannot, by itself, explain the timing of the violence of 1738. After the troubling crisis of 1706 had settled down, the Ottawas and Hurons had reconciled, and resumed wintering together and launching raids against Onontio's enemies. For the next three decades, the two groups coexisted at Détroit without any major incident. By all appearances, the long-running enmity between the groups had finally subsided; the two nations seemed to have transcended those old grievances. Yet if the Hurons and Ottawas had lived in harmony for thirty years, it was not because the old animosity had been forgotten but because it had been suppressed. The hostilities did not surface because the Pax Vulpinae served to draw the Ottawas' and Hurons' attention off one another and toward common enemies. As those conflicts drew to a close, the Hurons' reconciliation with the Flatheads, and their suggestion that their neighbors do the same, also rekindled fear of a Huron-Iroquois alliance and, in the context of the ancient Ottawa-Huron animosity, foreboded danger for the Ottawas.

From the very beginning, conflict with the Foxes served to mend the Ottawas' and Hurons' relationship. In 1712 Huron and Ottawa warriors had fought side-by-side against the Foxes and Mascoutins from the cramped Fort Pontchartrain. Shortly after the siege, the Huron and Ottawa warriors combined to attack a group of Kickapoos, allies of the Foxes, the first of many such cooperative campaigns.<sup>100</sup> The two groups also launched raids against the southern nations allied to the British—the Chickasaws,

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<sup>100</sup> Dubuisson to Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, *MPHSCR*, 33:550-551; Vaudreuil to the Minister, 14 Oct. 1716, in *ibid.*, 578.

Cherokees, Choctaws, and the Flatheads. As a result, between 1712 and 1738 the Hurons and Ottawas seemed to be perpetually preparing for, carrying out, or returning from war with either the Foxes and their allies or the southern nations. Such cooperation served not only to heal wounded feelings but also, by creating a common enemy, to redirect the Hurons' and Ottawas' anger away from one another and toward an external target. Indeed, the Détroit natives, especially the Hurons, displayed an enthusiastic hostility toward the Outagamis and their allies. They declared themselves "unwilling that a single one of [the Outagamis] should be left," and wanted to attack a group of peaceful natives only because they "bear the name of Sakis."<sup>101</sup>

When the Fox Wars ended in the years before 1738, conversely, the Hurons and Ottawas lost a common endeavor which had bound them together for decades. As they lost reasons to get along, the two nations found reasons to distrust one another once again.<sup>102</sup> Particularly, the Hurons' alliance with an old foe made the Ottawas uneasy. The Hurons, hoping to augment their position in the region, had apparently made peace with the Flatheads in 1729.<sup>103</sup> Given the Hurons' and Ottawas' long history, the Ottawas viewed the Hurons rapprochement as threatening. The Flatheads, after all, had been

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<sup>101</sup> Beauharnois and Hocquart to the Minister, 1 Oct. 1732, in *ibid.*, 34:100; Hocquart to the contrôleur général des finances, 26 Oct. 1735, in *ibid.*, 132. Asking the French to attack the Outagamis and Mascoutins in 1712, the Hurons had called for the French and allies to "absolutely destroy them and extinguish their fire" ("absolument les destuire et esteindre leur feu"). Dubuisson à Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 33, fol. 164v.

<sup>102</sup> Newbigging suggests that the Ottawas rekindled their rivalry with the Hurons because of the Ottawas' burgeoning alliance with the Potawatomis. Where the Ottawas had once depended on the Hurons to supply them with grain, they now began trading with the horticultural Potawatomis instead and they therefore no longer needed the Hurons. Yet the Potawatomis had been at Détroit more than two decades before the Ottawas and Hurons started fighting again. While this development might have contributed to the animosity between the two nations, the Ottawas' reactions owe more to their misgivings about the Hurons' dealings with the Flatheads ("The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance," 345).

<sup>103</sup> According to Beauharnois, the Miamis were "irritated" (*Irrités*) with the Hurons for making peace with the Flatheads without telling their allies. Beauharnois au ministre, 21 July 1729, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 51, fol. 127.

fierce enemies of both groups for some time, and the Ottawas and Hurons had long and frequently formed joint raiding parties against the southern foes. One such party, ironically, returned to Détroit just at the time that the two groups broke into violence in 1706.<sup>104</sup> As the Ottawa headman reminded the Hurons in council in 1738, Ottawa “bones are in their [the Flatheads’] Cabins and our scalps hung above them” and the stakes where the Flatheads had tortured and killed Ottawa captives still stood in their villages.<sup>105</sup> Moreover the Flatheads were allied to the British colonies, Onontio’s treacherous foes and the “enemy of prayer.”<sup>106</sup> The Ottawas thus saw treachery in the Hurons’ reconciliation with the Flatheads.<sup>107</sup>

A 1735 letter suggests another layer of apprehension for the Ottawas. In a dispatch to the Minister of the Marine, Monsieur de Beaucour, the governor of Montréal, described a conversation he had held with three Onondagas and a Seneca headman. These Iroquois leaders told Beaucour that the Six Nations had held a council with the Flatheads, at the request of the British, in which the Flatheads asked for an alliance very similar to that they had offered to Hurons.<sup>108</sup> These negotiations belonged to an intensive Anglo-American effort to proctor a peace between the British-allied Catawbas and Cherokees (the Flatheads), and the British-allied Six Nations—what Jon Parmenter deems the “holy grail” of British-native diplomacy.<sup>109</sup> By 1738, such a truce seemed

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<sup>104</sup> “Speech of Miscouaky . . .,” 26 Sept. 1706, *MPHSCR*, 33:289.

<sup>105</sup> “nos ôs sont dans leurs cabanes Et nos Chevelures penduës dessus,” Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1738, in *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 69, fol. 126.

<sup>106</sup> “il [l’anglais] est ennemy de la priere.” Dubuisson à Vaudreuil, 15 June 1712, in *ibid.*, vol. 33, fol. 167v.

<sup>107</sup> Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1738, in *ibid.*, vol. 69, fol. 126.

<sup>108</sup> Josué Dubois Berthelot de Beaucour au ministre, 2 Oct. 1735, in *Ibid.*, vol. 64 fols. 253-253v; Réponse à la mémoire du roi par Beauharnois et Hocquart, 13 Oct. 1735, vol. 63, fols. 91-91v.

<sup>109</sup> Concluding that a peace between the Iroquois and the Catawbas and Cherokees would “be very beneficial to all his Maje<sup>ys</sup> Colonies in N. America,” the British urged the Six Nations to finally reconcile

more likely than ever. The Catawbas, bloodied by the frequent Iroquois raids, seemed to be in a “more pacific disposition” toward the Six Nations, and at least some Iroquois advocated peace with the Flatheads.<sup>110</sup> In 1737, the Six Nations agreed to meet with the Catawbas and Cherokees, although they insisted that the conference take place at Albany, not in Williamsburg, Virginia, as the Flatheads had suggested. The Iroquois and Flatheads also agreed to observe a twelve month cease fire.<sup>111</sup>

In the light of the Catawba-Iroquois negotiations and truce, the Hurons’ invitation to make peace with the Flatheads in the spring of 1738 appeared suspect to the Ottawas and their Anishinaabe allies. The Hurons were not simply suggesting an alliance with the Flatheads, but a larger coalition which included the Six Nations as well. Just as had Cheanonvouzon’s collaboration with the Miamis and Iroquois earlier in the century, the Hurons’ recent cooperation with the Flatheads and the Iroquois troubled the Ottawas. They discerned in this rapprochement another Huron attempt to challenge Anishinaabe dominance of the region and expand Huron influence in the region. The Ottawas had no interest in seeing a rival military and commercial coalition emerge in the region, much less in becoming a junior partner in an alliance dominated by the Iroquois and Hurons. Nor could they broach such a brazen Huron grab for power and declaration of

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with them. Peter Wraxall, *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs Contained in four Folio Volumes, Transacted in the Colony of New York, from the Year 1678 to the Year 1751* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1915), 194-199, 210, 211, 217-20 at 211; Jon Parmenter, “At the Wood’s Edge: Iroquois Foreign Relations, 1727-1768” (Ph.D. diss. Dept. of History, University of Michigan, 1999), 260.

<sup>110</sup> James Logan to William Gooch, 2 Feb. 1738, Logan Papers, Pennsylvania State Archives, quoted in James Merrell, “Their Very Bones Shall Fight: The Catawba-Iroquois Wars,” in Daniel Richter and Merrill, eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and their Neighbors in Indian North America* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987): 125.

<sup>111</sup> Conrad Weiser, “Narrative of a Journey, made in the year 1737, by Conrad Weiser, Indian Agent and Provincial Interpreter,” trans. Heiser H. Muhlenberg, in Pennsylvania Historical Society, *Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, J. Pennington, 1853), 1:6, 16, 20; Parmenter, “The Woods’ Edge,” 124-25, 134-35, 141-45.



independence from Ottawa suzerainty. Within the context of a long and troubled Ottawa-Huron relationship and an equally long tradition of Iroquois-Huron intimacy, the Ottawas found the Huron invitation to make peace with the Flatheads and threat to defend the Flatheads troubling.

Thus, when the Ottawa leader fretted that the Hurons wanted to “do bad things... [and] take refuge with the [Flatheads],” he might well have had an intensified Huron-Iroquois alliance in mind.<sup>112</sup> In the early 1730s, in fact, the Ottawas reportedly invited the Iroquois to join them and “entirely destroy” the Hurons.<sup>113</sup> They hoped thereby to drive a wedge between the Hurons and their would-be allies.<sup>114</sup> The Ottawas’ attack on the Flatheads in the summer of 1738 might have in fact been an attempt to keep the scheduled Iroquois-Flathead in Albany from convening. Betraying their fears of a Huron-Iroquois alliance, the Ottawas also pleaded that the Iroquois “take no part” in the quarrel shortly after the conflict in 1738. Ominously for the Ottawas, the Iroquois deferred their response.<sup>115</sup>

As they had in 1706, questions about status and authority played a role in the violent encounter of 1738. At Michilimackinac, the Ottawas had exploited the Hurons’ weakened position and subjected them to a sort of “slavery.” After 1706, however, the tables seemed to have turned again, this time against the Ottawas. In the peace talks of

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<sup>112</sup> “je pense que tu as Envie de faire mauvais affaires pour te réfugier chez les Têtes-plates [Flatheads],” Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1738, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 69, fol. 126.

<sup>113</sup> The Ottawas and Iroquois both pleaded their innocence and denied any knowledge about the plot (“frapper sur les hurons du detroit et les detruire entierement,” Beauharnois au ministre, 1 Oct., 1731, in *ibid.*, vol. 54, fol. 406-407v).

<sup>114</sup> The Ottawas’ proposal to renew the “Peace & good Correspondence [which] had been formerly established” with the Iroquois in 1735 also indicates an attempt to prevent the Hurons and Iroquois from forming an alliance which excluded them. Wraxall, *Indian Abridgements*, [10 June 1735], 191-92.

<sup>115</sup> “Les Outa8ais [Ottawas] ont donné trois branches de Porcelaine aux cinq Nations Iroquoises pour les Inviter de ne prendre aucun party,” Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1738, CAOM, vol. 69, fol. 128v.

1707, Cadillac praised the Hurons for their support and defense of the French during the previous year. Although the commandant had heretofore counted the Ottawas as his “elder son,” that group’s rebellion had cost them his esteem. Henceforth, the commandant promised, the Hurons would take their “elder brother’s”—the Ottawas’—place “in my heart.”<sup>116</sup> Charlevoix found that the Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas accorded the Hurons “the honor of speaking for all” the natives at Détroit.<sup>117</sup> In 1730, Capt. Pierre-Jacques de Payan de Noyan noted that “All the Savages” of Détroit “are guided exclusively by the feelings of the Hurons. [Hurons]”<sup>118</sup> French officials explicitly attributed the 1738 conflict to the Hurons’ “haughtiness,” which the Ottawas heretofore “endured impatiently.”<sup>119</sup> This continuing contest for status and authority sheds light on the Ottawas’ angry dismissal of the Hurons’ proposal in 1738. “Who are you, Huron,” the Ottawa headman charged, “to make laws for me?”<sup>120</sup>

## Conclusion

The conflagration of 1738, then, had a complicated lineage. General cultural differences—linguistic, economic, and religious—combined with conflicts over status and power to produce an abiding animosity between the Hurons and Ottawas. This

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<sup>116</sup> “il est vrai qu’autrefois L’outaouois étoit mon fils aîné ; mais puis qu’il a leve son feu d’ici, et qu’il a Comis un ...desobeissance, ..., il sera avenir mon enfans cadets, et vous hurons rentez vous aujourd’huy que parôtre obeissance, nous avez pris dans mon Cœur et dans mes bien fait Le place de vôtre aîné, ...vous d’avoir profiter d’un grand heritage,” “Procès-verbaux des conseils tenus à Détroit.” Aug. 1707, CAOM, C11A, vol. 26, fol. 123v.

<sup>117</sup> “l’honneur de parler pour tous est ordinairement déferé aux Hurons [Hurons], quand il s’en trouve dans un Conseil,” Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:539.

<sup>118</sup> Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et de Chavoy, “Mémoire,” [1730], *MPHSCR*, 34:76.

<sup>119</sup> “sa [les Hurons’] hauteur la fait haïr des autres, Et l’on ne doit pas se flatter de la reconcilier bien sincerement avec les Outaouïais qui souffront toujours impatiemment sa fierté,” Résumé de lettres du Canada avec commentaires des autorités métropolitaines, 1740, CAOM, C11A, 74 :235-235v.

<sup>120</sup> “qu’est-tû huron [Huron] pour me faire la loy...?” Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1738, in *ibid.*, vol. 69, fols. 125-126v.

animosity could be muted, overcome by the very real ties of affection and alliance that bound the groups together, but not completely forgotten, even after thirty years of peace. Two dynamics, then, were at play among the Détroit Hurons and Ottawas; one emphasized their shared interests and history of cooperation while the other accentuated their differences and reminded them of previous slights. In 1738 animosity won out.

At bottom, the violence of 1738 demonstrates a simple but overlooked truth about the Hurons and the Ottawas. No matter how much they may have cooperated with—indeed depended on—one another, no matter how much they hunted together, fought alongside each other, traded, laughed, or played lacrosse, they remained separate. Their cultural identities—buffeted by colonial pressures such as depopulation and dislocation—proved durable, resilient, and consequential. So consequential, in fact, that these long-allied neighbors seemed poised to destroy each other.

That these two groups, perhaps the most important French allies in the region, not only retained their cultural identities but also harbored a genuine resentment for one another forces us to reconsider cultural exchange in the pays d'en haut. Specifically that relationship poses problems for Richard White's description of the region. The Hurons and Ottawas would be especially susceptible to the sort of disintegration that White describes. Both groups, but especially the Hurons, faced depopulation on a massive scale. As Cadillac observed, the Hurons' "sword" had been cut "too short" for the nation to act with complete autonomy; the once numerous Ottawas could barely fill three villages in 1721.<sup>121</sup> The two nations had also been forced to flee their ancient territories in the face of the determined and relentless Iroquois juggernaut. That exodus precipitated

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<sup>121</sup> Cadillac, "Relation du Sr. de Lamothe," [1690s], *MDE*, 5:80; Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:429.

a painful sojourn through the region. In only a few years' time, the Hurons had moved from Huronia to Green Bay, western Lake Superior, and Michilimackinac before finally settling at Détroit. The Hurons and Ottawas also dealt more closely with the French than the other nations of the area, living with the French and welcoming the Jesuits among them. By White's account, these pressures should have obliterated the Hurons' and Ottawas' distinct identities. But they did not. Their complicated relationship demonstrates that the Ottawas and the Hurons refused to leave their cultural identities behind. Colonial pressures had battered these nations, but they had not destroyed them.<sup>122</sup> As the Hurons noted when rejecting an Iroquois invitation to settle among the Five Nations 1707, they could not allow "the Huron name [to] become extinct."<sup>123</sup>

The Hurons and Ottawas eventually reconciled. In the aftermath of a joint campaign against the Chickasaws in 1741 the Hurons and Ottawas met and finally reached an accommodation.<sup>124</sup> As in the seventeenth century and the 1710s, war against a common enemy served to ameliorate the conflicts between the two allies. The Hurons and Ottawas demonstrated their newly reestablished harmony in 1744, when the commandant of Détroit, Paul-Joseph Le Moyne de Longueuil, offered a war belt to the nations of Détroit to attack the British. The Ottawa leader, Kinosaki, noting that the belt could not be cut up and distributed to each nation, pointedly offered the entire belt to his "brothers the Hurons."<sup>125</sup> The Ottawas thereby publically testified to the Hurons'

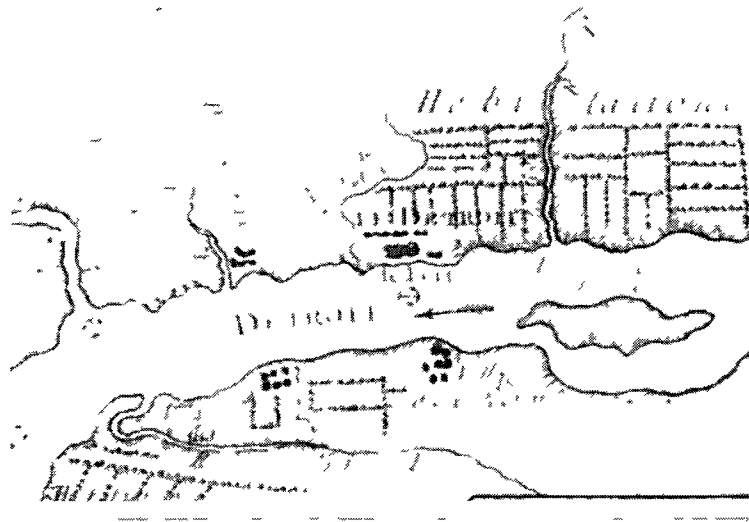
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<sup>122</sup> Newbigging, "The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance," 27, 410; Heidi Bohaker, *Nindoodemag: The Significance of the Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes Region 1600-1701*, *WMQ*, 36:1 (Jan. 2006), 29, 46.

<sup>123</sup> Aigremont to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:447.

<sup>124</sup> Hocquart au ministre, 11 June 1742, CAOM, C11A, fol. 77, fols. 281-82; Beauharnois au ministre, 17 Sept. 1743, *ibid.*, vol. 79, fols. 108-14v.

<sup>125</sup> "Conseil tenu par M. de Longueuil," [1744], in *ibid.*, vol. 18, fols. 336-36v.



**Figure 11: Detail from Jacques-Nicolas Bellin after Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, “La Rivière du Detroit Depuis le Sainte Claire jusqu’au Lac Erie,” 1764. From Archives of Ontario, Toronto, C 78, AO 6699. Accessed online.**

This detail shows the proximity of the Huron (lower left) and Ottawa (“Outaouais,” lower right) villages in 1749

importance and implicitly offered to reconcile with the Hurons. The Huron headman, Sastaretsy, accepted the belt, thus renewing the ancient alliance. Soon thereafter, the Hurons established a village on the south side of the Détroit River, directly adjacent to their erstwhile persecutors.<sup>126</sup> Once again the two groups renewed a centuries-old acquaintance. Yet their proximity and cooperation implied no cultural or political fusion. They remained distinct.

<sup>126</sup> Joseph-Gaspard de Chaussegros de Léry, “Carte de la Rivière du Détroit fait a Quebec le 22 Oct. 1749,” Newberry Library, Chicago, MapPhoto France MC No. 547

## CHAPTER FOUR

### “One heart and one body”: The Huron Community

To illustrate what he saw as a crisis in the Huron community in September 1750, the Jesuit missionary in charge of the Huron mission at Détroit, related a story to the commandant of the fort, Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Blainville. He told the officer that the Détroit Huron man Otiok8andoron, known to the French as Babi, had come to him and asked for a knife with which he could cut a roll of tobacco. When the priest gave him the tool, the Huron man confided that he and his fellow Détroit Hurons kept their knives handy, “even when we sleep...to defend ourselves in Case of attack.” The missionary inferred that Otiok8andoron and the other French-aligned Hurons living at Détroit feared “some Coup of treason on the part of the rebels,” referring to those Hurons led by Nicolas Orontony who, after trying unsuccessfully to surprise and massacre the French at Détroit, had abandoned Détroit. Otiok8andoron’s fear of his “false brothers,” in Potier’s telling, indicated a significant rift between two separate Huron communities: one which had remained loyal to the French and to the Faith and which had stayed at the Huron mission at Détrot, and another which had apostatized, embraced the Protestant British, and had established a separate village on the Muskingum River. Father Potier found it “hard to Believe” that the fracture in the Huron body politic could ever be mended, and predicted that the fabric of Huron identity and unity had been rent forever.<sup>1</sup> By all appearances, the

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<sup>1</sup> “même quand nous dormons, nous avons toujours un Couteau a notre coté pour nous deffendre en Cas d’attaque,” “il Croignoit quelque Coup de traître de La part des rebelles,” “faux freres,” “si ces scelerats sont dans Le dessein de se repatrier avec Le françois (ce que j’ai peine à Croire),” Potier à Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Blainville, 11 Sept. 1750, in Robert Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, (Ottawa : Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1996), 642-43.

Huron community had been divided into two separate groups—one British-aligned and the other French-aligned—living in two different places—Sandusky and Détroit.<sup>2</sup>

Yet within six years of this supposedly decisive break, most of the Hurons returned from the Ohio Valley to Detroit. On the third of May 1753, the Hurons held a council with their neighbors, the Ottawas, Potawatomis, Ojibwas, and French of Detroit and announced that their “brothers the Hurons” had “returned forever.”<sup>3</sup> As the Hurons attested in May 1753, the Hurons had not divided into two separate peoples after 1747. Ultimately what Potier and subsequent observers saw as a decisive break in the Huron community was merely an animated debate over how to position itself in a changing geo-political climate. While some Hurons favored remaining aligned with French and staying at Détroit, others favored a more neutral or explicitly British-aligned stance and suggested moving to Sandusky (or Conchaké on the Muskingum River) to facilitate that position. These two groups waged a determined contest to win supporters and build consensus for their position, but they always did so within the context of loyalty to the

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<sup>2</sup> Following Potier’s reading of this crisis in Huron politics after 1747, many scholars have likewise pointed to Orontony’s failed coup as the decisive moment of division in the Huron community in which some Hurons moved from Détroit and constituted a separate community. James Clifton saw the event as the beginning of a “re-ethnogenesis” in which Orontony and his followers moved from Détroit to Sandusky, embraced a long-dormant Huron ethnicity, and became a separate people, the “Wyandots.” “The Re-emergent Wyandot: A Study in Ethnogenesis on the Detroit River Borderland, 1747.” In *Papers from the Western District Conference*, ed. K.G. Pryke and L.L. Kulisek (Windsor, Ont.: Essex County Historical Society and Western District Council, Windsor, 1983):1-15. Richard White likewise casts Orontony’s rebellion as an emphatic denunciation of the traditional, French-allied Huron leadership and “a fundamental fracture in Huron-Petun society.” *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 147,195, 201. Peter MacLeod likewise claims that the Huron controversy was “resolved by fission rather than negotiation” and that they thus formed “separate villages located at Detroit and on Sandusky Bay on Lake Erie.” “*Une conspiration générale*”: The Exercise of Power by the Amerindians during the War of Austrian Secession.” (Ph.D. Diss. Department of History. University of Ottawa, 1992), 11, 134. Gregory Dowd attributes the rift to religious differences between the “non-Christian Wyandots from Sandusky” and the “Catholic Wyandots” of Détroit. *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 110.

<sup>3</sup> “Conseil des hurons en presence des outaouïais, et pouteouatamis [et Sauteux] et reponse,” CAOM, C11A, vol. 99 fol. 75-77.

Huron community.<sup>4</sup> Rather than “evidence of dysfunctional factionalism,” this debate reflects an innovative and experimental approach in which Huron people sought to advance the interests of their people.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter contemplates the decade-long debate between shifting Huron groups from 1738 until its ultimate denouement in 1753. The controversy unfolded in three identifiable stages. After a brief introduction about Huron political culture, I will describe each of these phases in a separate section. In the first stage, lasting from 1738 until 1744, the recent conflict with the Ottawas created a controversy within the Huron community. While most of the Hurons favored moving from Détroit to the St. Lawrence Valley and aligning themselves more closely with the French and the Canadian Iroquois, a small but important group favored moving to Sandusky and intensifying their contacts with the British, Shawnees, and Iroquois. Although the Hurons eventually elected to remain at Détroit, the episode had illuminated important divisions within the Huron community and had created two separate groups. The resumption of war between Great Britain and France in 1744 significantly changed the terms of the controversy and initiated a new, more contentious, phase in the crisis. After the British-aligned Hurons tried to attack Détroit in 1747, the two sides became more defined and more antagonistic. One side, residing at Détroit, remained loyal to the French, while the other, living on the Muskingum River, allied themselves with the British. At the same time the attack

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<sup>4</sup> Terms like “pro-British” and “pro-French” imply a fixity to these two groups that rarely existed. I use French- or British-aligned instead to indicate that the faction favored one side or the other. I also sometimes refer to these groups by the names of their leaders.

<sup>5</sup> Jon Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534-1701* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 81; Parmenter “At the Wood’s Edge: Iroquois Foreign Relations, 1727-1768,” (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, Univ. of Michigan, 1999); MacLeod, “*Une conspiration générale*,” 35-36.



deepened divisions between the groups, it also prompted the two parties to seek reconciliation. In the final phase, therefore, both sides sought to win the other to its position. The Détroit Hurons, aided by geopolitics and the smallpox virus, ultimately won the contest when the Conchaké Hurons returned in 1753.

This story of Huron survival and continuity, rather than fracture and disintegration, during the 1740s and 1750s testifies to the durability and adaptability of native peoples in the face of serious challenges. Many scholars have read this incident as further evidence of the destructive power of colonial forces. Forced to choose sides in an imperial conflict, the Hurons renounced the bonds which tied them together and divided into feeble fragments. When the crisis is seen as a fairly ordinary groupal dispute within an integrated political and social Huron community, however, that community appears to be a flexible and integrated entity which could absorb the “hammer blows” of colonialism.<sup>6</sup> The Hurons could do so largely because of the social and cultural bonds which held them together and created a Huron identity. That identity was not a flat formulation or self-conscious articulation of what it meant to be Huron, but a living and breathing set of practices which bound the Hurons together. The fact of Huron persistence, of the durable bonds tying that nation together, in turn tells us much about the integrity of native communities in spite of the forces agitating against it. The Great Lakes region, in fact, was populated by these persistent, durable, and discrete peoples, not by shattered refugees.

## **I. “familles” and “bandes”: Huron Political and Social Economy**

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<sup>6</sup> White, *The Middle Ground*, 1.

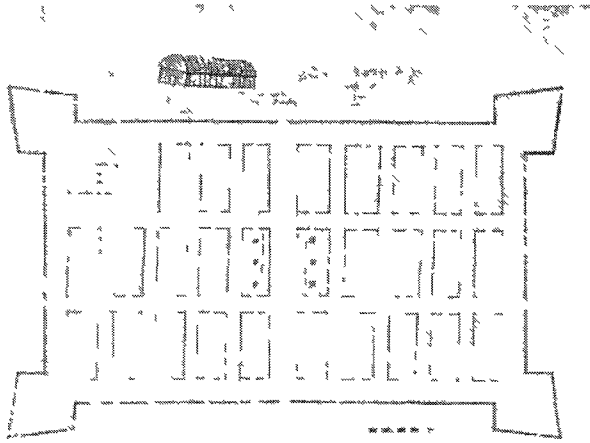
In order to understand the context in which this crisis took place, we must understand how political leadership worked in the Huron community. As monarchist French officials repeatedly observed, Huron leaders lacked the authority to command their people to act. Instead they had to navigate a baroque and multivalent set of political and social institutions and convince several different constituencies in order to create consensus on issues. Given this complexity and decentralization, these coalitions often proved unstable and consensus on issues frequently shifted. To clarify the context in which the Huron debate took place, this section explores the principal institutions and interest groups which shaped Huron foreign policy.

Membership in the Huron community operated simultaneously on several different levels. The most basic of these was that of the “longhouse,” which the French referred to either as a “*famille*,” “*cabanne*,” or “*cabannée*.” These longhouses consisted of the members of an extended family, who lived in the long segmented structures common to all northern Iroquois peoples.<sup>7</sup> The population of these longhouses varied considerably from four individuals to as many as seventy-five, with an average of about twenty per dwelling.<sup>8</sup> Henri-Louis Deschamps de Boishébert, onetime commandant of Détroit, counted twenty-eight such longhouses at the Huron village in 1732 (see figure 12), and Pierre Potier recorded the same number of inhabited longhouses at the two

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<sup>7</sup> These units were also called “matrilineages.” Conrad Heidenreich, *Huronian: A History and Geography of the Huron Indians, 1600-1650* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971), 76-77; Jules M. Boucher, “The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron: The Western Wendat People to 1701” (M.A. thesis, Dept. of History, University of Kansas, 2001), 26-28.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Toupin has recreated these longhouses from Potier’s 1746-1747 census of the Hurons (*Les écrits de Potier*, 181-99). Garry Warrick estimates the average size of Huron longhouses in southern Ontario hovered around sixteen at the time of the Iroquois invasion. Garry Warrick, *A Population History of the Huron-Petun*, (New York: Cambridge U.P., 2008), 125-33.



**Figure 12 : [Henri-Louis Boishébert], “Plan du Village des hurons au Detroit, Erie,” 1732. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.**

Boishébert, the commandant at Détroit sketched this plan of Détroit, including an elevation of a Huron longhouse and an interior plan of a longhouse.

villages on the Bois Blanc Mission in 1746.<sup>9</sup> These longhouses functioned as social units as well, and each apparently had its own “head.”<sup>10</sup>

Besides the longhouses, the Hurons also organized themselves into exogamous matrilineal clans, which the French referred to as “*bandes*.”<sup>11</sup> As they did in societies throughout North America, the bonds of fictive kinship and descent from a totemic figure tied these clans together.<sup>12</sup> The Détroit Hurons counted ten such separate clans. These clans were both exogamous, meaning that the Hurons considered marriage within one’s

<sup>9</sup> Boishébert, “Plan du village des hurons du Détroit érie, 1732,” reprinted in Brian Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit, 1701-1838* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), Fig. 2.10; Potier, “Recensement des Hurons,” in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 200-26. In 1757, a captive from Pennsylvania counted sixty or seventy of these houses at the Point au Montréal Huron village. “The Captivity of Charles Stuart, 1755-57,” in Beverley Bond, ed., *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* vol. 13 (1926-1927): 73.

<sup>10</sup> In Potier’s census, he identifies each longhouse or “cabane” by the name of a head, which could be a man or a woman (*ibid*). Richardie also identified them by reference to one “head.” Richardie to Potier, 10 Dec. 1750, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 654-55.

<sup>11</sup> Potier, “Recensement des Hurons,” Texte II, in Toupin *Les écrits de Piere Potier*, 259-60. Unfortunately, the French used the term “bande” rather carelessly to refer not only to specific clans, but also to larger phratries and also to non-related groups, making it difficult to discern how the term is being used at any given time. For example, Gov. Roland-Michel Barrin de La Galissonnière and Intendant Giles Hocquart referred to the “bande” of Sastaretsy and Tayachitin, the leaders of two separate hontaxen . *Journal*, 1746-1747, CAOM, C11A, 87:74v.

<sup>12</sup> Charlevoix, Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Journal d’un Voyage*. 2 Vols, ed. Pierre Berthiaume, (Montréal : Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, [1744] 1994), 1:552.

own clan to be incest and instead insisted that young people find spouses from different clans, and matrilineal, meaning that children inherited their clan designation from their mothers, not their fathers.<sup>13</sup>

The Hurons further divided these clans into three larger social units of related clans, known by titular animal totems, the Deer, Turtle, and Wolf and denoted as “bandes,” or “tribus” by French writers.<sup>14</sup> Pierre Potier, the longtime superior of the Huron mission at Détroit, noted that these interrelated clans claimed a sort of fictive kinship with one another, that they were “hontaxen,” meaning that their members were “brothers and sisters in a moral sense.”<sup>15</sup> The members of these “Families, or, Tribes,” according to Charlevoix, were “intermixed” within the Huron community “without being confused.”<sup>16</sup> The origins of these social units—which I refer to as “hontaxen”—remain disputed.<sup>17</sup> While the Tionontatés, or Pétuns, had apparently included both “Deer” and “Wolf” hontaxen before the fall of Huronia, they had no division associated with the Turtle. This hontaxen, then, might have consisted of non-Tionontatés, perhaps remnants of the constituent nations of the Huron Confederacy or the Ontario Iroquoian Neutrals.<sup>18</sup> Regardless of their origins, these hontaxen operated as a powerful motif and organizing principle in Huron social life. While they remained at Michilimackinac in the 1670s, for

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<sup>13</sup> Elisabeth Tooker, “Northern Iroquoian Sociopolitical Organization,” *American Anthropologist*, 72 (1970): 90-97; Heindereich, *Huronia*, 77-79.

<sup>14</sup> Potier, “Recensement des Hurons,” Texte II, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 359-60; Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:552.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Toupin, “Familles occupant les 45 cabanes,” in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 178, 181; John Steckley, “The Clans and Phratries of the Huron,” *Ontario Archaeology* 37 (1982) : 29-34.

<sup>16</sup> Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:552.

<sup>17</sup> I prefer the Huron term “hontaxen” to the Greek “phratry,” the name used by anthropologists to denote these supra-clan units. Although hontaxen probably did not serve in Huron as a noun, I find it more appropriate than associating it generically with a foreign Western concept.

<sup>18</sup> James A. Clifton, “The Re-emergent Wyandot,” 12-13; Lucien Campeau, “Appendice I : Les Hurons de Détroit,” in *La mission des jésuites chez les Hurons, 1634-1650* (Montréal: Institutum Historicum S.I., 1987), 361-67; Boucher, “The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron,” 154-59.

example, the Hurons participated in a Christmas celebration in which they organized themselves into three separate bodies, each of which was associated with one of the magi.<sup>19</sup> Nearly a century later, in 1761, Sir William Johnson noted that the Huron council room contained “three fires burning,” suggesting the political and cultural importance of the Hurons’ tripartite division.<sup>20</sup> When the Hurons undertook important diplomatic missions, moreover, they often sent three representatives, apparently representing these different social units.

Huron conventions of leadership and political authority derived from the Huron social structure and therefore likewise operated on several different levels at once.<sup>21</sup> The longhouse appears to have been the most basic unit of Huron decision-making. On several occasions individual “*familles*” or longhouses made their own decisions that deviated from those of the clans and of the Huron community generally. In 1738, for instance, three or four “*cabanes*” opposed the plan to move to Montréal; ten years later Potier noted that some clans had decided to return to Détroit on their own.<sup>22</sup> In addition to these households, each clan had both male and female elders, which constituted an important council and deliberated on issues common to the entire community. Potier

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<sup>19</sup> Clifton, “The Re-emergent Wyandot”; Vincent Bigot, “Relation de ce qui s’est passé...en la Nouvelle France en l’année 1679,” in *JR*, 10:114.

<sup>20</sup> “Extracts from the diary of Sir William Johnson of his journey to Detroit,” July 4-Oct. 30, 1761, *WHC*, 18:247. A cross-section of a Huron longhouse also shows that these dwellings had three separate fires. See Map 1.

<sup>21</sup> This discussion focuses on the “civil” political apparatus, as opposed to the “war” leaders and councils. For descriptions of pre-1649 Huron government, see Elisabeth Tooker, *An Ethnography of the Huron Indians 1615-1649*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 190 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1964), 43-51; Heindreich, *Huronnia*, 79.

<sup>22</sup> “Paroles des hurons du Détroit,” [12 août 1738], *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 74, fol. 74 ; Father de la Richardie to Père St. Pé [M. de Boucherville], [26 août 1740], *ibid.*, fol. 268v; Potier to Gabriel Marcol, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 629. For further examples, see Richardie to Potier, 10 Dec. 1750, *ibid.*, 654-55; “Conseil des hurons en presence des outaoüais, et pouteouatamis [et Sauteux] et reponse,” [3 Mai 1753], *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 99, fols 75-77 ; Boucher, “The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron,” 91-92. For a discussion on the role of such families among the Iroquois, see Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods*, 141.

listed thirty-three men—“*anciens*”—and twenty-nine women—“*anciennes*” in the Huron community.<sup>23</sup> In 1746, the commandant of Détroit invited the Hurons to meet with the governor but stipulated that they should be represented only by “the captains, the elders, and only the elders, because the young people are not powerful.”<sup>24</sup> In decentralized Huron politics, these elders had to reach consensus in order to make a decision.

Finally, the Hurons also recognized three principal chiefs, representing each of the three hontaxen.<sup>25</sup> Each of the three exercised considerable power in the community and important decisions required their unanimous consent. In all important diplomatic affairs, therefore, the Hurons sent representatives of the three hontaxen. In 1668, Father Philippe Pierson noted that the Hurons were divided into three bands and each their own separate “Chief.”<sup>26</sup> When the Hurons asked Gov. Beauharnois for permission to move to the St. Lawrence Valley in 1738, they did so in the name of the principal chiefs of each of the three hontaxen. When the governor’s nephew, Claude de Beauharnois, the Chevalier de Beauharnois, visited Détroit in hopes of bringing them to the St. Lawrence in 1741, moreover, he distributed three *gorgets*—a metal device worn around the neck by European officers—to three Huron chiefs, presumably the leaders of each hontaxen.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 178, 179.

<sup>24</sup> “les Ouendats, les capitaines, les anciens, et seulement les anciens, car les jeunes gens ne sont pas puissants,” Paul-Joseph le Moyne, Baron de Longueuil, et Richardie aux Hurons en hivernement, 20 mars 1746, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 590 ; Toupin, “Introduction,” *ibid.*, 40.

<sup>25</sup> Charlevoix, *Journal*, 552.

<sup>26</sup> “tous les hurons...se diuiserent en trois bandes selon les diferentes nations qui forment leur village, et ayant Choisi leurs Chef chascun de sa nation.” Bigot, “Relation...de l’annee 1668,” in *JR*, 10:114.

<sup>27</sup> Chevalier de Beauharnois, “Mémoire des depenses que J’ay Esté obligé de faire au Detroit Et Sandoské tant pour les Suavages de ce Poste que Ceux du Sault S<sup>t</sup> Louiis Et du Lac des deux Montagnes qui m’accompagnoient,” 19 Oct. 1741, CAOM, C11A, vol. 77, fol. 292v. The Hurons also sent three men back with Beauharnois, each representing one hontaxen. “Mémoire concernant diverses nations indiennes,” 1742, *ibid.*, fols. 388-92.

The following year, three Huron “Sachems” arrived at Albany to represent the Hurons.<sup>28</sup> Three “principal men of the Weyondotts [Hurons]” met with the British Indian agent George Croghan in 1759 to discuss a peace between their nation and Great Britain.<sup>29</sup> In 1761, Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, spoke to “the Huron Chiefs.”<sup>30</sup> Some evidence suggests that the Hurons ranked these principal chiefs—indeed “Sastaretsy,” the hereditary title of the leader of Deer hontaxen, ruled as “king” of the Hurons and his name even served as a metonym for the entire population.<sup>31</sup> Yet the evidence suggests that each exercised considerable power and that the unanimous consent of these leaders remained vital to Huron decision-making.

In addition to the household, clan elders, and principal leaders, a number of other powerful institutions operated constituted the Huron political structure. For example, Huron women, in addition to serving as clan elders, exercised their own autonomous influence in the community. As early as 1721, Charlevoix noted that Huron women exercised considerable power and that they had asked the Jesuits to send a missionary to their village. When some Hurons proposed abandoning the French and moving to Seneca territory in early 1739, the Jesuit missionary, Armand de la Richardie, had to use the “old

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<sup>28</sup> 30 July 1743, Peter Wraxall, *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain, (New York: Benjamin Blom, [1915] 1968, 230-31.

<sup>29</sup> “George Croghan’s Journal April 3, 1759 to April [30], 1763,” in Nicolas B. Wainwright, ed., *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 71:4 (Oct. 1947): 358.

<sup>30</sup> Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson Bar[one]t with the Indians on his Way to, and at the Détroit in 1761, [July-Sept. 1761], *WJP*, 3:494.

<sup>31</sup> Charlevoix, *Journal*, 1:539; Relation du Sieur de Lamothe Cadillac, [1718], in *MDE*, 5:122; “Conseil tenu dans le fort Pontchartrain par les Hurons.” 3 June 1703, in *ibid.*, 291). The French reported that Tayachitin, the leader of the Wolf hontaxen was the “second chief” or the nation and the Turtle leader was the “third chief.” “Journal of Occurrences in Canada, 1746, 1747,” in *NYCD*, 9:120; “Indian Affairs at Detroit in the Years 1738-1741,” *MPHSCR*, 34:201). Potier even lists the three leaders in this order in his 1747 census of the Huron nation. Potier, “Rescensement des Hurons,” Texte II, Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 260.

women's influence" to prevent them from doing so.<sup>32</sup> In 1741, the Chevalier de Beauharnois, arriving to find most of the men gone to war, spoke to the Huron women whom he concluded possessed "absolute power over the Minds of the men."<sup>33</sup> The Pennsylvanian Charles Stuart identified an "old Indian Squaw" as one of the "Chief Leaders of the Wondot [Huron] Council at Detroit."<sup>34</sup> Likewise the "young people" or "young men"—the Huron warriors not yet old enough to serve as elders—also held political power and acted independently from their principal leaders. These young people successfully subverted their elders in 1742, leading Gov. Beauharnois to question if the principal chiefs were really the "masters of deciding" things for their village.<sup>35</sup> Finally, a few French people, most notably the superiors of the Huron mission, Fathers Armand de la Richardie and Pierre Potier, enjoyed considerable influence in Huron policy-making. Serving as external advisors to influential Huron elders, these missionaries provided critical access to French power and mediation between the Hurons and French. Richardie proved able to influence the Hurons not to abscond to the British in 1739, to exclude his Huron enemies from council in 1740, to "place" the Hurons at a new mission site in

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<sup>32</sup> Richardie wrote the letter on 15 June 1739 ("Été obligé d'Employer la crédit de Vieilles femmes pour en arrêter le Course," "Résumé de lettres de Noyelles, Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et La Richardie," 1738-1741, CAOM, C11A vol. 75, fol. 130v.

<sup>33</sup> The officer certainly exaggerated this, especially since he noted that the same was true of paternalistic French society (Chevalier de Beauharnois to Governor Beauharnois, 2 Aug. 1741, *WHC*, 17:354).

<sup>34</sup> "The Captivity of Charles Stuart," 1755-57, in Bond, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 71-72.

<sup>35</sup> "si vos Chêfs n'étoient pas les maîtres de décider du sort de leur Village, il ne devoient pas me parler en son nom," "Paroles de Monsieur le Marquis de Beauharnois Gouverneur Général de la nouvelle France, a trois Chêfs hurons du Détroit qui Sont descendûs de cet Entroit L'automne dernier avec M. le Ch<sup>er</sup> de Beauharnois," 28 Juin 1742, COAM, C11A, vol. 77, fol. 164v. In another instance in 1741, the young men wanted to attack the Flatheads in order to ingratiate themselves with the Ottawas, but the elders successfully halted this plan. Richardie to St. Pé, 10 June 1741, *WHC*, 17:339.



1742, and to bring some of the Hurons back to Détroit in 1751.<sup>36</sup> Father Pierre Potier, furthermore, “Assisted” in a Huron council in 1756 and in 1763, a French habitant at Detroit noted that the missionary likewise “led” (*conduire*) all of the Hurons.<sup>37</sup>

Huron political culture, like Huron social organization, then, was a matrix of several cross-cutting institutions and interests which exercised influence and crafted policy. Decisions could only be reached, accordingly, through careful and tedious consensus-building and could easily be destabilized by any one of these groups. Huron politics, therefore, was a complicated machine with many moving parts. When a series of crises struck the Hurons beginning in 1738, the Hurons sought to form coalitions and to shape Huron policy and their response to those external problems.

## II. “within sight of the Outa8acs & Sauteurs”: Debating Removal, 1738-1743

This crisis in the Huron community began in the immediate aftermath of their violent conflict with the Ottawas in 1738. Noting that the Ottawas—with whom they had been quarrelling for decades—had tried to enlist the Iroquois to attack them in 1731 and 1732 and had actually done so in the summer of 1738, the Hurons finally concluded that they could no longer hope to live “within sight” of their persecutors.<sup>38</sup> If the Hurons agreed that they could no longer remain at Détroit, they could not reach consensus on

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<sup>36</sup> “Indian Affairs at Detroit in the Years 1738-1741,” [1741], *MPHSCR*, 34:172; Beauharnois to Richardie, 14 June 1741, *ibid.*, 203; “Paroles des Sonont8ans a Monsieur le Marquis de Beauharnois Gouverneur,” 17 July 1742, vol. 77, fol. 205v; Richardie to Potier, 10 Dec. 1750, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 654-55.

<sup>37</sup> “The Captivity of Charles Stuart,” 1755-57, in Bond, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 71-72.; [Robert Navarre], *Journal de la conspiration de Pontiac*, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 711.

<sup>38</sup> For the rumored attack on the Hurons, see Beauharnois to the Minister, 1 Oct. 1731, CAOM, C11A, vol. 54, fol. 406-407v; Beauharnois to the Minister, 10 Oct. 1731, *ibid.*, 417-18v; Parolles de Mons<sup>t</sup> le M. de Beauharnois aux chefs Iroquois, Octobre 1732, *ibid.*, vol. 57, fols. 352-53. For quotation see, “Indian Affairs at Detroit in the Years 1738-1741,” *MPHSCR*, 34:201-202; Payen de Noyan to the Minister, in CAOM, C11A, vol. 89, fol. 194v.

where they should go. This controversy divided the Huron community into at least two parties and exposed rifts within the community. These groups centered on not only where to live, but more fundamentally on two different visions about how the Hurons should situate themselves diplomatically and geographically, based on their foreign policy objectives. While one party—whom I refer to as French-aligned, or Détroit Hurons—espoused a steady French-aligned orientation and advocated moving to one of the mission settlements in the St. Lawrence Valley, closer to the seat of Onontio’s power at Montréal, the other—the British-aligned, or Sandusky (later Conchaké) Hurons—supported a British alignment and advocated living at Sandusky, south of Lake Erie, where they could easily access British trade at Oswego and in the interior of the Ohio Valley, or moving to one of the islands in the Detroit River. During this early phase of the crisis, these two Huron groups began to articulate two different visions of Huron geostrategy which they later intensified.

The first group, led by Mattias Sastaretsy, the latest leader of the Deer honaXen and “true chief” of the entire Huron community and Tayachitin, the leader of the Wolf honaXen, advocated moving to the relative safety of the St. Lawrence Valley, most likely at the Christian Iroquois village of Kahnawake or the settlement at Iroquois-Algonquin-Nipissing settlement at Oka, or Lac des Deux Montagnes.<sup>39</sup> In advocating this position, Sastaretsy and Tayachitin sought to ally their nation more closely to the “*domiciliés*”—the Christian peoples of the St. Lawrence Valley—and, of course, to the French. The Hurons had long been allied to the Christian Iroquois at both Oka and Kahnawake, whom they considered “our brothers who love us.” Those communities had invited them to

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<sup>39</sup> Antoine Laumet de Lamothe Cadillac, “Relation du Sr. De Lamothe,”[ca. 1698], in *MDE*, 5:119.

settle among them around the turn of the eighteenth century, and Huron men and women had married and had children with the Iroquois from these mission settlements.<sup>40</sup> These bonds had only intensified after the resumption of the Jesuit mission to the Hurons in 1728. In 1732, for example, the Christian Hurons and Christian Iroquois from Oka launched a raid against the Foxes, whom they deemed “dogs who did not acknowledge the master of life” and the Iroquois later chided their Christian brothers for their syncretistic religious practices.<sup>41</sup> The Hurons thus concluded that, if they settled near their Canadian Iroquois kin—and near the French settlement of Montréal—they would no longer have anything to fear. The Ottawas and Potawatomis would not dare provoke the Canadian Iroquois or the French by attacking the Hurons in the St. Lawrence Valley. They hoped for “their Father’s Protection...from every attack.”<sup>42</sup> Accordingly, Sastaretsy sent a message to Beauharnois and to the Canadian Iroquois in October 1738, just months after the attack, and asked him for a safe haven.<sup>43</sup>

Yet not all Hurons agreed with Sastaretsy and Tayachtin. A splinter group, involving three or four longhouses and led by the leader, “highly considered” Ang8irot, the leader of the Turtle hontaxen and “third chief” of his nation, purposed that the Hurons settle, not at Montréal, but at Sandusky, where the Hurons had fled for safety in the

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<sup>40</sup> “ces frères qui nous aiment,” “Paroles des Hurons du Détoit à M. de Beauharnois,” [1740], CAOM, C11A, vol. 74, fol. 72; Beauharnois to Richardie, 14 June 1741, *MPHSCR*, 34:304; “Baptisme de Marie-Anne,” 1 Aug. 1718, in *RPD*, 1:70; “Baptisme de Madelene Michelle,” 2 Aug. 1718, in *ibid.*, 71.

<sup>41</sup> Boishébert to Beauharnois, 1732, *WHC*, 17:150, 153-54.

<sup>42</sup> Richardie to Beauharnois, 17 Sept. 1740, in *ibid.*, 287.

<sup>43</sup> “Paroles des hurons du Détoit...,” 12 Aug. 1738 [1740], CAOM, C11A, vol. 74, fols. 72-76v; “Résumé de lettres du Canada avec commentaires des autorités métropolitaines,” [1740], *ibid.*, fols. 232-36v, “Paroles de Monsieur le Marquis de Beauharnois, Gouverneur général de la Nouvelle France, aux Iroquois du Sault S<sup>t</sup> Louïs et du Lac des deux Montagnes,” 12 June 1741, *ibid.*, vol. 75, fol. 93; “The Huron of Detroit Desire to Migrate,” *WHC*, 17:279; Hocquart au ministre, CAOM, C11A, vol. 70, fol. 118v.

autumn of 1738, or some other place in the Ohio Valley (see figure 13).<sup>44</sup> Sastaretsy grudgingly alluded to these dissenters in his August 1738 message to Beauharnois, although he dismissed them as “only three persons...who were not heeded.”<sup>45</sup> These three individuals most likely represented distinct longhouses because Richardie later noted that “three or four longhouses (*cabanes*)” still opposed removal in 1741.<sup>46</sup> Another officer noted in April of the following spring that many Hurons remained at Sandusky, “which they wanted to assign as their resting place.”<sup>47</sup> By 1740, Ang8irot and other Hurons had begun preparing land for cultivation at Sandusky, suggesting that they hoped to settle there permanently, rather than just hunt in the area.<sup>48</sup> As late as 1741 Richardie noted that Ang8irot and a few others still opposed migration and that “a large number” of the nation remained at Sandusky.<sup>49</sup> When the Chevalier de Beauharnois arrived at Détroit in 1741, he found Ang8irot “more obstinate than ever” and worried that the leader would spoil his mission to bring the Hurons to Montréal.<sup>50</sup>

Just as Sastaretsy and Tayachitin hoped to insulate themselves from Ottawa violence by allying themselves with the Canadian Iroquois and French and moving to the St. Lawrence Valley, Ang8irot hoped that moving to Sandusky would allow him to develop closer ties with the Shawnees and Senecas and to orient the Hurons to the British. Sandusky, positioned several days from Détroit, was closer to Seneca territory

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<sup>44</sup> “Indian Affairs at Detroit in the Years 1738-1741,” *MPHSCR*, 34:201; “Copie d'une lettre de Beauharnois au père Armand de La Richardie,” 14 June 1741, CAOM, C11A, vol. 75, fol. 154v.

<sup>45</sup> “il n’y a que trois personnes qui y Soient opposées, Encore ne sont elles point Ecoutées.” “Paroles des hurons du Détroit...,” 12 août 1738 [1740], in *ibid.*, vol. 74, fol. 74.

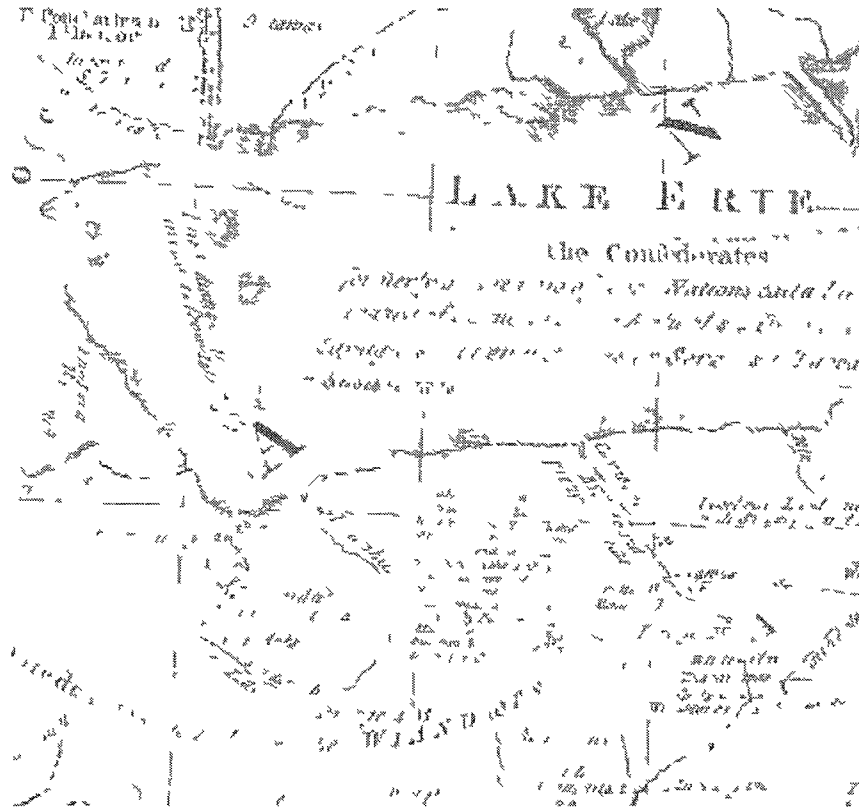
<sup>46</sup> Father de la Richardie à Père St. Pé [M. de Boucherville], [26 août 1740], in *ibid.*, vol. 74, fol. 268v.

<sup>47</sup> “Mémoire des fournitures... hurons rester au fond du Lac-Erié, en un endroit nommé Sandosket ou Ils voueloient assigner leur demeure,” 24 April 1739, in *ibid.*, vol. 73, fols. 149-49v

<sup>48</sup> “Indian Affairs at Detroit in the Years 1738-1741,” [1741], *MPHSCR*, 34:201.

<sup>49</sup> Father de la Richardie to Père St. Pé [M. de Boucherville], [26 août 1740], CAOM, C11A, 74 :269.

<sup>50</sup> Chevalier de Beauharnois to Governor Beauharnois, 2 Aug. 1741, *WHC*, 17:354.



**Figure 13: Detail from Lewis Evans, “Bowles’s new pocket map of the following independent states of North America,” in *Bowles’s Universal Atlas* (London: Bowles, Carington, 1784). Lawrence H. Slaughter Collection, New York Public Library, Map Div. 97-6006[LHS 228]. Accessed on-line.**

This detail shows the three major Huron settlements between 1738 and 1743—Bois Blanc Island in the Détroit River, Pointe à Montréal across the river from Fort Pontchartrain (near the “Outawas” village), Junundat (Étionnontout) at Sandusky (the small bay south west of Lake Erie), and Muskingum, or Conchaké (in the bottom left-hand corner). Also shown are the lands “allotted for the WIANDOTS,” or Hurons, by the Six Nations Iroquois.

and more easily accessible to British traders from Pennsylvania.<sup>51</sup> As the Marquis de La Jonquière, governor of New France, would later complain, “the English always have a very considerable Commerce at Ossandousket [Sandusky].”<sup>52</sup> Indeed, beginning in the early 1740s, the Irish-Pennsylvanian trader George Croghan operated a trading factory at

<sup>51</sup> For the length of the trip from Sandusky to Détroit, see “A Journal of Account of the Capture of John Pattin,” reproduced in Howard Eavenson, “Who Made the ‘Trader’s Map?,”” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 65 4 (October, 1941) 427

<sup>52</sup> “les Anglois font toujours un Commerce très considerable à Ossandousket,” Copie de l’instruction secrete donnée à M. de Céloron par M. le marquis de La Jonquière, 9 July 1750, CAOM, C11E, vol 13, fol 212

the mouth of the nearby Cuyahoga River south of Lake Erie.<sup>53</sup> Some Hurons had even considered moving even closer to the British than Sandusky, either to the Ohio River Watershed or to Seneca territory, to which the Senecas had invited them. Richardie noted that the Iroquois and British had been playing on the Hurons' fear of the Ottawas "to attract them to one or the other nation," and that many Hurons seemed inclined to "listen to nothing but their terror and the words of the English and Iroquois."<sup>54</sup> Even Sastaretsy—who supported moving to the St. Lawrence Valley—alluded to this possibility in his message to Beauharnois. The leader noted that, if Beauharnois failed to grant his request, the Hurons "might take a part which you [Beauharnois] would perhaps not approve."<sup>55</sup> Nodding to Ang8irot's British-aligned position, Potier scawled the note "janus quirinus" next to his name in his 1746 census of the Huron community; by invoking the two-faced Roman god, Potier suggested that Ang8irot maintained a duplicitous attachment to both the French and to the British.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Nicolas Wainwright, "George Croghan and the Indian Uprising of 1747," *Pennsylvania History*, 21:1 (Jan. 1954): 23. Cartographer John Mitchell called Cuyahoga "The seat of War, the Mart of Trade, & chief Hunting Grounds of the Six Nations, on the Lakes & Ohio." Mitchell, *A Map of the British and French Dominions in North America, 1755*, Newberry Library, VAULT oversize Ruggles 259.

<sup>54</sup> "Etoient Entierement determines a ne rien Ecouter, que leur frayeur et des paroles angloises et Irqouoise," "l'anglois et l'Iroquois profitoient des allarmes des hurons pour les attirer auprès de l'une ou l'autre Nation (131v)" ; *Résumé de lettres de Noyelles, Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et La Richardie, 1738-1741*, CAOM, C11A, vol.75, fols. 130-30v, 131v.

<sup>55</sup> "il pourra prendre un party que vous n'aproûverts peut-être pas si vous rejettiés sa parole," *ibid.*, fol. 133v.

<sup>56</sup> Potier, "Recensement des Hurons," Texte II, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 239. An ethnic component also overlaid this dispute about Huron diplomacy and real estate. While the leaders of two hontaxen, Sastaretsy representing the Deer, and Tayachitin, representing the Wolves, supported removal to the St. Lawrence Valley, Ang8irot, leader of the Turtles, opposed it in favor of Sandusky. To be sure, many Turtles, like Nicolas Orontony and Otiok8andoron, remained at *Détroit* and loyal to the French while some Deer and Wolves may have joined Ang8irot's British-aligned group. Potier à Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Blainville, 8 Sept. 1750, in *ibid.*, 637. Yet the disagreement among the principal leaders of the hontaxen points to at least the possibility that larger social and ethnic considerations fed the conflict. That Nicolas Orontony, another Turtle leader, eventually joined Ang8irot's group and took an even harder stance against the French than had Ang8irot likewise confirms that impression. Potier, "Recensement des Hurons," Texte II, in *ibid.*, 260.

Although many contemporary French observers and subsequent historians have seen this controversy as evidence of Huron disunity or “dysfunctional factionalism,” the debate reflected a pragmatic and very functional response to the challenge that the Hurons faced in 1738. By forming different groups which worked to build consensus among the various Huron interest groups, the Hurons could fully explore the range of options open to them. As Jon Parmenter observes about the Iroquois, the Hurons demonstrated an “openness to innovative attempts to build consensus around a particular initiative,” which “ultimately facilitated a far greater degree of cohesion” within the Huron community.<sup>57</sup> The groups led by Sastaresty and Ang8irot, then, were not too separate communities in the making, but simply two interest groups pursuing the good of the entire Huron community. Ang8irot’s move to Sandusky and his courtship of the British should not be read, in this light, as a renunciation of Sastaresty and the other Hurons, but as an attempt to explore an alternative geopolitical policy which would best serve Huron interests. His dealings, ultimately, were not British-aligned any more than Sastaresty’s were pro-French. Both positions were explicitly pro-Huron.<sup>58</sup> This controversy conformed to a longer Huron tradition of decision-making in which different groups explored different alternative solutions to the problems facing the Hurons. The Hurons had reacted to similar challenges at the turn of the eighteenth century by forming a pro-Iroquois/British group led by Le Baron and Cheanonvouzon which settled at St.

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<sup>57</sup> My thinking on Huron factionalism is indebted to Parmenter’s work on the Iroquois communities in Iroquoia, the St. Lawrence Valley, and, later, the Ohio Valley. Parmenter, *The Wood’s Edge*, 87; “At the Woods’ Edge”.

<sup>58</sup> This formulation is shamelessly borrowed from Peter MacLeod’s description of the Miamis during this period (“*Une conspiration générale*,” 35-36).

Joseph, and French-aligned group led by Kondiaronk which remained at Michilimackinac.<sup>59</sup> Those groups had reached consensus and moved Détroit by 1704.

Attempting to win support for their relative positions, then, both Ang8irot and Sastaresty maneuvered politically. Ang8irot's opposition to removal created a problem for Sastaresty and Tayachitin. Without the consent of each hontaxen, the Hurons could make no decision of such magnitude. Deftly navigating the complicated and decentralized Huron political system, Sastaresty deployed a sophisticated two-pronged political strategy. He sought first to isolate and marginalize Ang8irot as the leader of the Turtle hontaxen, while simultaneously promoting another leader, Nicolas Orontony, as the true representative of that hontaxen. Such maneuvering would give him at least the perception of consent from each hontaxen and allow him to proceed with his plans. Once the Hurons had moved, Ang8irot and the others would thus be forced to follow their kin to the St. Lawrence Valley.

In order to marginalize Ang8irot, Sastaresty called upon the support of his ally, Father Armand de la Richardie, known to the Hurons as Ondecha8asti, or the "beautiful country."<sup>60</sup> Dismissing the stubborn Ang8irot as a "drunkard" and a "dangerous and pernicious person," Richardie sought to actively undermine his authority, both among the Hurons and the French. More seriously, the Jesuit, and presumably Sastaresty, barred Ang8irot from attending Huron councils and ignored Ang8irot's supporters.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Boucher, "The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron," 261-68, 282.

<sup>60</sup> Ondecha8asti translates into French as "le Grand Terre" (Potier, "Recensement des Hurons," Texte II, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 261; Richardie to the Hurons, 29 Dec. 1746, in *ibid.*, 622).

<sup>61</sup> "le seul yvrogne An8irot" Extract of letter from Richardie to Saint-Pé, 26 Aug. 1740, CAOM, C11A, vol. 74, fol. 268v; "un Sujet dangereux et pernicieux" Copy of a Letter from Beauharnois to Richardie, 14 June 1741, in *ibid.*, vol. 75, fol. 154v. Years later, Potier also mentioned that Ang8irot was a "drunkard" (*bibax*). "Recensement des Hurons," Texte II, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 239.



While marginalizing Ang8irot, Sastaretsy simultaneously sought to promote the Turtle elder, Nicolas Orontony, as Ang8irot's replacement. Although Orontony was a "great chief" of the nation and listed as a "considérée" in 1747, he was apparently not the leader of the Turtle hontaxen.<sup>62</sup> Yet he, unlike Ang8irot, the rightful claimant to that authority, supported Sastaretsy and Tayachitin and their plan to move to Montréal, and Sastaretsy therefore sought to install Orontony as the de facto leader of the Turtle contingent. In the winter of 1738-1739, Sastaretsy sent Orontony to Détroit to ask Nicolas Joseph des Noyelles, commandant at Détroit, for permission to settle in the St. Lawrence Valley "on the part of the whole village."<sup>63</sup> The following spring, Sastaretsy and his allies crafted a message to be sent to the governor, once again asking him to remove them to the region. The heading of this missive, delivered to the governor in July of 1739, claimed to be the "Words of Sastaretsy, Tayatchatin and Orontony to be sent to the General."<sup>64</sup> By all accounts, Ang8irot, and not Orontony, led the Turtle hontaxen. He, and not Orontony, had the authority to speak for his people. By ignoring him and presenting Orontony as the legitimate representative of the Turtle hontaxen, Sastaretsy and Tayachitin sought to stage a coup d'état. Moreover, they entrusted the delivery of these words to none other than Orontony himself, whom they "put in charge of their affairs."<sup>65</sup> Purportedly speaking for the "whole nation" and "all the elders"—a palpable

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<sup>62</sup> "grand chef de cette nation," Extract of a letter from Nicolas Joseph des Noyelle to Beauharnois, 1 Feb. 1739, CAOM, C11A, 71:103v; Potier, "Recensement des Hurons," Texte II, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 260.

<sup>63</sup> "de la part de tout son village," "Extract of a letter from Nicolas Joseph des Noyelle to Beauharnois," 1 Feb. 1739, CAOM, C11A, vol. 71, fol. 103v.

<sup>64</sup> "Résumé of the Letters of Noyelles, Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan, and La Richardie," 1738-1741, in *ibid.*, vol. 75, fol. 133.

<sup>65</sup> "Nicolas chargé de leurs affaires," "Résumé of the Letters of Noyelles, Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan, and la Richardie," 1738-1741, in *ibid.*, 134.

lie—Orontony accordingly brought the message to Montréal in the summer of 1739 and spoke directly with Beauharnois.<sup>66</sup>

In entrusting the message to new headman, Sastaretsy, Tayachitin, and Richardie sought to accomplish two ends. Not only did they minimize Ang8irot's influence and try to replace him with Orontony, but they also sought to tie Orontony more firmly to their party by granting him authority to speak for the whole nation. This attempted coup by Sastaretsy and Tayachitin sought to place a pretender, Orontony, at the head of the Turtle hontaxen. This may explain the French sobriquet for Orontony: the "Regent."<sup>67</sup> In European political culture, a regent not only reigned during the minority of a monarch, but also during his or her absence. Orontony therefore appeared to exercise authority for the absent Ang8irot. Like regents in contemporary European political science, Orontony exercised authority that he did not in fact possess.<sup>68</sup>

Sastaretsy's ploy worked at first. Beauharnois had responded to the initial, 1 Oct. 1738, message by granting the Hurons leave to come settle in the St. Lawrence Valley, for which the Hurons enthusiastically thanked him.<sup>69</sup> When Orontony arrived the following summer, Beauharnois reiterated his promise to "receive them with great

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<sup>66</sup> "tout le village Etoit dans ces Sentimens," "Paroles de Beauharnois aux Hurons de Détroit," 12 June 1741, in *ibid.*, vol. 75, fol. 150v ; "de tous nous anciens," "Paroles de Hurons...", [1740], in *ibid.*, vol. 74, fol. 72-26 (quote on 74); Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1739, CAOM, C11E, vol. 16, fol. 225.

<sup>67</sup> Potier, "Recensement des Hurons," Texte II, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 241.

<sup>68</sup> The first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* notes that "regent" could denote both a proxy who ruled during a young monarch's minority and a ruler who ruled during the monarch's absence. ("Regent, [reg]ente. adj. Qui regit, qui gouverne l'Etat pendant une minorité, une absence du Souverain"). *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. (1694), accessed online from the University of Chicago's ARTFL Project.

<sup>69</sup> Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1739, CAOM, C11E, vol. 16, fol. 224, "Résumé of the Letters of Noyelles, Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan, and La Richardie," 1738-1741, CAOM, C11A, fol. 75, fol. 134.

pleasure” and would “cede them the land” near Montréal.<sup>70</sup> Finally in the spring of 1741, Beauharnois issued a formal invitation for the Hurons to come settle in the St. Lawrence Valley. He sent his nephew, the Chevalier de Beauharnois, to Détroit with a large contingent of Canadian Iroquois from both Oka and Kahnawake, as well as Hurons from the settlement of Lorette.<sup>71</sup> In a speech to be delivered by the younger Beauharnois, Onontio told the Hurons that their “complaints, and apprehensions had reached their father Onontio’s ears” and that he therefore offered to shield them in the “sanctuary of a father who cherished them.”<sup>72</sup> The “principal chiefs”—Sastaretsy, Tayachitin, and presumably Orontony—who had all continued to support the move, received the message enthusiastically.<sup>73</sup> Although nearly all the Huron warriors were away from Détroit fighting the Chickasaws, the Huron elders promised to discuss the matter when the young men returned.<sup>74</sup> They even sent three representatives—one for each “band,” or hontaxen—to Montréal to chose lands for the future Hurons emigrants.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> “je les recevois avec grand plaisir, Et que je leur cederai la terre que j’avois,” Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1739, CAOM, C11E, vol. 16, fol. 225v.

<sup>71</sup> “Paroles de Monsieur le Marquis de Beauharnois, Gouverneur général de la Nouvelle France, aux Iroquois du Sault S<sup>t</sup> Louÿs et du Lac des deux Montagnes,” 12 June 1741, CAOM, C11A, vol. 75, fols. 93-93v.

<sup>72</sup> “Vos plaintes, et vos justes appréhensions, sont venus fraper Les oreilles de votre père Onontio,” “vous mettre sous les ailles d’un père qui vous chérir,” “Conseil Particulier aux huronnes,” 2 Aug. 1741, *ibid.*, 99-99v.

<sup>73</sup> Richardie noted that Orontony still supported the move in the summer of 1740, and presumably still did in 1741. Tayachitin had bought porcelain from Richardie on credit, presumably to form wampum belts. “Résumé des lettres...,” 1738-1741, CAOM, C11A, in *ibid.*, 135-35v; Catherine Cangany, “Frontier Seaport: Detroit’s Transformation into an Atlantic Entrepôt, 1701-1837, (Ph.D. diss., Dept. of History, The University of Michigan, 2009), 44-45.

<sup>74</sup> Chevalier de Beauharnois to Gov. Beauharnois, 2 Aug. 1741, *WHC*, 17:353-55; Chevalier de Beauharnois, “Mémoire des depenses que J’ay Esté obligé de faire au Detroit Et Sandoské tant pour les Suavages de ce Poste que Ceux du Sault S<sup>t</sup> Louÿs Et du Lac des deux Montagnes qui m’accompagnoient,” 19 Oct. 1741, CAOM, C11A, vol. 77, fols. 291-93.

<sup>75</sup> Beauharnois au ministre, 30 Sept. 1741, in *ibid.*, vol. 75, fol. 187; Gov. Beauharnois to the Minister, 8 Oct. 1741, *MPHSCR*, 34:209-211.

By the time Chevalier Beauharnois arrived at Détroit, however, the delicate consensus to move to Montréal had already begun to collapse for several reasons. First and foremost, the Hurons' reconciliation with the Ottawas made the removal to Montréal much less pressing. In the aftermath of the joint campaign against the Chickasaws in 1741—the same campaign which had crippled the Chevalier de Beauharnois's mission—the Hurons and Ottawas met and finally reached an accommodation.<sup>76</sup> With the hostility between the Hurons and Ottawas gone, the Hurons had less incentive to seek asylum in the St. Lawrence Valley. As Pierre Jacques Payen de Noyan, the post's commandant, pointed out, "in banishing the fear, the desire of moving away was also banished."<sup>77</sup> At the same time that relations improved with the Ottawas, relations with the Canadian Iroquois had apparently dimmed. The Canadian Iroquois had been cool to the Hurons' plea from the beginning. Before May 1740, a Canadian Iroquois headman from Kahnawake had apparently made "threats" about the Hurons' relationship with Flatheads, and this had "taken from them [the Hurons] all taste for coming to settle near them [the Kahnawakes]."<sup>78</sup> Moreover, when the Canadian Iroquois escort arrived at Détroit, they told the Hurons that there were not enough resources in the St. Lawrence Valley to sustain the Hurons and actively discouraged them from moving.<sup>79</sup> If these changes were not enough, Richardie apparently turned against the plan when he learned, erroneously, that the Sulpician missionaries at Oka had begun making space for the Hurons to move

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<sup>76</sup> Hocquart au ministre, 11 June 1742, CAOM, C11A, vol. 77, fols. 281-82; Beauharnois au ministre, 17 Sept. 1743, *ibid.*, vol. 79, fols. 108-14v.

<sup>77</sup> "en Banissant la crainte à aussi Bani le desir de s'eloigner," Payen de Noyan au ministre, 20 Aug. 1742, *ibid.*, vol. 77, fol. 352.

<sup>78</sup> "les menaces d'Entatsogo, chef de Sault S. Louïs, faites a L'occasion de la Paix des hurons avec les têtes-plates, paroïssoient leur avoir ôté le goût de venir s'Etablir auprès d'Eux," Beauharnois to the Minister, 1 Oct. 1740, *ibid.*, vol. 74, fol. 81v.

<sup>79</sup> Payen de Noyan au ministre, 20 Aug. 1742, *ibid.*, vol. 77, fol. 352.

there. Fearing that his charges would be wrested from his order and given to the rival Sulpicians, Richardie lobbied the Hurons not to move to the St. Lawrence Valley.<sup>80</sup>

In response, many Hurons, particularly the “young people,” instead suggested that the Hurons settle on Grosse Île, an island in the Détroit River. The island, about ten miles from Fort Pontchartrain, would be sufficiently far away from the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis, they believed, to keep the Hurons safe.<sup>81</sup> As early as April 1741 the commandant at Détroit, Payen de Noyan, reported that the Hurons “are divided,” with “some wanting to Establish themselves at the gosse yslé,” while “the others do not want to Hear any talk but of Montréal.”<sup>82</sup> Ang8irot, although he probably still would have preferred to move to Sandusky rather than to Grosse Île, saw this changing political climate as an opportunity to finally scuttle the plan to move to Montréal. When the

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<sup>80</sup> Beauharnois au ministre, 9 Sept. 1742, *ibid.*, vol.75, fol. 121-125v. Although Richardie seemed willing for the Hurons to move to Kahnawake, where the Jesuits ran the mission, he had vociferously opposed the idea of moving to Oka because the Sulpicians had jurisdiction there. In a not-so-coded message, he told his Jesuit conferee that “people...from the Lake...are not good in my books, as you may think,” and noted that the Hurons “are not pleased with the Indian observances of the place where they are to be settled.” “Indian Affairs at Detroit in the Years 1738-1741,” *MPHSCR* 34:172, 200. Hearing a rumor that the Sulpician superior, François Piquet had cleared lands at Oka, the missionary concluded that he and the Chevalier de Beauharnois had conspired with the Sulpicians to “take this mission away from” his Society. “Excerpt from a Letter from Richardie to Father Janauy,” Dec. 1741 in *ibid.*, 210-11. Accordingly, when the Chevalier de Beauharnois arrived at Détroit the following summer, he correctly sensed that the missionary was undermining him. Chev. Beauharnois au Marquis de Beauharnois, 2 Aug. 1741, *WHC*, 17:355; Richardie to Father Jaunay, Dec. 1741, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 75, fol. 123v ; Université Laval, *Les prêtres de Saint-Suplice au Canada: Grands figures de leur histoire, 1657-1759*, (Québec: Université Laval, 1992), 181. Embarrassed at having committed the Crown’s resource to a failed endeavor, Beauharnois railed against Richardie and the Jesuits in general and unsuccessfully tried to have the priest removed from Détroit. See Beauharnois au ministre, 9 Sept. 1742, *CAOM*, C11A, 75 : 121-125v; 2 Nov. 1742, *ibid.*, fols. 241-42v; 12 Nov. 1743, in *ibid.*, fols. 349-50v; 7 Sept., 1742, *ibid.*, vol. 79, fols. 108-10v. The governor, seeking to deflect blame from himself, chose to minimize the other, equally pressing, reasons for the Hurons’ change of heart and instead to tap into anti-Jesuit currents in European culture.

<sup>81</sup> The island was three or four leagues from the fort, or about ten miles (Beauharnois to Richardie, 14 June 1741, *MPHSCR*, 34:204).

<sup>82</sup> Richardie blamed this change of heart on what he deemed Beauharnois’ sluggish response to the Hurons’ plea. Beauharnois had indeed put off removing the Hurons in hopes that he could reconcile the Ottawas and Hurons by inviting the Hurons to fight the Flatheads and thereby to erase the lingering bad feelings between the two nations (“ils sont divisés de Sentiments, les uns voulant s’Etablir dans la gorse yslé, et que les autres ne veulent Entendre parler que de Motnréal, mais que tous sont pour laisser le détroit,”) “Résumé... 1738-1741,” *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 75, fol. 137).

Chevalier de Beauharnois arrived at Détroit and Sandusky in the summer of 1741, therefore, he found Ang8irot as “obstinate as ever.” No matter how many presents the officer offered, Ang8irot remained unmoved.

In the shifting political and diplomatic climate, Ang8irot’s position won out. By April 1742, Father Richardie marked the “Entire opposition especially among the young people” to the removal, although the principal chiefs still supported the plan.<sup>83</sup> Two Hurons, who had gone to trade at the British post of Oswego that summer told some Senecas that they “would not descend” to Montréal and that their missionary “had placed them on grosse isle.”<sup>84</sup> Hearing these rumors in late June, Beauharnois assembled the three Huron elders, who had remained in Montréal since the previous fall, and angrily reproached them for their nation’s inconsistency. Reminding the Hurons that they had repeatedly asked him to remove them, the governor rhetorically wondered why Sastaretsy and the other “elders have left the decision of all things to the young people.”<sup>85</sup>

Between 1738 and 1742, then, the Hurons had conducted a serious debate about the future of their community and had exposed serious dissension within their ranks. Sastaretsy, Tayachitin, and their supporters had attempted to outflank Ang8irot by presenting Orontony as the true representative of the Turtle hontaxen. In response, Ang8irot argued against the removal to Montréal and, when the conditions changed in his

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<sup>83</sup> “une Entiere opposition surtost dans les jeunes gens, quoyques les 4 principaux Chefs persistent toujours dans les mêmes sentiments et soient tous prests a obeir aux ordres qui leur fera donner,” Hocquart au ministre, 11 June 1742, *ibid.*, vol. 77, fols. 277-83.

<sup>84</sup> The Senecas reported this to Beauharnois on 17 July 1742, suggesting that they had spoken with the Hurons in question sometime in June and that the Hurons had made their final decision around that time. “Paroles des Sonnot8ans à Monsieur le Marquis de Beauharnois Gouverneur general de la Nouvelle France,” CAOM, C11A, vol. 77, fols. 205-205v.

<sup>85</sup> “Paroles de Beauharnois à trois chefs hurons de Détroit descendus avec le chevalier de Beauharnois,” 28 June 1742, CAOM, C11A, vol. 77, fol. 162.

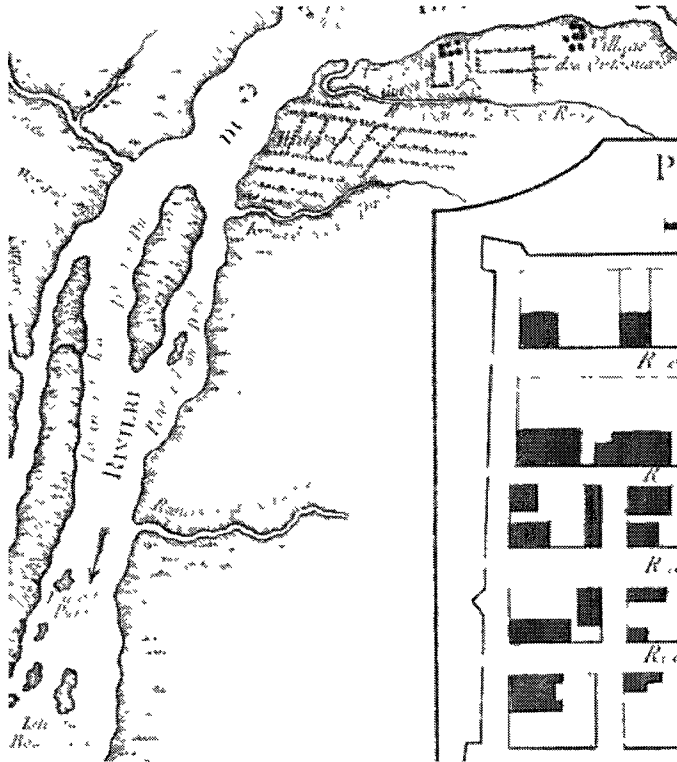
favor, convinced the “young people” to oppose the movement. While Ang8irot had not convinced the majority of the Huron to move to Sandusky, he had prevented them from moving to the St. Lawrence Valley and had maintained at least the possibility of a British alliance. Both Sastaretsy and Ang8irot had proven adept at creating consensus and manipulating Huron politics to their ends.

Despite disagreements over where, and with whom, to live, the Hurons never rejected their unity. Indeed, following the failure of the Montréal plan, the Hurons unified once again. Most of the Hurons, including Ang8irot, returned from Sandusky to the new Jesuit mission located, not on Grosse Île as initially suggested, but on Bois Blanc Île, ten miles downstream from Fort Pontchartrain (see Map 3).<sup>86</sup> Although a rumored attack by some Ojibwas sent the greater part of the Hurons to exile in Sandusky in the winter and spring of 1743, reassurances from the Ottawa headman, Kinousaki, convinced “nearly all” the Hurons to return to Détroit that summer.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the Hurons joined one another to go to war against common enemies; nearly all the Huron warriors participated in a campaign against the Chickasaws in the summer of 1741 and others launched raids in the following years. Reconciled with their Anishinabeg neighbors and settled in a new mission, the Hurons had overcome their differences by the summer of 1743.

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<sup>86</sup> Beauharnois to the Minister, 2 Nov. 1742, CAOM, C11A, 75 :241-42v. Ang8irot, who had recently died, was mentioned as having had a longhouse in the smaller of the two Huron villages located at the Bois Blanc mission around 1747. Potier, “Recensement des Hurons,” Texte I, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 248.

<sup>87</sup> “Paroles de Kinousaki aux hurons Etablis à Sandoské portée par six chefs Outa8acs,” 5 May 1743, CAOM, C11A, vol. 79, fols. 95-96; Beauharnois au ministre, 7 Sept. 1743, *ibid.*, fols. 108v-109v.



**Figure 14: Detail From Charles-Nicholas Bellin. “La rivière du Détroit depuis le lac Sainte-Claire jusqu’au lac Érié,” 1764. From Archives of Ontario, Toronto, C 78, AO 6699. Accessed online.**

This detail shows the two sites occupied by the Détroit Hurons between 1738 and 1753, after leaving their original village (just north of the river out of view). They first occupied Isle au Bois Blanc Island (the small island in the bottom left-hand corner), then the Point au Montréal (immediately to the left/west of “Villages des Outaouais” indicates the Huron village and mission).

### III. “a general conspiracy”: The Hurons and King George’s War, 1744-1748

Huron internal relations might have remained auspicious had it not been for the ill-timed death of the Holy Roman Emperor in 1740. The controversy over who would succeed Charles VI triggered a war between France and Great Britain as well as other European states, the War of Austrian Succession, which spread to North America in 1744. King George’s War, the American component of that conflict, reached Détroit in August of that year. The commandant, Paul-Joseph le Moyne, Baron de Longueuil, called a council at which he invited the Ojibwas, Potawatomis, Ottawas, and Hurons—his “four invincible arms”—to immediately attack the British merchants in the Ohio Valley and Britain’s “brother the Flathead.” Playing on the nations’ loyalty to Ontario,



Longueuil wondered “what would become of me in this conjuncture if my Children held Themselves as Simply spectators of my quarrel with the English?”<sup>88</sup>

Longueuil’s invitation to war both renewed the conflict within the Huron community and changed the terms of that controversy. Since Cheanonvouzon’s day, the Hurons had maintained an ambiguous relationship with the British, and British-aligned and pro-Seneca sentiment remained a latent position in Huron foreign policy. They traded with them regularly at Oswego (some had been there in the summer of 1742) and stayed on peaceful, if distant terms, with them, while maintaining relationships with the Senecas and Flatheads, both had ties to the British. As recently as the summer of 1743, the Hurons, probably annoyed at the rising prices and scarcity of French trading goods, had sojourned to Albany to speak with the commissioners there.<sup>89</sup> The three representatives, probably representing each of the three hontaxen, renewed the “Antient Treaty” between the Hurons and Great Britain and showed them a large wampum belt—the same that the commissioners had given Cheanouvouzon’s emissaries in 1703.<sup>90</sup> That the Hurons had kept the belt—which depicted the Hurons connected to the Covenant

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<sup>88</sup> “ les quatre bras invincibles,” “son frere le tête-plate,” “ si mes Enfans Se tiennent Simples spectateurs de mon demêle avec L’anglois,” ”Conseil tenu par M<sup>r</sup> de Longueüil Commandant pour Le Roy au Détroit, aux 4. nations de Son Poste, au Sujet dela déclaration de la guerre contre L’anglois,” [1744], *ibid.*, fol. 134v. Although this address was misdated, the references to King George’s War and the identification of Longueuil as commandant points to a date in 1744. The conference took place before 1 Sept., because Longueuil mentioned it in a letter to the governor and probably took place around August, when an habitant noted that he had provided a cow for a “war feast” (*festin de guerre*). Beauharnois to Count de Maurepas, 7 Nov. 1744, *NYCD*, 9:1111; “Fournitures faites par moy Jean Baptis bondist [Bondy] pour le Service du Roy Suivant les ordres de Monsieur Chevalier de Longueuil,” 31 Juillet 1745, *CAOM*, C11A, 83 :298.

<sup>89</sup> The British blockade of French shipping had created an acute shortage of goods, recognized not only by the French (who often exaggerated these shortages), but also by the British and natives themselves. MacLeod, “*Une conspiration générale*”, 1, 32, 57-67.

<sup>90</sup> Wraxall, *Indian Affairs*, 230-31.

Chain—demonstrates the lingering attachment of at least a group of Hurons to the British, which became problematic with the renewal of war in 1744.<sup>91</sup>

Since the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the tentative and grudging peace between the French and British in North America facilitated the Hurons' ambiguous geo-strategic situation: the French had not asked the Hurons to fight the British since 1713, although the Hurons had regularly raided British allies like the Flatheads and Chickasaws. In August 1744, however, Longueuil and Beauharnois rendered such ambiguous neutrality less tenable and intensified the debate between those Hurons who supported British alignment and those who wished to remain within the French orbit. As had the dispute over how to respond to the Ottawa threat in 1738, the controversy about whether either to support the British and live at Sandusky or to support the French and remain at Bois Blanc Island once again exposed disagreement within the Huron polity and the same two groups reemerged. In the context of an Anglo-French conflict, however, the stakes were much higher and the rhetoric more charged. Indeed, the debate reached its apogee in 1747, when Orontony and other dissenters allegedly tried to destroy Détroit. Nonetheless, the debate within the Huron community was not whether to remain united, but how a united community should position itself in a rapidly changing world.

Sastaretsy and Tayachitin once again led the French-aligned group, who supported remaining at the Bois Blanc Island and fighting the British and Flatheads.

During the council, the Sinago Ottawa leader, Kinosaki, pointedly offered the war belt to

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<sup>91</sup> The Hurons' British-aligned position was not, as Peter MacLeod suggests, simply a response to the shortage of French goods in the region during the war. That position had a much longer lineage and involved a significantly different vision of how the Hurons would position themselves in a shifting world (*Une conspiration générale*, 67, 152).

Sastaretsy and asked him to be its “guardian.” Although the Huron leader initially demurred—perhaps an indication of the indecision within the Huron ranks—Kinosaki insisted and Sastaretsy accepted the belt.<sup>92</sup> In the spring of 1745, several Huron parties set out from Détroit to attack the Flatheads and British.<sup>93</sup> Huron warriors also joined the Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas in a campaign on the Carolina frontier later that summer. Although the foray had limited success, two Hurons parties refused to “return [to Détroit] without doing anything” and remained until they finally succeeded.<sup>94</sup> In the spring of 1746 the Hurons hosted a war feast at Bois Blanc for the Potawatomis, Ottawas, and Ojibwas and then left to fight the Chickasaws and Flatheads.<sup>95</sup> That summer a large contingent of Hurons joined an army commanded by François-Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, son of the longtime governor, and participated in the sack of Fort Massachusetts.<sup>96</sup> The Huron warriors loitered around Montréal during the following fall and winter, occasionally participating in raids on the British frontier.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Kinosaki’s insistence that the Hurons keep the belt, even after they had declined it once, might have been a subtle threat to the Hurons, whose friendship with the British and Flatheads had generated the crisis in 1738. “Conseil tenu par M<sup>r</sup> de Longueuil Commandant pour Le Roy au Détroit, aux 4. nations de Son Poste, au Sujet dela déclaration de la guerre contre L’anglois,” [1744], CAOM, C11A, vol. 18, fols. 136-36v.

<sup>93</sup> A series of claims, submitted by various officers and *habitants* for Huron war parties, demonstrates the extent to which the Hurons participated in these conflict. See CAOM, C11A, C11A, vol. 83 :293-95, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303-303v, 304, 305, 307, 308, 310, 312-13, 314, 315, vol. 84 : 260, 270, 271, 117 :355, 457. See also, MacLeod, “*Une conspiration générale*,” 54-56.

<sup>94</sup> “n’avoient point voulû revenir sans rien faire,” Beauharnois au ministre, 28 Oct. 1745, CAOM, C11A, vol. 83, fol. 104.

<sup>95</sup> That Antoine Moison, who had supplied a cow for this gathering, made a claim for compensation from the Crown strongly suggests that the event was a war feast. “Antoine Moison, Certificat,” 25 April 1746, *ibid.*, vol. 118, fol. 58. For the Hurons’ war parties against the Chickasaws, see *ibid.*, vol. 83, fol. 289, vol. 84, fol. 292, vol. 85, fol. 305v.

<sup>96</sup> “Etat de la dépense qui a été faite à Montréal pour et à l’occasion du parti de français et Sauvages Commandé par M. Rigaud De Vaudreuil...pour aller sur les Costes de la Nouvelle Angleterre party de Cette Ville Le Trois Aoust 1746,” [30 Sept. 1746], *ibid.*, vol. 115, fols. 254-276v.

<sup>97</sup> For evidence of Huron participation in this attack and their subsequent stay in the St. Lawrence Valley, see Journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart), *ibid.*, vol. 87, fol. 26, and the following in CAOM, C11A,

While Sastaretsy and other Hurons supported war against Great Britain, a second group, once again led by Ang8irot, but now joined by Orontony, slowly emerged after the beginning of war.<sup>98</sup> Based at Sandusky, where at least a few Hurons had remained since the general exodus in the fall of 1738, this group openly courted British favor. If this option had been attractive in 1738, it seemed even more so now. Although the war had not reached North America until 1744, the War of Austrian Succession had begun in 1740, and the British navy had severely crippled France's ability to ship trading goods to New France.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, Longueuil complained that the British had "reddened the ocean with my Blood."<sup>100</sup> Consequently the prices of these goods rose, when they could be found at all. By 1744, the scarcity of goods at Détroit and Niagara had driven the "far Indians" like the Hurons to shop at Oswego.<sup>101</sup> When the Hurons returned the following year, the British commandant of the post, Lt. John Lindsay, was ready for them. He bluntly told the natives that the French would soon be completely unable to supply their needs and that they should regard the British "as the only ones who will be able to furnish them with merchandise." The peoples of Détroit had obliged the British

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vol. 85:193, 292v, 228-228v, 306-307; vol. 86 : 214v, 218, 224v, 225v ; vol. 87:6-6v; vol. 115 : 260-70v, vol. 117 :210v, 261, 263, 372, 373, vol. 118 : 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 59.

<sup>98</sup> Although the reasons for Orontony's defection remain unclear, Orontony might have simply taken a pragmatic approach during the crisis. During the first phase of the controversy, Orontony had temporized with Sastaretsy and Tayachitin because cooperating with these two leaders allowed the "Regent" to exercise influence within the community at a time when Ang8irot formally led the Turtle hontaxen. Even at that early date, Sastaretsy and Tayachitin worried that he might be won over to Ang8irot's side.

Beauharnois au ministre, 6, Oct., 1739, CAOM, C11E, 16:225. With Ang8irot's death in 1747, however, Orontony had no need to work with Sastaretsy and Tayachitin and thus claimed Ang8irot's mantle.

<sup>99</sup> Nicolas Wainwright, "George Croghan and the Indian Uprising of 1747," *Pennsylvania History*, 21:1 (Jan. 1954): 27.

<sup>100</sup> "L'anglois à rougi la mer de mon Sang," "Conseil tenu par M<sup>r</sup> de Longueuil Commandant pour Le Roy au Détroit, aux 4. nations de Son Poste, au Sujet dela déclaration de la guerre contre L'anglois," CAOM, C11A, vol. 18, fol. 135.

<sup>101</sup> Gov. Clinton to the N.Y. Assembly, 20 Aug. 1744, in E.B. O'Callaghan, *Papers relating to the first settlement and capture of Fort Oswego, 1727-1756*, (Albany: Weed, Parsons, & co., 1849), 469-70.

commandant and were “leaving continually” to go to Oswego. When confronted, the Détroit natives told Longueuil that “Goods Were too dear here and at Niagara.”<sup>102</sup> As these Hurons later explained to the Irish trader, George Croghan, the French had charged so much for trading goods that the Hurons “cou’d not buy them.”<sup>103</sup>

Making a gamble that the French would indeed run out of goods and perhaps even succumb to British arms—which the British assured them would happen—this second Huron group began dealing directly with the British. Many of them moved to the Huron settlements in the Ohio Valley, particularly at Sandusky, in order to deal more easily with British traders, who frequented the spot. In addition to visiting Oswego in 1744 and 1745, these Hurons began conspiring with the Iroquois to reject the French alliance altogether and to join the Covenant Chain. The British had distributed “subterranean belts” throughout the pays d’en haut to encourage the natives to “declare themselves against the French.”<sup>104</sup> This message had apparently reached the Hurons because Longueuil sent them an urgent message in March 1746 asking them not to listen to either the Senecas or the British, who were “sowing terror” among the peoples of the pays d’en haut. He begged them to return to Détroit that spring and meet with him.<sup>105</sup> Yet Longueuil’s effort failed: some Hurons appear to have fought alongside the British or the

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<sup>102</sup> “L’anglois leur declare qu’ils doivent les regarder...comme les Seuls qui pourront leur fournir des Marchdises,” Copie de la lettre adressée à Beauharnois par Paul-Joseph Le Moyne de Longueuil, 28 July 1745, CAOM, C11A, 83 :61-61vS; For a biographical note about Lindesay, see *NYCD*, 6:707, n1.

<sup>103</sup> “Journal of Conrad Weiser, Esqr., Indian Interpreter, to the Ohio,” 1748, in Reuben G. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels: Travel to the Interior of North America, 1748-1856*, 32 vols. (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904-1907) 1:29. Orontony also cited the constant French demands that they fight as a reason for abandoning the French. Yet, as the Hurons had already demonstrated and would again, the French could scarcely force them to do anything against their will.

<sup>104</sup> Beauharnois au minsitre, 28 Oct. 1745, CAOM, C11A, 83 : 103v.

<sup>105</sup> “sement l’effroi,” Longueuil et Richardie aux Hurons en hivernment, 20 March 1746, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 589-91 (quote on 590).

Flatheads in the autumn of 1746. The French rewarded the Détroit Kiskakon leader, Mikinac, for deterring his warriors from attacking “five huron prisoners” who arrived at Détroit in November 1746.<sup>106</sup> Father Richardie, who had retired as superior of the Bois Blanc mission that summer and moved to the Jesuit mission at Jeune Lorette (near Québec), alluded to the Hurons’ dealings with the British at the end of 1746. Sending a message with some Hurons from the Lorette settlement who went to Détroit, he pleaded with the Hurons to “listen to the message [of the Governor] there where you are. Don’t listen to any other.”<sup>107</sup> Yet the Hurons had already listened to, and heeded, the messages coming from the British and Iroquois.

In moving to Sandusky and dealing directly with the British, the Hurons joined a larger movement taking root in the Ohio Valley in the 1740s. Delawares and Shawnees from the Susquehanna Valley had been moving into the region in increasing numbers since the 1720s and reached “a flood stage by midcentury.”<sup>108</sup> Members of the Six Nations Iroquois, especially the Senecas, also moved to the region in search of game. Often referred to as “Mingos,” these Ohio Iroquois effectively extended the influence of the Six Nations into the region and claimed authority over their neighbors.<sup>109</sup> Many of

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<sup>106</sup> “Estate des fournitures que j’ay [Bellestre] fait aux Sauvages pour le Roy pend[an]t mon Sejour au Detroit, 16 janvier 1747,” CAOM, C11A, vol., 117, fol. 111v.

<sup>107</sup> “vous écouterez le message là où vous demeurez. N’écoutez rien d’autre,” Richardie wrote this letter at the end of December, 1746 and sent it to the Hurons via a delegation from the Huron village of Lorette, who delivered them in early April, 1747 (Pierre-Daniel Richer à Potier et aux Hurons, 25 Dec. 1746, Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 618-20 ; Richardie aux Hurons, 29 Sept. 1746, in *ibid.*, 620-23; Journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart), CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fol. 75).

<sup>108</sup> Eric Hinderacker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 27-32.

<sup>109</sup> The Six Nations explained to the Hurons that they looked “upon you as our Children, tho’ you are our Brethren.” Weiser, “Journal,” in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 36. The British later placed those Hurons in the Iroquois “charge,” and indicated that the land that the Hurons, and others in the Ohio Valley held were “allotted” to them by the Iroquois. “A Treaty with the Indians of the Six nations, Delawares, Shawonese, Owendatts, and Twightees,” in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:67; Jeffreys, “A general

these new settlers in the Ohio Valley lived in cosmopolitan villages which the royalist French disparaged as mongrel “republics” existing outside of any recognizable political order.<sup>110</sup> The presence of these groups set the stage for the last phase of the Anglo-French rivalry in continental North America during the 1740s and 1750s.

The Hurons’ prefatory dealings with the British paled in comparison to the failed attempt by Orontony and other discontented Sandusky Hurons to attack Détroit in May 1747. Orontony apparently heeded the British wampum belts and Seneca encouragement and believed the British warnings about New France’s imminent collapse.<sup>111</sup> In the winter of 1746-1747, while some Hurons were in Montréal from where they launched raids against the New England colonies, Orontony and his people decided to attack Fort Pontchartrain, where they planned to assassinate at least Father Potier and Commandant Longueuil and perhaps all the French people at the fort. Accordingly, in early May Orontony and some Huron warriors killed five French traders at Sandusky and left for Bois Blanc Island, where they arrived on 20 May, ostensibly to celebrate the Vigil of Pentecost on the following day.<sup>112</sup> According to later reports, Orontony and his followers planned go to Fort Pontchartrain the following day, Sunday, to celebrate the holiday and

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map of the middle British colonies in America,” 1754; Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 13 Nov. 1763, *NYCD*, 7:573; “Enumeration of Indians within the Northern Department,” 18 Nov. 1763, *ibid.*, 583. For more on the Mingos, see Jon Parmenter, “At the Wood’s Edge: Iroquois Foreign Relations, 1727-1768,” Chap. 2.

<sup>110</sup> White, *The Middle Ground*, 186-89; “The President of the Council of the Marine to La Jonquière,” 4 May 1749, *WHC*, 18:20-23.

<sup>111</sup> Indian Letter to Gov. Thomas, 16 May 1747, in Hazard, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1:741; Memorandum of the Cayugas, 17 July 1747, *NYCD* 6:391; MacLeod, “*Une conspiration générale*,” 77.

<sup>112</sup> “20 Mai, arrive de Nicolas à L’île aux bois-blanc avec les guerriers,” Pierre Potier, “Journal,” *Gazette de Potier*, Archives Jésuite de Canada, Montréal, AJC, BEL1-17/03-05—08A, pg. 43. The Hurons gave one of these scalps to some Ohio Senecas, who presented the trophy to George Croghan on 16 May. They also told the trader that they expected to “have Completed a victory” over the French “very Soon,” a reference to the attempted attack on Détroit. “Indian Letter to Gov. Thomas (PA),” 16 May 1747, in Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ser., vol. 1, “Commencing 1644” (Philadelphia : Joseph Severns, 1852), 741-42.

remain there Sunday night. The Hurons apparently slept in the French fort frequently and the French, as yet unaware of the murders at Sandusky, had no reason to suspect Orontony's motives. In the middle of the night, the warriors would awaken and massacre the unwitting French people entirely, then bathe the fort in "fire And Blood."<sup>113</sup>

Unfortunately for Orontony, a loyal Huron woman overheard the conspirators discussing the plan on Saturday night and immediately told one of the lay Jesuit brothers at the mission.<sup>114</sup> Father Potier hastened to Fort Pontchartrain, where he arrived at midnight, and breathlessly told Longueuil of the anticipated plot.<sup>115</sup> Having discovered the conspiracy, Longueuil had all the French people assemble in the fort and, addressing the natives with "prudence and Firmness," prevented the deliberated attack.<sup>116</sup> Although the French had thwarted the plot, the failed coup set off alarms throughout the pays d'en haut and the French, convinced that the British had turned their allies against them, saw would-be conspirators behind every tree. Continued rumors of conspiracies from around the Great Lakes and actual attacks, such as the murder of a trader by Ojibwa warriors and raids on the cattle of Détroit, convinced the French that there was "a general Conspiracy of the black skin against the White."<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> "mettre tout a feu Et Sang," "Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart)," CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fols. 74-75 (quote from 74v); José Dubois Berthelot de Beaucours, "Mémoire de Canada en 1747," *ibid.*, fols. 16-16v ; Madame Jorbert de Longueuil au ministre, 2 Nov. 1747, *ibid.*, vol. 89, fol. 252v.

<sup>114</sup> Beaucours, *Mémoire de Canada de 1747*, CAOM, C11A, fol. 87, fol. 16.

<sup>115</sup> Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), *ibid.*, fol. 75; Pierre Potier, *Journal, Gazette de Potier*, AJC, BEL1-17/03-05-08A, pg. 43.

<sup>116</sup> "La prudence et La fermeté," Madame Jorbert de Longueuil au ministre, 2 Nov. 1747, CAOM, C11A, 89 :252v; "Mémoire de Canada de 1747 par Beaucours, gouverneur de Montréal," *ibid.*, vol. 87, fol. 16.

<sup>117</sup> "une Conspiration generale de la peau noir contre la Blanche," Beaucours, *Mémoire*, *ibid.*, vol. 87, fol. 16; For the Ojibwas' looting, the murder of the habitant, Pierre St. Onze dit Martineau, and evidence of a larger conspiracy, see *ibid.*, vol. 87, fol. 16v; "Enterrement de Pierre St. Onze," 31 Aug. 1747, *RPD*, 1:439 ; Journal (de la Gallisonière et Hocquart) in CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fols. 179, 180 ; "Indian Letter to Gov. Thomas," 16 May 1747, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ser., 1:741. For evidence of anti-French activity elsewhere in the pays d'en haut, see "Journal of Occurrences," 1747, *NYCD*, 10:119, "Occurrences in



Orontony's failed coup sharpened the divisions between the "faithful" French-aligned Hurons who remained at Détroit and the "rebellious" British-aligned Hurons who lived at Sandusky and later on the Muskingum River in Ohio. Led by Sastaretsy and Tayachitin, the "loyal," or Détroit, Hurons—amounting to about half of the population—charted a path that affirmed their loyalty to the French and sought to win Orontony and his band back to Détroit.<sup>118</sup> Sastaretsy and Tayachitin immediately denounced the attack and declared that they had "no part" in Orontony's attack and pledged unconditional loyalty to the French.<sup>119</sup> Afraid to remain at the exposed Bois Blanc Island, these leaders and about half of the Huron population set up a temporary encampment adjacent to Fort Pontchartrain—figurative and literally attaching themselves to the French—and later settled at the Pointe au Montréal, directly across the river from the fort.<sup>120</sup> Longueuil

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Canada during the Year 1747-1748," in *ibid.*, 140, 156; La Galissonnière to the Minister, 23 Oct. 1748, *ibid.*, 182, Peter MacLeod, "*Une conspiration générale.*"

<sup>118</sup> The number of Hurons supporting the two groups remains unclear and probably vacillated a good deal. Yet it appears that about 100 warriors—or 400 people—supported Orontony, while some 70 sided with the Sastaretsy group—making about 240. The new Sastaretsy reported in early 1748 that he had convinced seventy warriors to return to Détroit, but that 119 remained with Orontony. "Occurrences in Canada during the year 1747-1748," *NYCD*, 10:162). Later that year, Conrad Weiser reported that "100 Owendats [Hurons]," presumably referring to fighting men, lived at Conchaké and that seventy remained at Détroit. Weiser, *Journal*, 1748, in the *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, vol. 5 (1745-1754), (Harrisburg, PA: Theodore Fenn & Co., 1851), 351; *Journal*, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 29; Christopher Gist estimated that the Huron population had been divided in half and that there were a hundred families at Orontony's settlement in Ohio [A *Journal of Christopher Gist's Journey, 1750-1751*, in *George Mercer papers relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia*, ed. Lois Mulkearn (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1954), 101. Charles Stuart counted eleven longhouses at the Sandusky settlement as well in 1755. "The Captivity of Charles Stuart," in Bond, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 72).

<sup>119</sup> A marginal note indicates that the two "were not present at the coup" ("n'Estoient pas presents au coup)," "*Sastaretsy Et Tayachatin* sont aussy venus parler a M. de Longueuil, Et luy ont Egalements assuré qu'ils ne trempoient pas dans le mauvais coup des gens de Nicolas [Orontony]," "Journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart)," *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 87, fol. 74v; Beaucours, "Mémoire de Canada de 1747," *ibid.*, fol. 16v.

<sup>120</sup> *Journal* (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart), *ibid.*, fol. 74v; *Journal* (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart), 1747-1748, *ibid.*, 176v. By September 1748, they had moved to a new Jesuit mission farm at the Pointe au Montréal, directly across the river from Fort Pontchartain and south of the Ottawa village. Occurrences in Canada during the year 1747-1748, *NYCD*, 10:178; Léry, *Établissement du Détroit*, 22 Oct. 1749, *CAOM*, *Dépôt des Fortifications*, vol. 9, 35-36. The Jesuits built this mission at the Crown's expense, see *CAOM*,

even employed the Hurons as retainers to defend the weakly garrisoned fort, providing food and repairing weapons for the Hurons at the Crown's expense.<sup>121</sup> Several of these loyal warriors went to war against the French foes, the Chickasaws.<sup>122</sup> Sastaretsy and Tayachitin, along with thirteen other French-aligned Hurons elders, left Détroit in mid-June to address the governor directly.<sup>123</sup> Although Sastaretsy died soon after their arrival in Québec, Tayachitin and the others addressed the new governor, Roland-Michel Barrin de La Galissonière, in early August. Tayachitin maintained that his people, and those of Sastaretsy, remained "good children" and asked for pardon for Orontony and the errant Hurons.<sup>124</sup>

Although Tayachitin also died before he could leave Montréal, both his and Sastaretsy's successors continued their policy of French alliance and appeasement of Orontony.<sup>125</sup> Sometime in September, "two Huron Chiefs," presumably the heirs of Sastaretsy and Tayachitin, met with Longueuil, the Potawatomis, and the Ottawas at Détroit. These "seemingly faithful" Hurons pledged their loyalty once more and agreed to visit Orontony at Sandusky.<sup>126</sup> The following April, the French-aligned Hurons met

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C11A, vol. 118 : 345, 349, 352, 353, 355, 359, 361, 375, 392, 393, 394, 398, 402, 403, vol. 119:226 ; Potier, "Livres de Compte," in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 547, Potier to Marcol, 29 Sept. 1749, in *ibid.*, 629; La Jonquière and Bigot to the President of the Council of the Marine, 5 Oct. 1749, *WHC*, 18:32.

<sup>121</sup> "Mémoire des Ouvrages d'armurerie et Taillandrie que J'ai fait moy Charles Chauvin par les ordres de Monsieur de Longueuil Capitaine d'Infanterie Commandant pour Le Roy au Détroit depuis Le Vingt Janvier dernier Jusqu'à ce Jour," 21 Oct. 1747, CAOM, C11A, 117 :43-47; "Fournitures faites par moy charles Courtois Pour le Compte et Service Du Roy au detroit Suivant les ordres de M<sup>r</sup> De Longueüil Commandant aud. Lieu," 22 Octobre 1747, *ibid.*, 117 :128-128v; "Occurrences in Canada during the year 1747-1748," *NYCD*, 10:151.

<sup>122</sup> "Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), 1747-1748," CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fol. 176.

<sup>123</sup> "Dépenses a l'occasion de la guerre 8 premiers mois 1747," 1 Sept. 1747, *ibid.*, vol. 117, fols. 271-71v.

<sup>124</sup> "Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), 1746-1747," *ibid.*, vol. 87, fols. 80, 81-81v ; Potier,

"Registre Mortuaire," in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 922.

<sup>125</sup> "Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), 1746-1747," CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fols. 84, 85.

<sup>126</sup> "deux Chefs hurons du nombre des prétendues fidèles," "Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart)," 1747-1748, *ibid.*, vol., 87, fol. 180.

with representatives of other nations around Détroit and joined them in swearing their “fidelity and obedience” to Onontio. This time, however, they went a step further and pledged to defend their French allies from any would-be attackers. They would treat such aggressors—even if they happened to be Hurons—as a “common enemy.”<sup>127</sup> Once again, Huron representatives from the “Sastaredzy band” visited Montréal in July 1748. Once again, they denied any part in Orontony’s dealings. As proof of their continued loyalty, they offered to send the warriors in a campaign against the British.<sup>128</sup> These Hurons reportedly agreed to strike against the renegade Miamis.<sup>129</sup>

In stark contrast to the group led by Sastaretsy and Tayachitin, Orontony and his people not only fully embraced the British cause, but actively recruited other nations to do the same in the months following the attack. Some four hundred of these “rebel” Hurons returned with Orontony to Sandusky after the conflict. In July William Johnson noted that these Hurons had “cut off all communication” between the western posts and Montréal.<sup>130</sup> The next month they received British traders who, according to Longueuil, supplied Orontony and his followers with ammunition and arms.<sup>131</sup> Later that month some Cayugas told Sir William Johnson that the “Chienondadeys,” or the Sandusky Hurons, were “resolved to Destroy Niagara” (the French trading post) which they viewed as an “Impediment in their way to Oswego” (the British entrepôt).<sup>132</sup> By September a British factor observed that the “Inguns att this side of Lake Eary is Makeing war very

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<sup>127</sup> “L’Ennemi Commun,” “Journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart), 1747-1748,” *ibid.*, fol. 205.

<sup>128</sup> “des hurons bande de Sastaretdzy,” *ibid.*, fols. 214, 215v, 217v.

<sup>129</sup> *La Jonquière à Celoron*, 1 Oct. 1751, *ibid.*, vol. 97, fols. 166v-167.

<sup>130</sup> Johnson to Clinton, 17 July 1747, *NYCD*, 6:386.

<sup>131</sup> *Journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart), 1747-1748*, CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fol. 176v.

<sup>132</sup> “Chienondady” or “Jenundady,” a term that the British frequently used for the Hurons, came from the Iroquois Ionontady Hagas or Huron Tionontaté. Sir William Johnson to George Clinton, 4 Aug. 1747, *WJP*, 1:106 ; Johnson to Clinton, 19 Aug. 1747, *NYCD*, 6:389.

Briskly Against the French.”<sup>133</sup> That autumn, Conrad Weiser reported that these Hurons had sent a “Black Belt” to the Delawares, Shawnees, and Susquehannas, to “cut off a French Settlement to the South of Lake Erie,” probably Niagara.<sup>134</sup> They also gave them the five scalps they had lifted from the French people at Sandusky.<sup>135</sup> Around the same time, Théata or Tahaké, a leader of the Orontony group, visited the British and brought back messages from them for the Hurons.<sup>136</sup> The following winter, traders from Pennsylvania visited Orontony twice at Sandusky.<sup>137</sup>

In addition to courting the British directly, Orontony sought to bring neighboring nations into his anti-French coalition. According to Louis La Corne, a French officer, Orontony and his people served as a “conduit” for the “Solicitation of the English.”<sup>138</sup> As early as April of that year, the Hurons were actively engaged in attracting the Kahnawakes and the people of Oka to the British alliance.<sup>139</sup> They continued these efforts following the attack. In August, Orontony intercepted at Sandusky a Shawnee delegation headed to Détroit. He persuaded them not to continue to the fort, and only a single delegate went to the post to meet Longueuil.<sup>140</sup> The commandant of Kaskaskia likewise learned that a Huron representative, “a firm Scoundrel,” had traveled to the

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<sup>133</sup> George Croghan to Thomas Lawrence, 18 Sept. 1747, Hazard, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1:770.

<sup>134</sup> The “Jonontadyhagas,” were from “Deoghsagronty,” or Détroit. “Council held at Philadelphia,” 6 Nov. 1747, Hazard, *Minutes from the Provisional Council of Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 136.

<sup>135</sup> “Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), 1747-1748,” CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fol. 204v.

<sup>136</sup> “Continuation du journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart) concernant ce qui s'est passé d'intéressant dans la colonie,” Oct.-Nov. 1747, *ibid.*, fol. 99.

<sup>137</sup> “Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), 1747-1748,” *ibid.*, fol. 198.

<sup>138</sup> La Corne au ministre, 1 Oct. 1747, *ibid.*, vol. 89, fol. 236. The governor and intendent also claimed that Orontony sought to facilitate British settlement south of Lake Erie. “Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart),” 1747-1748, *ibid.*, vol. 87, fol. 177.

<sup>139</sup> “Colonel Johnson’s Speech to the Indians and their Answer,” 25 April 1747, *NYCD*, 6:359.

<sup>140</sup> “Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), 1747-1748,” CAOM, C11A, 87:176v.

Shawnee settlement of Scioto to further “Their bad designs toward the French.”<sup>141</sup>

Orontony also received a delegation of Miamis, whom he encouraged to join the British alliance and whom he informed that Détroit had already been destroyed. Some of these Miamis, led by the headman La Damoiselle, “allowed themselves” to be seduced by Orontony and formed a British-aligned village of their own at Pickiwillany.<sup>142</sup> The Hurons even convinced some Ottawas to establish themselves along the Miami River, where they could trade with the British.<sup>143</sup>

Orontony further amplified this divergent trajectory by moving from Sandusky to Conchaké, a village at the head of the Muskingum, where he would be more convenient to the British and more distant from the French (see Map 2). Conchaké was well suited to Orontony’s needs. While Sandusky was reachable from Détroit in two or three days, the journey from Détroit to Conchaké—some one hundred miles south of Sandusky—took closer to two weeks.<sup>144</sup> Accordingly, Orontony and his village could escape the watchful eye of the French. Located in the Ohio River watershed, the Hurons could

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<sup>141</sup> Chevalier de Berthet à Longueuil, 5 March 1748, Toupin, *Les Ecrits de Potier*, 632-34 ; “Occurrences in Canada during the year 1747-1748,” *NYCD*, 10:142.

<sup>142</sup> Les Miamis “se sont Laissés gagner par les colliers de Nicolas,” “Journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart),” 1747-1748, CAOM, C11A, 87:177-79v.; George Ironstack, “From the Ashes: One Story of the Village of Pinkwi Mihtohseeniaki,” (M.A. thesis, Dept. of History, Miami University, 2006). The following year the “Rebel hurons” again offered the Miamis “hatchet of the English to strike” Onontio. “Parolles Des iroquois et hurons Reblles de la belle riviere aux misamis qui avoient esté en chasse Dans cette riviere,” 1748, CAOM, C11A, vol. 97, fols. 406-406v.

<sup>143</sup> “Journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart),” 1747-1748, *ibid.*, vol. 87, fols. 204-204v. Some Senecas told George Croghan that “y<sup>e</sup> Misagas [Ojibwas] & Toaways [Ottawas]” had joined their conspiracy before 16 May 1747. “Indian Letter to Gov. Thomas,” 16 May 1747, Hazard, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1 Ser., 1:741.

<sup>144</sup> In 1755, the royal cartographer Gaspard-Joseph Chaussegros de Léry, fils, left Détroit on 15 March and did not arrive at Conchaké until 30 March. Yet the officer might have made the trip more quickly had he not stopped to measure distances and make sketches of the area. He estimated that the Conchaké was 30 to 35 leagues from Sandusky, which translates into some 100 miles. “Journal de Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, Lieutenant des Troupes, 1754-1755”, in *RAPQ pour 1927-1928*, vol. 7, ed. Pierre-Georges Roy, (Québec: L. Amable Proulx, 1928), 405, 420-27.

expect regular visits from British traders from Pennsylvania and frequent contact with other groups, such as the Shawnees settled at nearby Scioto, the British-aligned Miamis at Pickawillany, and the Ohio Iroquois at settlements such as Cuyahoga.<sup>145</sup> Orontony asked the Ohio Iroquois permission to move further into the Ohio Valley, and sometime in late January or early February 1748 Orontony and his people left Sandusky and sojourned to Conchaké.<sup>146</sup> By 1751, Christopher Gist noted that some one hundred “Wyendott” families inhabited the town, which he called Muskingum, and that George Croghan maintained a trading post there.<sup>147</sup> This Huron-British intimacy even produced a child, a little boy named Nicolas born to an unknown English father and a baptized Huron mother in 1751.<sup>148</sup> Both metaphorically and geographically, Orontony had moved his people further from the French and closer to the British.

Orontony’s dealings with the British culminated in a September 1748 meeting at Conchaké. Conrad Weiser, Pennsylvania’s Indian agent, along with traders George Croghan and Andrew Montour, arrived at Conchaké and held a council with the “Wondots” on Sept 6. As they had in 1743, the Hurons displayed the belt which the Hurons had long ago given to Cheanonvouzon’s delegates and reminded the British representatives of the “Treaty of Friendship” the two nations had completed long ago.

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<sup>145</sup> Pattin, “Journal,” in Eavenson, “Who Made the Traders Map?,” 431. According to a British officer, Conchaké, or Muskingum, was a mere 150 miles from Logstown, a British settlement. William Trent, *Journal of Captain William Trent from Logstown to Pickawillany, A.D. 1752*, (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971).

<sup>146</sup> Gov. La Galissonnière reported that Orontony and his people left after they had secured the release of some Iroquois prisoners from Détroit, which happened in February 1748. “Journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart),” 1747-1748, CAOM, C11A, 87:198; M. de la Galissonnière to Count de Maurepas, 23 Oct. 1748, NYCD, 10:182.

<sup>147</sup> Gist, Journal, 1751, in Mulkeum, *George Mercer Papers*, 101; Albert T. Volwiler, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement, 1741-1782* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1926), 34.

<sup>148</sup> Potier, “Continuation de L’*extrait des Registres De Baptême de La Mission des hurons du detroit*,” in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 856.

The Hurons, according to Weiser, were “mightily pleas’d” that they regarded them as “Brethren of the English.” To consolidate this new friendship, the Senecas, Onondagas, Hurons, and Britons met and formally solemnized the Hurons’ entrance to the Covenant Chain. As the Seneca speaker put it, the Hurons, having left the French, would “now join us, & our Brethren, the English & you to become one People with us.” The Seneca man then presented them with a belt from the British with which he symbolically tied the Hurons to the British, Six Nations, and other nations of the Ohio Valley.<sup>149</sup>

By September 1748, then, the crisis within the Huron community had become more serious than ever. The Détroit Hurons had vowed to support and defend the French force against any attack, thereby committing themselves, in theory, to fighting their Huron brothers, while Orontony had conspired with the Hurons’ neighbors in the Ohio Valley to attack the French. In addition to their figurative estrangement, the two parties had literally moved farther apart from one another and closer to their respective allies. The Sastaresty/Tayachitin group had moved from Bois Blanc Island to a new mission on Pointe à Montréal, just across the river from Fort Pontchartrain, and the Orontony group had left Sandusky for Conchaké, near the Pennsylvania frontier and in proximity to Logstown and other British posts. Orontony’s band had even informed the Iroquois that they “no longer saw themselves as Hurons...but as Iroquois.”<sup>150</sup> A few years later, Otiok8andoron related his fears about his “false brothers.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> George Croghan, “Report, 1748, in Hazard, *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, 350-58; Conrad Weiser, “The Journal of Conrad Weiser, Esqr. Indian Interpreter, to the Ohio.” 1748, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:28-37.

<sup>150</sup> Les Hurons “ne se regardoient plus Comme hurons attendu leur petit nombre, mais comme yroquois, puisque La plus grande partie de leur village, (des hurons) En Estoient Enfants,” “Journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart),” 1747-1748, CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fol. 186.

<sup>151</sup> “faux freres,” Potier to Céloron, 11 Sept. 1750, Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 642-43.

This growing estrangement was not lost on local observers. The Kiskakon Ottawa headman, Mikinic, for example, observed toward the end of 1747 that the Sandusky Hurons had become “a separate part” of the Huron nation.<sup>152</sup> Marking this rupture between the two Huron groups, French observers likewise began to embrace a taxonomy of divergence. They differentiated between the Hurons of Detroit—“those who remain faithful to the French,” and the Sandusky Hurons whom they termed “evildoers,” the “fugitive hurons,” the “rebels,” and the “nicolaïtes.”<sup>153</sup> At the same time, these observers grew pessimistic about the possibility—and even the desirability—of the Sandusky Hurons’ return to Detroit. Father Pierre Potier, Richardie’s replacement at Detroit, concluded that “Nicolas and his adherents... will always persist in Their schism.” Moreover, in the improbable case that the Sandusky Hurons would return, the missionary feared that they would ruin the faithful disposition of the Detroit Hurons and “reignite the land.”<sup>154</sup> Clear lines had been drawn between the Sandusky and Detroit Hurons and the smart money held that reunification was unlikely.

#### **IV. “Our mats are reunited”: Resolution, 1749-1753**

In many ways, by 1748 the Hurons appeared to have divided into two separate groups living in two separate places and following two incompatible trajectories. By then the Hurons had been engaged in a serious controversy for a full decade. Between 1738

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<sup>152</sup> “quoyqu’Elle fasse un Corps séparé du Village du Détroit,” “Journal (de la Galissonnière et Hocquart),” 1747-1748, CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fol. 185.

<sup>153</sup> “ceux qui restez fideles aux François,” *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 641; “scelerats,” *ibid.*, 639, 640, 642; “Les hurons fugitifs” *ibid.* 639; “rebelles,” *ibid.*, 643, 648; “Les nicolaïtes,” *ibid.*, 646, 648.

<sup>154</sup> “Nicolas et ses adherans...preserverent toujours dans Leur schisme.” Complaining that the Hurons “d’en haut” were “miserable villains” (“vilaines gueuseries”) with a “Luciferian arrogance” (“un orgueil Luciferien”), Potier feared that, if Orontony’s group did return, they would corrupt the Hurons who had heretofore remained loyal. Potier à Marcol, 29 Sept. 1750, *ibid.*, 629.



and 1743 elements of the Huron polity had angrily disagreed about where best to settle and how to orient themselves diplomatically. The resumption of war between France and Great Britain in 1744 only intensified the controversy and defined the sides more clearly. This escalation culminated in Orontony's failed strikes and subsequent dealings with the British. Yet if the groups had become more ossified, the Huron community had not yet completely divided into two irreconcilable entities. Indeed, the boundaries between the groups remained fluid, and many Hurons remained profoundly ambivalent in their loyalties. Moreover, the Hurons demonstrated a stubborn desire to remain united in the years and months following 21 May 1747. Unwilling to simply divide and go their separate ways, each group instead struggled to win the other over to its position and once again to operate as a single, integrated community. These attempts resulted in the return of nearly all the remaining "rebel" Hurons to Détroit, and the subsequent abandonment of the Huron settlements in the Ohio Valley. This period should be read, therefore, not as the moment of ethnogenesis of two distinct groups, but of a determined and earnest controversy within a robust and well-integrated community. The Hurons' persisting durability testifies to the internal coherence within native groups.

From the beginning, the lines between the Conchaké Hurons and those of Détroit had always remained ambiguous and the two groups had never really operated as closed and fixed entities. Hurons from both camps easily passed back and forth between both Détroit and the Ohio Valley, especially Sandusky. Ang8irot and Orontony even maintained houses at Détroit as late as the winter of 1746-1747, and Orontony lived two doors down from Sastaretsy. Sastarety's mother-in-law, moreover, lived at the Sandusky

settlement.<sup>155</sup> In the months following the failed attack, the French knew about Orontony's dealings during these months in surprising detail, suggesting that Hurons continued to travel easily between the settlements and passed information along to their missionaries and the French officers.<sup>156</sup> Moreover, many Hurons seemed to be genuinely ambivalent about where their loyalties lay and therefore did not easily fit into either camp. The fact that Father Potier described Ang8irot as "janus quirinus" also suggests that the leader's position was ambiguous and ambivalent, not rigid and irreconcilable.<sup>157</sup> George Croghan believed that if the British failed to supply Orontony sufficiently, the Hurons would "Turn to the French" once again.<sup>158</sup> After Orontony's failed attack, the French frequently testified to this ambiguity, expressing concerns that the "seemingly loyal" Hurons were actually serving as spies for Orontony and that they might at any moment betray the French.<sup>159</sup> Although these fears were perhaps exaggerated, they nonetheless suggest that lines between the two groups had not yet hardened completely. If contemporary French observers could not readily distinguish between the "faithful"

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<sup>155</sup> Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, Tableau I, pg. 173, 225.

<sup>156</sup> Longueuil testified to these "goings And comings," ("ces allés Et venües) and correspondence during 1747 and 1748 indicated that the French were well aware of Orontony's activities, via the Détroit Hurons. See "Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart)," 1747-1748, CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fols. 175-184v. A Huron woman named Marie Agnès i8ennoh8e informed Potier and Commandant Céloron of the desire of some Hurons to kill Richardie in the autumn of 1750. Potier to Céloron, 8 Sept. 1750, in Toupin *Les écrits de Potier*, 637; Céloron to Potier, 9 Sept. 1750, *ibid.*, 639.

<sup>157</sup> "ang8irot (janus quirinus...)," Potier, "Recensement des Hurons," Texte II, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 239. Quirinus was a pre-Roman god whose cult merged with that of Janus.

<sup>158</sup> George Croghan to Thomas Lawrence, 18 Sept. 1747, Hazard, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1:770.

<sup>159</sup> Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), 1747-1748, CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fol. 180. Longueuil noted that the Hurons wished to return to Bois Blanc, where they could cut off Détroit if they so desired, and worried in 1748 that the Détroit Hurons would warn Orontony of any intended attack by the French (*ibid.*, fols. 177, 223v). The following year, Chaussegros de Léry remained concerned that the Hurons, settled directly across the river from Fort Pontchartrain, could too easily monitor the activity at the post and pass information to Orontony. Léry, "Mémoire sur le projet d'un établissement commercial sur les terres qui bordent le Détroit," 1749, CAOM, Série Dépôt des fortifications colonial, 35.

and “rebellious” Hurons, perhaps those lines were not as clearly demarcated as they sometimes seemed.

Not only had the two groups been ambiguous and fluid, but the Hurons showed a resolute commitment to reunite the fractured Huron community. These efforts differentiated the Ohio Huron communities from those formed by the Iroquois in the region. According to Jon Parmenter, migration served as a means of diffusing potentially destructive dissent for the Six Nations. Parmenter argues that discontented Iroquois frequently left their villages in Iroquoia to settle in the Iroquois settlements in the St. Lawrence and Ohio valleys. These splinter communities continued to communicate and cooperate with the Iroquois Confederacy, however, and in fact facilitated the projection of Iroquois influence far from Iroquoia.<sup>160</sup> Yet the Hurons, who numbered somewhere between six and eight hundred people compared to perhaps 6,400 Iroquois, could ill afford to lose such a substantial part of their population. Such a split would have severely compromised the Hurons’ ability to survive as independent and to retain their hard-won autonomy. With their population divided into two, the Ottawas would have dominated the Hurons remaining at Détroit (as they had when they lived at Michilimackinac), and the Ohio Iroquois would have subsumed the Conchaké Hurons. In fact, the British had given the Hurons “over in [the Iroquois] charge,” and the Iroquois claimed to be “fathers and brothers.” Although settlement at nearby Sandusky would allow the Hurons to remain socially and politically unified, settlement at Conchaké would have only diffused Huron power instead of extending it.

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<sup>160</sup> Parmenter, “At the Wood’s Edge,” 118.

Rather than accept division as a means of keeping peace and of extending Huron influence, therefore, leaders of each side pursued a campaign to win the others to their camp. The Détroit Hurons, for their part, immediately sought to rehabilitate Orontony and to bring the Hurons separatists back to Détroit. Knowing the regard that Orontony and his supporters had for Father Richardie, the Hurons who descended to Montréal in the summer of 1747 convinced Gov. La Galissonière to send the priest to Sandusky to meet with the rebels. Interestingly, the Hurons asked for Richardie to “reestablish tranquility in this Nation,” suggesting that the conflict was an interior crisis for the Hurons as much as a diplomatic crisis for the French.<sup>161</sup> Accordingly, Richardie arrived in October 1747.<sup>162</sup> After the death of the elder Sastaretsy in August 1747, the new Sastaretsy went to Sandusky to invite Orontony to speak with Longueuil. Although Sastaretsy finally convinced Orontony to come to Détroit, where the leader surrendered the belts he had received from the British, a strategic attack by a handful of Hurons and Iroquois on some Frenchmen near the fort successfully scuttled these talks.<sup>163</sup> Undeterred, Sastaretsy sent deputies to Conchaké in the spring of 1748 and again invited the errant Hurons back to Détroit, and succeeded in bringing back seventy men with their families.<sup>164</sup> Thereafter Sastaretsy and Richardie continued to lobby the Conchaké Hurons to return to Détroit.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> “a rétablir la tranquillité dans cette Nation,” Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), 1746-1747, CAOM, C11A, vol. 87., fols. 80, 81.

<sup>162</sup> Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart), 1747-1748, in *ibid.*, fol. 181.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 190v-91, 198.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 204v

<sup>165</sup> Potier au Gabreil Marcol, 29 Sept. 1749, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 639 ; Potier à Paul-Joseph Le Moyne, Baron de Longueuil, *ibid.*, 631. ; Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Blainville à Potier, 8 Sept. 1750, *ibid.*, 635-36.

These efforts by the loyal Hurons and Richardie soon began to bear fruit. When Conrad Weiser passed through the Ohio Valley later in 1749 he heard that “the Wondots [Hurons] had a mind to go back again to the French.” Although he later concluded that this news was unfounded, the rumor nonetheless suggests that some of the Conchaké Hurons had doubts about remaining in the Ohio Valley and had contemplating returning to Détroit.<sup>166</sup> In September, shortly after Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Blainville led an expedition of St. Lawrence *domiciliés* and French soldiers through the Ohio Valley, Potier noted that “some families” from Orontony’s band had “settled at the mission.”<sup>167</sup> Richardie even boasted that “the rebels were beginning to come to repentance” and that Orontony was losing supporters “every day.”<sup>168</sup>

Orontony also toiled to attract the Hurons of Détroit to Sandusky and later Conchaké. The Sandusky leader, Théata, visited the British in the summer of 1747 and returned to speak to the Détroit Hurons., which had a “very bad Effect,” on the loyal Hurons.<sup>169</sup> When he spoke to Conrad Weiser the following September, Orontony told the Pennsylvanian that the rest of his nation had been “left behind at another Town a good distance off”—meaning Détroit—but that he hoped those Hurons “wou’d follow” him and denounce the French alliance.<sup>170</sup> In September 1749, Théata visited either Oswego

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<sup>166</sup> Weiser, “Journal,” 1748-1749, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:28.

<sup>167</sup> “Q[uelque] familles qui se sont rangés à la mission,” Potier to Marcol, 29 Sept. 1749 in Toupin *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 629; “Copie de l’instruction secrète donnée à M. de Céloron... par M. le marquis de La Jonquière,” [1749], CAOM, C11E, vol. 13, fols. 212-15 ; William J. Eccles, “Céloron de Blainville, Pierre-Joseph,” *DCB*, vol. 3 [on-line].

<sup>168</sup> “le père La Richardie m’a dit que les rebelles commençoient à venir à rescipiscence, et que la bande de Nicolas diminueoit tous les jours” Jean de Bonnécamp, “Relation du voyage de la Belle rivière fait en 1749,” in *JR*, 69:192.

<sup>169</sup> “un très mauvais Effect,” “Continuation du journal (de La Galissonnière et Hocquart) concernant ce qui s’est passé d’intéressant dans la colonie,” Oct.-Nov. 1747, CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fol. 99.

<sup>170</sup> Weiser, Journal, 1748, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:30.

or Albany. Giving Théata a belt to present to Sastaresty, the British officials asked the Huron leader to invite the “faithful” Hurons to come trade at Oswego.<sup>171</sup> According to one French officer, the Hurons who “had remained faithful until now” had accepted this belt and planned to join Orontony at Conchaké in the autumn.<sup>172</sup> The Conchaké Hurons apparently believed this as well. In January 1751 they confidently asserted that the “other Part of the Wyendott Nation would desert the French” and “join their Brethren” at Conchaké.<sup>173</sup> Gist, Montour, and Croghan met with these Hurons again the following year. Noting that the Huron nation still remained divided in its loyalty, Gist hoped that Conchaké Hurons would “endeavor to bring over your brethren.”<sup>174</sup> These continued efforts, and the possibility of complete Huron defection to Conchaké, demonstrates that there was an ongoing debate within a cohesive Huron community. At one point, Céloron, the new commandant of Détroit, even suggested that the Conchaké Hurons might come back to Détroit in order to “dethrone sasetaredzy” and to corrupt the heretofore faithful Hurons.<sup>175</sup> These attempts by both groups to win over the other demonstrate that neither had accepted the division of their nation. Despite their differences, they thought of themselves as one nation.

After the death of Orontony in the summer of 1750, these negotiations reached a critical juncture. The departure of the charismatic figure and the purported ringleader of

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<sup>171</sup> Potier à Paul-Joseph Le Moyne, Baron de Longueuil, 29 Sept. 1748, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 631; “Parolles des Anglois à Chouaguen au nommé Tahaké huron en luy donnant un Collier pour les hurons du détroit et pour Nicolas Orontony chef des hurons rebels,” 1749, CAOM, C11A, vol. 93, fol. 61.

<sup>172</sup> “les hurons restéz fideles jusques present,” “Extrait des lettres Et nouvelles Envoyées a M. Lr Marquis de la Jonquiere par le S. de Reymond Commandant aux Miamis,” 1747-1750, *ibid.*, vol. 95, fols. 375-397.

<sup>173</sup> Gist, “Journal,” 1750, in Mulkearn, *George Mercer Papers*, 103.

<sup>174</sup> “Extracts from the Treaty with the Indians at Loggs Town,” June 1752, *ibid.*, 60.

<sup>175</sup> Céloron to Potier, 9 Sept. 1750, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 639.

the Huron mutiny created a diplomatic opportunity and gave the Détroit Hurons hope that they could reconcile with their brothers at Conchaké. While Orontony had French blood on his hands and had invested everything in his British-aligned stance, his successors might prove better able to reach an accommodation. Accordingly the Détroit Hurons launched a diplomatic mission to convince the Conchaké Hurons to return to Détroit. The “2 principal chiefs” of the Détroit Hurons—Sastaretsy, and Otiok8andoron, or Babi, a leader of the Turtle hontaxen—accompanied by several other Huron elders and Father Richardie, left Détroit in early September to meet with the Conchaké Huron elders and to winter in the Ohio Valley.<sup>176</sup> When the party reached the site of Tanouatekiori on the Vermilion River, a day and half journey from Conchaké, the Détroit Huron elders left Richardie, who had been warned that the Conchaké Hurons intended to kill him, and continued on to Conchaké. Once Sastaretsy, Otiok8andoron, and the other Hurons arrived at Conchaké, they planned to hold councils with the Conchaké Hurons for a few days and then repair to Tanouatekiori to meet with Richardie.<sup>177</sup>

Sastaretsy and Richardie, however, made little progress until a critical misstep by the British turned the tide toward the Détroit Hurons. Sometime in November or early December, some British traders had ransacked the longhouse belonging to Atironta at Sandusky and stolen a blanket, deerskins, and a broken musket. When news of the crime reached Conchaké, it galvanized the community and created a “general Consternation among the Hurons.”<sup>178</sup> Indeed sentiment had shifted so dramatically against the British

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<sup>176</sup> Céloron to Potier, 8 Sept. 1750, in *ibid.*, 635-36 ; Potier to Céloron, 8 Sept. 1750, *ibid.*, 637 ; Potier to Céloron, 17 Sept. 1750, *ibid.*, 64. Quotation from Potier to Gabriel Marcol, 13 Oct. 1750, in *ibid.*, 647.

<sup>177</sup> Richardie to Potier, 30 Sept. 1750, in *ibid.*, 646.

<sup>178</sup> “une Consternation generale parmi les hurons,” Richardie to Potier, 10 Dec. 1750, in *ibid.*, 655.

by January 1751 that few of the “great men” bothered to come meet the Pennsylvania Indian Agent, Christopher Gist, at Conchaké.<sup>179</sup> Making the most of this opportunity, Father Richardie convinced not only the longhouse led by Aritonta but five other influential longhouses to abandon the treacherous British and to return to Détroit.<sup>180</sup> As a result, a “large party of fugitive Hurons” arrived at the Jesuit mission at the Pointe au Montréal the following summer. In June and July, several French habitants at the fort supplied goods and services, at the Crown’s expense, to the “four families returned to the Mission.”<sup>181</sup> More Conchaké Hurons followed in the summer of 1752, and Longueuil heard that they all planned to return that summer.<sup>182</sup>

After the defection of these families in 1751, the Conchaké Hurons found their position increasingly untenable. Although the British had proved energetic and attractive allies during King George’s War, the end of hostilities and the return of the French into the region made their separate existence in the region less tenable. Following the end of hostilities in 1748, Gov. Galissonière sent a detachment of 230 French and native soldiers into the Ohio Valley to reassert French claims to the region. The army, led by Céloron , also sought to “chase the Hurons who had assassinated some Frenchmen” and to “whip

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<sup>179</sup> Gist, “Journal,” 1751 ,in Mulkearn , *George Mercer Papers*, 104.

<sup>180</sup> Although Robert Toupin credits Richardie with having single-handedly redeemed these Hurons, Sastaretsy and Otiok&andoron likely played an equally critical role. Richardie, never one to let a good deed go unclaimed, minimized their contribution and exaggerated his own. Rumors had circulated as recently as September that the Conchaké Hurons had intended to assassinate Richarde, after all, and they had refused to let him visit Conchaké directly, suggesting that his influence was more modest than he pretended.

Toupin, “Introduction,” *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 43-44; Richardie to Potier, 10 Dec. 1750, *ibid.*, 652-53.  
<sup>181</sup> “le retour d’un grande partie des hurons fugitifs,” La Jonquière au ministre, 21 Aug. 1751, CAOM, C11A, vol. 97, fol. 61. See also various certificates of habitants who provided materials and labor to help resettle these Hurosn, *ibid.*, vol. 119, fols. 291-91v, 292v, 293, 298, 299v.

<sup>182</sup> François Bigot, Etat des dépenses faites pour le service du roi dans les pays d'en haut à l'occasion des mouvements des nations sauvages et qui ont été acquittées la présente année, 4 Nov. 1752, *ibid.*, vol. 119, fol. 298 ; Longueuil to the Minister, 21 April 1752, *NYCD*, 10:249.



Home” the Miamis at Pickiwillany and the Hurons at Conchaké.<sup>183</sup> The French also established a fort at Sandusky at the same time.<sup>184</sup> Although the British reported that the Hurons of Conchaké had dismissed Céloron’s mission “as a jest,” the natives clearly found it troubling. In an angry message to governors of the British colonies, the Hurons charged that the British, contrary to their word, had not included the Hurons in the treaty at the conclusion of King George’s War. As a result, the French “are always threatening us,” and the Hurons “dare not” stray too far from their village. They implored the British, therefore, to “have us included in the Peace.”<sup>185</sup> Unwilling to provoke another war with France, the British did nothing but reassure the Hurons of their good intentions and wish them luck.<sup>186</sup>

Even more intimidating than Céloron’s mission, the French organized another campaign against the Conchaké Hurons’ neighbors, the Miamis of Pickiwillany, in the summer of 1752.<sup>187</sup> Although that mission faltered, a number of Ottawas from Michilimackinac and Potawatomis from Fort St. Joseph did decisively strike the Miami

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<sup>183</sup> “pour chasser les hurons qui ont assassiné des françois,” Galissonnière au ministre, 26 juin 1749, CAOM, C11A, vol. 93, fols. 143-145v (quote on 143v) ; Jonquière au ministre, 20 Sept. 1749, *ibid.*, fol. 93, fol. 103v ; Céloron’s Expedition down the Ohio, *WHC* 18 :36-58 ; Sir William Johnson, Correspondence on Indian Affairs, [2 Oct. 1749], *WJP*, 1:910 ; Gov. James Hamilton (PA) to Gov. George Clinton (NY), 2 Oct. 1749, *NYCD*, 6 :531-33.

<sup>184</sup> See CAOM, C11A, vol., 119, fols. 297v, 304v, 316v; Léry, “Journal,” 1754, *RAPQ*, 7:391.

<sup>185</sup> Message of the Miamis and Hurons to the Governor of Pennsylvania, 20 Sept. 1750, *NYCD*, 10 :596. On 4 May 1751, some French had “run off” some Shawnees, Hurons, and Miamis from around the Cuyahoga (Lieutenant Lindesay’s Report of Indian News, 4 May 1751, in *ibid.*, 6:706).

<sup>186</sup> “A Treaty with the Indians of the Six nations, Delawares, Shawonese, Owendatts, and Twightees [Miamis], Logstown,” 28 May 1751, Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:65. The Pennsylvanians seemed unable to provide support to these anti-French forces. MacLeod, “Une conspiration générale,” 175-76.

<sup>187</sup> Lieutenant Lindesay’s Report of Indian News, &c. at Oswego. [4 May 1751], *NYCD*, 6:706; La Jonquière à Céloron, 1 Oct. 1751, CAOM, C11A, 97 :166v-68 ;Longueuil au ministre, 21 April 1752, *NYCD*, 10:249-50; William Trent, *Journal of William Trent from Logstown to Pickawillany, A.D. 1752*, (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971) 85-105. See also certificates relating to the attack, CAOM, C11A, 98 :88v, 171v-72, 269-72, 269-76, 352, 457v, 99:280.

settlement.<sup>188</sup> When the British did nothing to protect their Miami allies from a French-instigated attack, the Hurons finally turned against the British alliance. Exasperated by the British abandonment, they sent a curt message to the governor of Pennsylvania in 1755 telling them they had left Conchaké.<sup>189</sup>

If the French threat had not been menacing enough, the Conchaké Hurons also faced the prospect of a poor harvest and a smallpox outbreak in the spring and summer of 1752. The harvest had been particularly bad in the autumn throughout the pays d'en haut, but especially in the "southern posts."<sup>190</sup> Weakened by hunger and suffering from malnutrition, the peoples of the pays d'en haut faced an outbreak of smallpox in the spring of 1752. At Détroit alone, the disease had killed fourteen Ottawas, including the Sinago Ottawa headman Kinosaki, around the same number of Potawatomis, and at least one Huron woman, before the end of April. The Ottawa headman, Mikinic, furthermore, refused to attack Pickiwillany in autumn 1751 for fear of the disease.<sup>191</sup> The disease apparently persisted throughout the summer, killing a native slave in September of that year.<sup>192</sup> This hunger and disease apparently hit the Hurons of Conchaké especially hard. In 1755 Chaussegros de Léry noted that a hundred and twenty Hurons had perished in a

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<sup>188</sup> Longueuil au ministre, 18 Aug. 1752, CAOM, C11A, vol. 98, fol. 351v; Bigot au ministre, 5 Nov. 1752, *ibid.*, vol. 119, fols. 288-290; "Depenses a l'occasion des pais d'Enhaut," 4 Nov. 1752, *ibid.*, vol. 119, fols. 297v-98v, 299v, 302, 304; Thomas Jefferys, "A general map of the middle British colonies in America," 1758, Newberry Library, Ayer Collection, 133 39 1758.

<sup>189</sup> William Hunter, "Orontony" in DCB on-line.

<sup>190</sup> Bigot au ministre, 6 May 1752, CAOM, C11A, vol. 98, fol. 88v ; Bigot au ministre, 8 May 1752, in *ibid.*, vol. 98, fol.111; Bigot au ministre, 10 Oct. 1752, in *ibid.*, 172; "Feuille au net concernant principalement le poste de Détroit," 1752, in *ibid.*, vol. 98, fol. 457v; Longueuil to the Minister, 21 April 1752, *NYCD*, 10:249-50.

<sup>191</sup> Longueuil to the Minister, *NYCD*, 10:246, 249.

<sup>192</sup> Enterrement de Jean Baptiste, *RPD*, 1:545.

single summer, presumably that of 1752.<sup>193</sup> Such losses were dramatic for the “rebel” group, which probably did not number more than four hundred at the time. In June and July of 1753, Father Potier interred six different Hurons, who had perished “at Conchake,” in the mission cemetery. If the Hurons continued to practice the Feast of the Dead, then these Hurons had likely died the previous year and their cleaned bones were now being interred.<sup>194</sup> Céloron hoped that the disease might “contribute a great deal” to the Conchaké Hurons’ return.<sup>195</sup>

The Conchaké Hurons therefore faced some unpleasant realities. They had lost the charismatic Orontony in 1750 and an important part of their population in the following year. The British and Iroquois, moreover, seemed unwilling or unable to satisfy their promises to protect the Hurons. The French remained intent on rooting the British out of the Ohio Valley and on either reabsorbing or entirely destroying the Pickiwillany and Conchaké communities.<sup>196</sup> The Détroit Hurons likewise continued to refuse to join their brothers in Conchaké. Now they had lost a serious portion of their population to disease. Without British support and with continuing pressure, the Conchaké Hurons could do little but concede that their position was untenable and seek reconciliation with their brothers at Détroit.

The messages that Céloron and Mikinac, the Détroit Kiskakon Ottawa leader, sent in the winter of 1752-1753, therefore found receptive ears at Conchaké. Speaking

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<sup>193</sup> Léry, “Journal, 1754-1755,” *RAPQ*, 7:427.

<sup>194</sup> Potier, “Registre mortuaire,” in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 924.

<sup>195</sup> Longueuil to the Minister, *NYCD*, 10:249; McConnell, “The Search for Order,” 24.

<sup>196</sup> Céloron to Vaudreuil, April 23, 1751, in Theodore Pease, and Ernestine Jenison, *Illinois on the eve of the Seven Years' War, 1747-1755, Illinois State Historical Library and Collections*, Vol. 29 (Springfield: State Historical Library, 1940), 245-47.

through the Turtle Huron elder, Théata, Céloron once again invited the Hurons to return to Détroit. The officer promised that “when [the Conchaké and Détroit Hurons] no longer make but one single nation,” then “Nothing bad would happen” to them.<sup>197</sup> Moreover, if they returned to Détroit, he would ensure their safety ensconced “in the Arms of you father ononthio and [those] of your brothers the outaoäis, pouteouatamis and Sauteux.”<sup>198</sup> The Hurons could expect to see their children grow and their wives live at peace. Mikinic sent a message during the same winter. Noting that it pained him to see the Hurons divided into two parties, the Ottawa leader implored the Conchaké Hurons to return. Since the entire episode had been sparked by the controversy between the Ottawas and Hurons, Mikinic’s assurance that the Conchaké Hurons would find peace and tranquility at Détroit carried added weight. Such promises resonated among a people battered by threats of war, famine, and disease. As a result the Conchaké Hurons testified to the “joy which they felt intensely” upon receiving this message.<sup>199</sup>

On 3 May 1753, accordingly, Huron elders from both Conchaké and Détroit met with Céloron, the Ottawas, and Potawatomis at the commandant’s house at Détroit. Speaking for the Conchaké Hurons, Théata told the assembly that it was a “Beautiful” day for he only had “Good Things to say.”<sup>200</sup> At long last, Théata announced, the Conchaké Hurons had “Returned for forever,” never again to “abandon their village” at

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<sup>197</sup> “tu [Céloron] as dit que quand nous ne fera qu’un même nation il ne nous arriveroit Rien de mauvais,” “Conseil des hurons en presence des outaoüas, et pouteouatamis [et Sauteux] et réponse,” 3, 13 May 1753, CAOM, C11A, vol. 99, fols. 75-75v (quotation). Céloron specifically thanked Théata for carrying his message to Conchaké.

<sup>198</sup> “y été en sureté dans les Bras de vôtre père ononthio et trouvés de vos feres les outaoäis, pouteouatamis et Sauteux,” *ibid.*, fol. 75.

<sup>199</sup> “la joye qu’on Ressente nos frères de Konchaket,” *ibid.*, fol. 76.

<sup>200</sup> “n’ayant que Bonnes Choses a dire,” *ibid.*, fol. 75.

Détroit.<sup>201</sup> Although the Huron community had long been “divided into two,” they now proclaimed that “we no longer differentiate our nation which now only makes one Body.” The Huron “heart” had been mended.<sup>202</sup>

Responding to the Hurons speech ten days later, Céloron and the Potawatomis, Ottawas, and Ojibwas all testified to their joy in seeing the Conchaké Hurons returned to Détroit. Céloron figuratively widened the reed mat—a metaphor which denoted home—to make room for the Conchaké Hurons at the Pointe au Montréal village. The commandant also offered to “Entirely Erase” any past unpleasantries between the two nations and strongly cautioned them to abandon the British interest. The Hurons must “Reject all the poisoned discourse that the English have made to deter them from returning near to me.” As a token of their renewed loyalty to Onontio, Céloron presented them with a flag to fly over their village. The commandant poignantly asked the Hurons to trade the King’s Colors of Britain—which the Hurons had flown at Conchaké—for the white banner of French Bourbons.<sup>203</sup> Echoing Céloron, the Potawatomis and Ottawas presented strings of wampum to “plug up their ears” from listening to British lies and encouraged them adhere only to Onontio’s “will.”<sup>204</sup>

The Hurons concluded the conference by asking Céloron to send Charles Chauvin, the longtime blacksmith at the Huron mission, and the Huron interpreter to

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<sup>201</sup> “les voila Revenû pour touiours; ils seront Stables et n’abandonneront plus leur village,” *ibid.* In eighteenth-century usage “ressentir” meant “sentir fortement” (*Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1694).

<sup>202</sup> “notre village partagé en deux,” “ nous ne distinguont plus nôtre nation qui ne fait a present qu’un meme Corps,” *ibid.*, fols. 76-76v, 77v.

<sup>203</sup> “Soit Entierement Effacé” “Rejettent tous les discours empoisonnés que langlais leur a fait pour les detourner de revenir aupres de moy,” *ibid.*, fols. 75-76.

<sup>204</sup> “debouchons les Oreilles par ces Brances des porcelain,” “sa volonté ” *ibid.*, fols. 76v-77v.

Conchaké to “Raise the road” for the Hurons from Conchaké back to Détroit.<sup>205</sup> By October, most of the Conchaké Hurons had settled at the Huron mission at Pointe au Montréal, and the reunited village had sent war parties against Onontio’s enemies, the Chickasaws and, ironically, the Flatheads.<sup>206</sup> As a result, French engineer and officer Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry found only two longhouses occupied by some Iroquois at Conchaké in 1754 and the derelict “pits and vestiges of the village.”<sup>207</sup> In fact, by 1761 the Huron community at Détroit numbered around eight hundred, a number consistent with or even a bit higher than estimates from the mid-1730s, suggesting the majority had returned to Détroit.<sup>208</sup> The Huron community had been reunited.

Although some of the Hurons continued to live at Sandusky after 1753, they did not constitute a separate people from the Huron village at Détroit, as many have supposed.<sup>209</sup> Instead the settlement served as a satellite outpost that was socially and politically connected to the Détroit settlement. Passing through Sandusky with his Huron masters in 1755, the captive Pennsylvanian, Charles Stuart, described a Huron geopolitical strategy which was centered at Détroit and spread far into the Ohio Valley.

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<sup>205</sup> “p<sup>r</sup> montrer le Chemin,” *ibid.*, fol. 77.

<sup>206</sup> Duquesne au ministre, 31 Oct. 1753, CAOM, C11A, vol. 99, fol. 120. The Huron speaker at the May 1753 conference allowed that three extended families, or longhouses (“cabanées”), still refused to come back. In 1746, Father Potier had counted forty-three such family units (“cabanes”) in the various Huron settlements, suggesting that very few of the Hurons had refused to come. In 1754, the *Virginia Gazette* reported that there were some “Wyendotts” at Conchaké, who had pledged to protect the British traders at the fort, but that these did not number more than thirty men. *Virginia Gazette*, 29 March 1753, in Mulkearn, *George Mercer Papers*, 84.

<sup>207</sup> “les fosses et les vestiges du village,” “Journal de Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, 1754-1755,” *RAPQ*, 8:427. The same year, Croghan mentioned that the “Owendats” were at “Fort De Troit” once again (Croghan, *Journal*, 1754, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:76). Léry did note, however, that some Hurons and Iroquois hunters had been in Conchaké during the winter of 1754-1755 (“Journal,” *RAPQ*, 8:404-405).

<sup>208</sup> Nau à Bonin, *JR*, 68:283; Hocquart, “Détail de toute la colonie,” 1737, CAOM, C11A, vol. 67, fols. 103v-104; “Sir William Johnson, Minutes of the Proceedings...in 1761,” *WJP*, 2:501.

<sup>209</sup> James Clifton argues this most fully in “The Re-emergent Wyandot.” See also the concluding section of this chapter.

The Détroit settlement on the Point au Montréal served as the “Chief Wondot [Huron] Town,” while Sandusky was the “Head Quarters of the Wondot Hunters during the Winter Season.” Radiating from this latter settlement, the Hurons maintained several other smaller camps placed a day’s travel apart from one another inhabited by a handful of Huron people.<sup>210</sup> These settlements were not separate Huron communities, but Huron nodes or outposts integrated with the Détroit community. As Stuart’s own passage from western Pennsylvania through Huron settlements in the Ohio Valley demonstrates, Huron people constantly traveled between these villages in the years following 1753, as they had in the preceding years. The Hurons, in fact, seemed to be a people in constant motion during this period, and frequently travelled between posts—a three day voyage.<sup>211</sup> These communities also remained politically connected. As late as 1775, the Hurons at Sandusky told Virginia rebel authorities that the “King of the Wiandots and wise men...live at Detroit” and proclaimed that they would be “ruled by them in our

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<sup>210</sup> “The Captivity of Charles Stuart, 1755-57” in Bond, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 69-72; “Examination of Moses Moore and Isham Bernat,” 1749, 632-33; Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin. *Indians of Northwest Ohio: An Ethnohistorical Report on the Wyandot, Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa or Northeast Ohio*, (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974), 14, 21, 27, 37, 40.

<sup>211</sup> Léry, for instance, noted that the Huron man whom the French called “le Glorieux” had wintered with the Shawnees at Scioto in 1755 and had easily travelled over the snow between Scioto, Sandusky, and Détroit (Léry, Journal,” 1754-1755, in *RAPQ*, 8:409). For a small sample of the evidence of travel between these villages, see George Croghan, “Journal,” 1748, in Wainwright, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 373; Stuart Captivity, in Bond, *The Mississippi Historical Review*, 78; Croghan to Johnson, 26 January 1760, *WJP*, 10: 137; Croghan’s Journal, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travel*, 1:108). James Smith noted that he and his captors traveled from Sandusky to Détroit in three days (Smith Captivity, in Drake, *Indian Captivities*, 233).

determinations.”<sup>212</sup> As James Smith, another British captive, explicitly confirmed in 1758, the Hurons at “Sunyendeand [Sandusky] and those at Detroit were connected.”<sup>213</sup>

This geopolitical strategy served Huron interests well.<sup>214</sup> Economically, the settlements reduced pressure on the Hurons’ resources at Détroit and opened up access to fresher soils and new hunting grounds. Indeed, the Hurons had begun to complain of the encroachments of French settlers on their lands and the scarcity of resources around Détroit.<sup>215</sup> Politically, these Huron outposts allowed the Hurons to keep contacts with their allies in the Ohio Valley, the Shawnees, Ohio Iroquois, and Delawares, and of course the British. They also facilitated the movement of Huron people and information from the Ohio Valley to the Huron leaders at Détroit. Such an arrangement allowed the Hurons to remain apprised of events throughout the region and to project their influence over a large swath of the region. This strategy would serve the Hurons well following the fall of New France in 1760.

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<sup>212</sup> “The Journal of Richard Butler, 1775,” ed. Edward Williams, in *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 47:1 (Jan. 1964): 36; “Treaty at Pittsburgh,” 1775, in Reuben Thwaites and Louise Kellogg, *The Revolution in the Upper Ohio, 1775-1777*, Draper Series, Vol. 2 (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1908), 25, 52 (quote), 91-92, 101.

<sup>213</sup> Smith Captivity, in Drake, *Indian Captivities*, 204.

<sup>214</sup> The Huron communities in the Ohio Valley served much the same purposes that Jon Parmenter suggests the Iroquois communities in the St. Lawrence and Ohio Valleys did for the Iroquois Confederation. They allowed the Hurons to move around the region, pass information quickly, and project power beyond Détroit. They also served as safety valves to reduce quarrels within the Huron community, without thereby ending the connections between them (Parmenter, *At the Woods’ Edge*; “At The Woods’ Edge”).

<sup>215</sup> The English captive James Smith judged the soils at Détroit “principally second rate,” while that around Sandusky were “first rate.” Smith Captivity, in Drake, *Indian Captivities*, 221, 224. The area was also “covered in Game.” “Journal of Capt. John Montresor,” 1764, ed. Gideon D. Scull, *The Montresor Journals*, vol 4, *Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1881* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1882), 295; Croghan, Journal of 1760-1761, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1: 152 [Jehu Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit” 1763-65, in Franklin Hough, ed., *Diary of the Siege of Detroit*, (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1865), 89-91; Gage to Johnson, 22 April 1764, *WJP*, 4:403).



## V. “The Huron Name”: Huron Identity

By the time the Conchaké Hurons limped back to Détroit in 1753, their nation had been racked by continual controversy for fifteen years. The fear of further Ottawa violence had exposed a rift between French and British supporters, which the resumption of war between those two nations only exacerbated. Orontony and his warriors had tried to attack Détroit and kill the inhabitants there, and his move to Conchaké and further courting of the British only confirmed the distance between the two groups. All of the original participants—the elder Sastaretsy, Tayachitin, Ang8irot, and Orontony—were dead and buried. And yet, in spite of all of this turmoil, both groups had remained committed to reconciling with one another, and to reunification. When it became clear that the Détroit Hurons would not move to Conchaké, Théata and the other Hurons had moved back to Détroit, rather than integrate themselves into another nation, such as the Shawnees at nearby Scioto, the Miamis at Pickiwillany, the Iroquois, or even the Flatheads.<sup>216</sup> They had in fact been invited to do so before on several occasions and French observers thought they would join the Ohio Iroquois, but they had declined these invitations.<sup>217</sup> The Conchaké Hurons’ decision to return to Détroit demonstrates the nature of the decade-long debate in which they had engaged. Different Huron groups had pursued very different alternatives but had done so within the context of a coherent Huron community. No matter how much they may have disagreed or how heated their

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<sup>216</sup> In 1749, Céloron worried that the Hurons and Miamis would join the Flatheads, “who are not so very far away” from Conchaké (“Céloron’s Expedition down the Ohio,” *WHC*, 18:57).

<sup>217</sup> “Résumé de lettres de Noyelles, Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et La Richardie, » 1738-1741, CAOM, C11A, vol. 75, fols. 130-30v, 131v. In 1748 one French officer expected the Hurons to settle among the Ohio Iroquois immanently, and in 1750 Richardie thought that the Hurons were on the verge of joining the Senecas, although he did not specify whether he meant those in the Ohio Valley or in traditional Seneca territory (“Occurrences in Canada, 1747-1748,” *NYCD*, 10:146; Richardie à Potier, 10 Dec. 1750, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, 654.

disputes became, the Hurons always affirmed their loyalty to other Hurons. Ultimately the Hurons' unity—their strength—derived not from the lack of division but from their ability to contain potentially devastating disagreements.

The key to this fractious integrity lay in a powerful Huron identity. A set of forces created a durable sense of Huron exceptionalism and unity which bound the community together and contained the groups, diverging interests, and ancient ethnic loyalties that otherwise might have divided the Huron community. In particular, a sense of Iroquoian linguistic and cultural superiority (enhanced and made more important in the presence of Algonquian and Siouan peoples), a long-term commitment to Christianity, and a shared narrative of suffering and sojourn combined to fuse the Hurons into a single, integrated community, while the practices of clan exogamy buttressed this unity. This identity was not timeless or fixed, but supple and durable. Huron identity changed over time, but it continued to provide a touchstone for the people whom the French called Hurons.

The first constituent of this Huron identity was a set of broad Iroquoian cultural assumptions and practices and, of course, language. To be sure, the refugees who first composed the Huron community in the seventeenth-century—the Tionontatés, Neutrals, and various Hurons—possessed a wide range of cultural expressions and beliefs.<sup>218</sup> Yet they also possessed crucial similarities—overlapping matrilineal clans, a heavy investment in horticulture, mutually intelligible Iroquoian languages, and similar

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<sup>218</sup> Lucien Campeau argues that there was no Huron or Neutral component among the Detroit Hurons and that the group was thoroughly Tionontaté, although others suggest that there was at least a component of these peoples among the Hurons. Campeau, Appendice I: Les Hurons de Détroit, in *La mission des jésuites chez les Hurons, 1634-1650*, (Montréal : Editions Bellarmin, 1987), 361-67.

settlement strategies, hierarchies of authority, and gender norms—which allowed them to construct a common Iroquoian culture and identity. Exposure to other non-Iroquoian peoples they encountered after 1649 further enhanced this sense of Iroquoian commonality. In contrast to the significant cultural differences separating them from Siouan and Algonquian speakers they encountered, the differences between the different southern Ontario Iroquoians seemed less and less meaningful. This sense of cultural commonality and superiority created a sense of Huron solidarity and cultural kinship critical for the creation of a stable community. The Hurons were quicker to acknowledge cultural and political kinship and to intermarry with distant Iroquoians like the Iroquois and the Huron community of Jeune Lorette near Québec, than their immediate Algonquian-speaking neighbors, testifying to their sense of Iroquoian exceptionalism and cultural superiority.<sup>219</sup>

The Hurons' long-term commitment to Christianity also provided a critical marker of Huron self-conceptions and contributed to a sense of commonality. Not only the Détroit Hurons, who remained at the Jesuit mission, but even the British-aligned

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<sup>219</sup> Just as the Hurons maintained close connections to the Iroquois, they also remained close to the Hurons of Lorette, a community of Huron refugees who fled toward Québec after 1649. Potier, for example, notes that sohendinnon, “le lorretain,” lived at the Jesuit mission in 1747, and recorded the names of several prominent “hurons de Lorette” in the accompanying dictionary. Potier, “Recensement des Hurons,” Texte I, in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 226, 236. Shortly before Orontony’s attempted strike, moreover, came to convince their “brothers of the heart” to remain loyal to the French. Pierre-Daniel Richer à Pierre Potier, 25 Dec. 1746, in *ibid.*, 618-20; Armand de la Richardie aux Hurons, 29 Dec. 1746, in *ibid.*, 620-23 (quotation on 622). During Pontiac’s War, André otechiodi, a Huron leader from Lorette, played a prominent role among the Hurons of Détroit. “Indian Intelligence from Detroit,” 20 December 1764, in Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds., *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1942-1943) Series 21655:254; William Murray to Andrew, a Huron [of Lorette?], 23 Dec. 1764, *WJP*, 4:628; ([Robert Navarre], “The Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” in *The Siege of Detroit in 1763: The Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy and John Rutherford’s Narrative of a Captivity*, ed. Milo M. Quaife and trans. R. Clyde Ford (R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co.: Chicago, 1958), 193, 198; [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” in Hough, *The Siege of Detroit*, 51-54; 82, 89, 112-13).

Conchaké Hurons remained committed to Christianity.<sup>220</sup> These Hurons allowed the Jesuits to winter near Sandusky during the 1740s.<sup>221</sup> Even Nicolas Orontony continued to embrace Christianity. Mere months after his attempted attack on Détroit, he had Potier solemnize his marriage to a Huron woman in November 1747, although Longueuil demurred that the sacrament was a sacrilege.<sup>222</sup> After his death in 1750, moreover, Potier interred him at Détroit.<sup>223</sup> The Pennsylvania Indian agent, Christopher Gist, noted that they mistook him for a minister and asked him to perform baptisms and marriages for them. One Huron showed him “a kind of Almanack” by which he kept track of the Sabbath and told them that he “always observed” the holy day.<sup>224</sup> In 1764, the Hurons told the British that “we are Baptized” and expected to live eternally.<sup>225</sup> George Croghan confirmed that the Hurons retained “a particular attachment to the Roman Catholic religion.”<sup>226</sup> As had the distinctly Iroquoian Christianity among the Iroquois Catholics in the St. Lawrence Valley, Huron Christianity provided an ideological and ritual unity among the Hurons.<sup>227</sup>

A shared history of common suffering and mutual support, finally, gave these cultural and linguistic commonalities meaning and allowed the Hurons to formulate a shared narrative of what it meant to be Huron. This people had faced a crisis of biblical

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<sup>220</sup> Although Richard White describes these people as “non-Christian,” the evidence strongly suggests otherwise. White, *The Middle Ground*, 195.

<sup>221</sup> Toupin, “Introduction,” *Les écrits de Potier*, 35-43.

<sup>222</sup> Potier, “Registre de Mariages,” in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 909 ; W. Eugene Shields, “The Jesuits in Ohio in the Eighteenth Century,” *Mid-America*, New Series, 7:1 (Jan. 1936): 42-43.

<sup>223</sup> Potier, “Registre Mortuaire,” in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 923.

<sup>224</sup> “A Journal of Christopher Gist’s Journey,” 1750-1751, Mulkearn, *George Mercer Papers*, 102-103.

<sup>225</sup> “An Indian Conference,” 7-10 May 1764, *WJP*, 11:179.

<sup>226</sup> George Croghan, Journal, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:152-53.

<sup>227</sup> Alan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 110.

dimensions. After having been forced into exodus by the Five Nations, they had wandered through what seemed to them a wilderness of strange peoples and strange lands. Once they had escaped the wrath of the Iroquois, they provoked the ire of the Sioux. They had endured a rocky relationship with their Ottawa allies. They had fought against the Foxes and Mascoutins, the Dutch and the British, the Catawbas and Chickasaws. They had loved and married one another, quarreled and laughed with one another, and lived day-by-day in the presence of their fictive and real kin. All of this provided a basis of trust and kinship among the Hurons and allowed them to write a narrative, a collective history, of what they had endured and how they had relied on one another. For a century after the Huron dispersal, the people who had come to be known as Detroit Hurons had relied on each other, had suffered alongside one another, and had remained united. It is no surprise, then, that they chose to reunite in 1753.

If a sense of Iroquoian exceptionalism, Christianity, and a shared Huron story provided the basis of a Huron identity, the practice of clan exogamy—epitomized by the institution of the longhouse—supplied the practical means and the technology of that unity.<sup>228</sup> The practice of marrying outside of one’s clan found its expression in the Huron institution of the *famille* or *cabanne*, which referred to those related people who lived in the same longhouse. Because of the Hurons’ matrilineal, matrilocal, and exogamous customs, these longhouses were, by necessity, integrated units which involved peoples from different clans. Because the Hurons were matrilineal and matrilocal, the women in

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<sup>228</sup> This notion—and the language of clan as “technology”—comes from a conference panel, chaired by Joshua Piker, in which I participated at the 2010 meeting of the American Ethnohistorical Society. Megan McCullen and Jean-François Lozier suggested that clan exogamy served as a unifying force for the Hurons. For a discussion of the cohesive role of clanship, see Elisabeth Tooker, “Northern Iroquoian Sociopolitical Organization,” 93; Boucher, “The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron,” 27-28.

each longhouse all belonged to the same clan, as did their children. Because of the Hurons' exogamous tradition and matrilocality, the men living in the longhouses belonged to different clans from their wives. Each longhouse, then, contained many related women and children from the same clan and men from different clans. Elders from the Deer and Wolf hontaxen clan even lived in the same longhouses as those of the Turtle hontaxen.<sup>229</sup>

In a very real way, then, the longhouse brought together people from different clans into one integrated institution and actual, inhabited space. They therefore tied the different Huron clans, and separate hontaxen, into one and made it difficult to imagine a division within the Huron polity. If clan identity continued to mean something, so did loyalty to one's household. Ties not only of intermarriage but cohabitation in these integrated longhouse units provided the mechanism of Huron cohesion.<sup>230</sup>

These components combined to create a sense of belonging and loyalty to the Huron community. The Hurons were, as the French never tired of pointing out, an extremely proud and haughty people, a fact which little endeared them to their native neighbors.<sup>231</sup> The Hurons themselves testified to this loyalty as well. In 1707, they rejected an invitation by the Senecas to move to Iroquois territory because they feared that their existence as a distinct people would be subsumed and "the Huron name [would]

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<sup>229</sup> Robert Toupin has painstakingly identified six longhouses in which elders from both the Deer and Turtle hontaxen lived and one in which Turtle elders cohabitated with a female elder of the Wolf hontaxen. These exclude those men from different clans living in a single longhouse, who were not clan elders. Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 176.

<sup>230</sup> Jon Parmenter similarly notes the importance of similar clan relations and exogamous imperatives in creating loyalty and community across an expansive Iroquoia. Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods*, xl-xlii.

<sup>231</sup> "sa [les Hurons'] hauteur la fait haïr des autres, Et l'on ne doit pas se flatter de la reconcilier bien sincerement avec les Outaouïais qui souffrent toujours impatiemment sa fierté," *Résumé de lettres du Canada avec commentaires des autorités métropolitaines*, 1740, CAOM, C11A, vol. 74, fols.,235-235v.

become extinct.” They again rejected such invitations in 1739 and 1750.<sup>232</sup> Thirty years later, when Sastaretsy requested permission to live close to Montréal, he stipulated that they did not want to be “mingled with other nations.”<sup>233</sup> When the Conchaké Hurons finally returned in 1753, they likewise testified to the bonds that held them together. They noted that their previously intact “body” had been divided but that it now had been healed once again.<sup>234</sup>

Nor was this the first time that the Hurons had survived such a dispute over whether to support the English or the French. In the 1690s, the pro-Iroquois and British-aligned leader Le Baron, and his successor, Cheanonvouzon had articulated an explicit pro-Iroquois and British stance, while their rivals, Kondiaronk and the current Sastaretsy, had favored French alliance. Just as Ang8irot and Orontony had moved to settlements to Sanduské and Conchaké, Le Baron and Cheanonvouzon had moved from Michilimackinac to the Miami settlements on the St. Joseph River in order, others surmised, to facilitate their interactions with the Iroquois and English. Kondiaronk and Sastaretsy, like Babi and the latter-day Sastaretsy, had remained at the French post and had supported French-sanctioned raids. In the 1690s, as in the 1740s, the two sides had quarreled bitterly, and Kondiaronk even warned the Miamis that Cheanonvouzon planned to betray them. Yet in 1704, after Kondiaronk’s death, Cheanonvouzon had effected a reconciliation and both had settled once again in the same village near Fort Pontchartrain. The defection of about forty Huron families to the Shawnees, who lived in the Ohio

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<sup>232</sup> Aigremont to the Minister, 14 Nov. 1708, *MPHSCR*, 33:447.

<sup>233</sup> “de ne nous point mêler avec d’autres Nations,” *Paroles des hurons du Détroit a M<sup>r</sup> Le M<sup>is</sup> de Beauharnois, Gouverneur général de la Nouvelle France, parlant a M. De Noyelle Commadant aud. Poste*, [1738], *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 74, fol. 75v.

<sup>234</sup> “Paroles des Hurons...,” 13 May 1753, *ibid.*, vol. 99, fol. 75v.

Valley, in 1740s, might have also reflected an ongoing debate about Huron foreign policy. Each time they had countenanced dividing and each time they had come back again. The Hurons displayed a desire to remain united and an ability to contain factionalism without division.

## **Conclusion**

My reading of the episode—of a period of factional controversy within a unified community, and of Huron persistence in the face of long odds—deviates from other interpretations of that story, and those differences have important consequences for how we understand the history of early America. The most sustained analysis of the event comes from an essay written by anthropologist James Clifton in 1983. Clifton asserts that Orontony's defection signifies the moment of a decisive ethnogenesis of a new group—the Wyandots of Sandusky—which formed a separate community from the Huron community at Détroit. Using Potier's census from the winter of 1746-1747, Clifton noticed that both of the main leaders of the British-aligned Sandusky/Conchaké group—Ang8irot and Orontony—and many of those living at Sandusky, and later Conchaké, belonged to Turtle hontaxen. Next he observed that there had not been any Turtle clan among the Tionontatés before the Iroquois invasion in 1649 and that these Turtles must have come from outside the Tionontatés. Noting that the British-aligned group sometimes used the name Wyandot, the autonym of the members of the Huron Confederacy, Clifton concluded that the Turtles must have thus been composed primarily



of the descendents of the Huron Confederacy and Neutral tribes, rather than of the Tionontatés.

Therefore, Clifton read Orontony's defection from the Détroit community and failed attack as the decisive moment of "ethnogenesis"—or "re-ethnogenesis"—of a long-dormant Huron identity which had remained separate from the Tionontaté part of the community and resented Sastaretsy's domination of Huron politics.<sup>235</sup> These Hurons thereafter claimed the mantle of the defunct Huron Confederacy and proudly styled themselves as "Wendat" or "Wyandot" to distinguish themselves from the Tionontatés who remained near Détroit. These groups later became the distinct communities of the Sandusky Wyandots and Detroit Hurons.<sup>236</sup> Richard White likewise suggests that Orontony rebelled against the French in 1747 to "underline his own independence from the Huron-Petuns" of Détroit.<sup>237</sup>

Yet Clifton's characterization of Orontony's defection has serious flaws. Given the traditions of intermarriage between Huron clans, for instance, the idea that a portion of the population could remain discernably distinct and separate from the rest after nearly a century of intermarrying seems unlikely. Evidence suggests, moreover, both that the Tionontatés and members of the Huron Confederacy used the autonym "Wendat" before 1649 and that the purportedly "Tionontaté" portion of the population called themselves

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<sup>235</sup> Lucian Campeau rejected Clifton's assertion that the Turtles were really members of the Huron Confederacy in disguise. He instead inserted that they might have been Ottawas who had been incorporated into the Huron community. As I hope to have made clear in the previous chapter, I find this possibility very unlikely (Campeau, *La mission des jésuites chez les Hurons*, 261-64).

<sup>236</sup> Clifton, "The Emerging Wyandot," 1-17.

<sup>237</sup> White, *The Middle Ground*, 201.

“Wendats” as well, even if the French called them Hurons.<sup>238</sup> More importantly, Clifton underplays the significant communication and interaction between the allegedly separatist Hurons and those who remained loyal to the French. Clifton seemed entirely unaware of the May 1753 conference and White only mentioned it passing. The fact that nearly all of the Hurons returned from Conchaké and joined their compatriots at Détroit seriously undermines Clifton’s reading of the event. If the Hurons had continued to interact after the Orontony’s defection, if each side tried to coax the other to reunite, and if they eventual did reunite, then Clifton’s assertion of Huron division rings false.

The consequences of the Hurons’ survival reach far beyond the Huron community and beyond Détroit itself. For White and Clifton, the Hurons’ dissolution and division demonstrated the corrosive power of imperialism and the inherent weakness of native polities. In the face of imperialism, the Hurons had been devastated by disease and had been chased hundreds of miles from their homes. Finally, imperial rivalries between France and Britain had broken the weak bonds that had tied the community together and had broken the Hurons into even smaller fragments. Their story seems to confirm the narrative of dissolution and shattering of native peoples throughout North America. Yet if the Hurons *did* persist in spite of all of this, if they did continue to be Huron, if they could overcome these serious divisions and remain a united people, the story reads much differently. Instead of seeing the Huron community, and others like it, as weak and

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<sup>238</sup> The Huron linguist, John Steckley, suggests that Tionontatés also used the autonym “Wendat.” John Steckley, “How the Huron Became Wyandot: Onomastic Evidence,” in *Onomastica Canadiana*, 70:198 (1988): 59n2; For evidence that Hurons of Détroit continued to refer to themselves as “Wendats,” see Potier, “Rescensement des Hurons,” in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 162, 230, 589, 590; “Donation des Hurons au Père Potier,” 22 Dec. 1780, in Ernest J. Lajeunesse, ed., *Windsor Border Region* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960), 281. See also Charles Garrad and John Steckley, “A Review of *The Re-Emergent Wyandot*,” *Kewa: Newsletter of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society*, 84:7 (Oct. 1984), 10-14; Jules M. Boucher, “The Legacy of Iouskeha and Tawiscaron,” 14-18.

degraded, we should rather see them as cohesive and supple enough to survive the admittedly disastrous effects of colonialism. If even the Hurons—perhaps the most embattled people in the pays d'en haut next to the Foxes—survived as a united and distinct polity, other nations must have as well. The pays d'en haut, then, was peopled by a number of distinct nations who pursued their own goals and who interacted with the French, and sometimes the British, if and when it suited their current needs.

Although the Hurons' internal crisis is the best documented, it was not exceptional. Other nations responded to the resumption of hostilities between the British and French in similar ways, and, like the Hurons, ultimately affirmed their commonality and membership in robust, distinct communities. The Ottawas living at Détroit, for example, developed different groups which favored the French and British. While the Sinago Ottawa leader, Kinosaki, adamantly supported the French, the Kiskakon leader Mikinic appeared inclined toward the British. Like Sastaresty and the French-aligned Hurons, Kinosaki and his followers swore their allegiance to the French, and Longueuil supplied provisions for them.<sup>239</sup> Yet Longueuil suspected that Mikinic, along with Ottawas and Ojibwas from Saginaw “would declare themselves against us.”<sup>240</sup> Mikinic's wife, whose name the French did not deign to record, had in fact visited the British at

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<sup>239</sup> “Journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart),” 1747-1748, COAM, C11A, vol. 87, fols. 180, 205; “Estate de Boeuf que moy jacques pilet Boucher ay tués Suivant les ordres de M<sup>f</sup> de Longueuül,” 1747, *ibid.*, vol. 117, fol. 143; Certificat, 15 Oct. 1747, in *ibid.*, vol. 118, fol. 96; “Etat des fournitures faites au Rôy par ordres de M. Le Commadant par moy Derusseau,” 20 Oct. 1747, in *ibid.*, vol. 118, fol. 131; “Fournitures fait au Roy par moy Chesne,” 30 Oct. 1747, in *ibid.*, vol. 118, fol. 128; “Fourny pour le Compte du Roy par mois chevaliez [L’huiller Chevalier] Livre au Kinosaki, Barbie, Mikiniac,” 1 Nov. 1747, in *ibid.*, vol. 117, fol. 142 ; “Mémoire des Charriages de Bois de Chauffage et Autres faits par moi Pierre Descomps L’abadie pour le Service du Roy Suivant les ordres de M. de Longueuil au Detroit,” 17 July 1748, fol. 241.

<sup>240</sup> “Continuation du journal (de La Galissonière et Hocquart) concernant ce qui s'est passé d'intéressant dans la colonie,” Octobre-Novembre 1747, in *ibid.*, vol. 87, fol. 99.

Oswego and returned to Détroit with two British flags and wampum belts.<sup>241</sup> He reportedly claimed in council that he would decapitate Longueuil, “devour his heart and drink his blood.” As had the Huron groups, the dispute among the Ottawas generated a serious controversy. Seventeen years later the Sinago leader Pontiac reported that he had confronted Mikinc and told him that, if he wished to kill the French “he would have to begin with me and my men” who would defend the Frenchmen.<sup>242</sup> Yet the Ottawas had quickly resolved their disputes. Soon after the conflict, the Ottawas of Detroit, joined by their Ottawa and Ojibwa kin from Saginaw, professed their unity and support for the British. By 1748 Longueuil counted Mikinac as “a trusty Outaouas chief.”<sup>243</sup> The Miamis likewise confronted and overcame similar factional disputes during this period.<sup>244</sup> The bonds connecting the Ottawas and Miamis, like the bonds connecting the Hurons, could not be cut so easily.

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<sup>241</sup> [Raymond ?] à Galissonière, 1748, in *ibid.*, vol. 97, fols. 396-96v.

<sup>242</sup> [Robert Navarre], “Journal,” in Quaipe, 99.

<sup>243</sup> “Occurrences in Canada during the year 1747-1748,” *NYCD*, 10:157; Michael A. McDonnell, “Charles-Michel Mouet de Langlade: Warrior, Soldier, and Intercultural ‘Window’ on the Sixty Years’ War for the Great Lakes.” In David C. Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years’ War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2001): 81-82; MacLeod, “*Une conspiration générale*,” Chapter Four.

<sup>244</sup> George Ironstack, “From the Ashes.”

## CHAPTER FIVE

### “Elder Brother...in My Heart”: The Local Context of Pontiac’s War

On 11 May 1763, the Detroit Ottawa Pontiac visited the Hurons and demanded they join his campaign to oust the British from the post.<sup>1</sup> The Ottawa leader had already invited the Hurons to participate earlier that spring and they had unceremoniously rejected the offer.<sup>2</sup> Now, Pontiac insisted they join and threatened to “cut them to pieces” if they refused.<sup>3</sup> Remonstrating against the Ottawas’ threat of violence and presumption of authority over them, some of the Huron warriors suggested that they attack the Ottawas instead of the British.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, however opposed they were to Pontiac’s war with the British, the Wendats had little choice but to consent to Pontiac’s demand. Pontiac’s coalition—composed of Ottawa, Potawatomie, and Ojibwe, and even some Huron warriors—vastly outnumbered the Hurons. As the Huron leader Théata lamented, even if the Hurons tried to flee Detroit, Pontiac’s forces would “fall upon us and kill our wives and children and then compell us to assist them.” The Hurons therefore grudgingly

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<sup>1</sup> I use the Anglicized “Detroit” instead of the French “Détroit” to refer to the post during the periods of British and Anglo-American occupation (after 1760).

<sup>2</sup> Although Pontiac was never identified as a Sinago, indirect evidence suggests that he was. By the 1730s, two large and distinct Ottawa contingents, the Sinagos and Kiskakons, lived at Détroit (“Enumeration of the Indian Tribes connected with the Government of Canada,” 1736, *NYCD*, 9:1058). During the siege, Pontiac reminded the French habitants that he had remained loyal to them during the 1747 crisis, but that Mikinic, the Kiskakon leader, had threatened to decapitate the French commandant. Pontiac claimed to have traveled to Mikinic’s “village” to declare his loyalty to the French and convince Mikinic to remain loyal as well. This exchange strongly suggests Pontiac was not a Kiskakon, and was thus a Sinago. First, he had shown no deference whatsoever to Mikinic in 1747, nor to his memory in 1763, suggesting that he did not feel bound to respect the Kiskakon leader. Second, by noting that he “travelled” to Mikinic’s “village” Pontiac indicated that he did not live in the same village as the Kiskakon Mikinic and hence revealed his Sinago identity. [Robert Navarre], “The Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” in *The Siege of Detroit in 1763: The Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy and John Rutherford’s Narrative of a Captivity*, ed. by Milo M. Quaife, trans. by R. Clyde Ford (R.R. Donnelley & Sons: Chicago, 1958), 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-65; quote from [Jehu Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” in Franklin Hough, ed., *Diary of the Siege of Detroit*, (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1865), 43 (quotation).

<sup>4</sup> “Journal of Indian Congress,” 15 December 1763, *WJP*, 10: 965.

conceded to Pontiac's demands, promising to join the siege of Detroit after they had celebrated Mass the following day.<sup>5</sup> As the Hurons would later complain to anyone who would listen, they had been "compelled to take up arms against Detroit by the Outawas."<sup>6</sup>

The confrontation on that May day was simply the most recent skirmish in a months' long struggle between the two nations, which itself was part of the generations-long struggle between the Hurons and Ottawas for status in the region. In demanding that the Hurons join the campaign and demonstrating the Ottawas' superior strength, Pontiac sought to force the Hurons to acknowledge the Ottawas' status as elder brothers and to restore the order at Detroit. In resisting those attempts and working to undermine Pontiac's campaign, these Hurons asserted their autonomy and independence from the Ottawas. The drama, therefore, followed a familiar pattern of interaction between the two nations dating at least to their time at Michilimackinac, nearly a century before. In 1763, just as they had in 1706 or 1738, the two inseparable allies struggled to assert power over one another. Conditions had, of course, changed through the years and different stresses and issues precipitated conflict at different times. But the long-running dynamic proved durable. Much had changed at Detroit, but much remained the same.

The most recent Huron-Ottawa power struggle had been triggered by the fall of New France in 1760 and the subsequent British occupation of Detroit and the rest of the Great Lakes Region. Particularly, a dispute over how to respond to a set of grievances against the British pitted the old rivals against one another yet again. As the first section below describes, the Ottawas, who had been old and enthusiastic allies of the French,

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<sup>5</sup> [Navarre], "The Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 62-65.

<sup>6</sup> A Court of Enquiry held by Order of Major Gladwin to enquire into the Particulars of the Loss of the Post at Presque Isle, 9 July 1763, *CCOD*, 421-24.

reacted angrily and violently to disrespectful British behavior. Seeking to oust the British from the region to allow the French to return, Pontiac turned to his Anishinaabe allies throughout the Great Lakes in order to accomplish his ends, as his predecessors had done when threatened by external threats.

Unlike the Ottawas, however, the Hurons had less reason to oppose the British and more incentive to support the new regime, as I discuss in the second section. Due to their long association with both the Iroquois and the British, the Hurons were able to claim an unprecedented degree of autonomy and authority after the fall of New France. By 1758 the Hurons had positioned themselves as mediators between the nations of the Great Lakes and the Anglo-Iroquois alliance. As a result, most, but not all, Hurons refused to participate in Pontiac's anti-British campaign in the spring and summer of 1763. These differing reactions set up a power struggle between the Hurons and Ottawas, which I describe in the third section. Insisting that the Hurons acknowledge Ottawa seniority, Pontiac demanded that the Hurons participate in his campaign. Determined not only to assert their autonomy but to defend their newfound ascendance, the Hurons doggedly resisted these attempts. The conflict, like many before, was a fight for seniority at Detroit to determine, as Cadillac put it many years before, whether the Hurons or Ottawas would be the "elder brothers" at *Détroit*.<sup>7</sup>

The story of Huron-Ottawa conflict during Pontiac's War tells us much about both the nature of the alliance between these peoples, which predated and long outlived this conflict, but also something about how colonialism worked at Detroit. In the first

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<sup>7</sup> "il [the Ottawas] sera avenir mon enfans cades, et vous hurons rentez vous aujourd'huy que parôte obeissance, nous avez pris dans mon Cœur et dans mes bien fait Le place de vôte aisé," "Procès-verbaux des conseils tenus à *Détroit*," Aug. 1707, CAOM, C11A, vol. 26, fol. 123v,

instance, the conflict demonstrates, once again, that the vagaries of colonialism had not shattered the Hurons or Ottawas into feeble shards. Colonial pressures had not succeeded in breaking the barriers between the two communities, and had, in fact, sharpened those boundaries. The exchange between the peoples also testifies to the durability of the age-old dynamic between the two peoples. The Hurons and Ottawas had long cooperated against common foes and had lived together at Chequamegon Bay, Michilimackinac, and finally Detroit—even in nearly adjacent villages since the 1750s. Still they had nurtured a determined rivalry and looked for opportunity to prevail over their neighbors. Even during one of the most celebrated examples of pan-Indian cooperation in American history, the Hurons and Ottawas bickered about who would rule at home. Not even the unifying threat of a common enemy—which had unified the nations against the Iroquois in the seventeenth century and the Foxes more recently—could overcome the hostilities between the nations. This is not to say that this relationship was unchanging or stuck in time, only that this dynamic continued to operate according to a familiar logic in new circumstances.

Moreover, the Huron-Ottawa conflict demonstrates the degree to which longstanding local concerns and relationships between native communities shaped Pontiac's War and, by extension, the exercise of colonial power in the Great Lakes region. The Huron-Ottawa rivalry affected every phase of the conflict, from its beginning to the final reconciliation between the combatants and the British. The relationship between the British and the peoples of Detroit, as had that between the French and those peoples, was shaped by the Huron-Ottawa relationship. And that



relationship was premised upon the Anishinaabe alliance which allowed the Ottawas to wield power in the region, and the Huron-Iroquois friendship which allowed the Hurons to claim enhanced status after 1760. In short, the relationship between the colonized and the colonizers was conditioned by and circumscribed within a set of relationships among native peoples.

### **I. “welcome to our Country”: The British Occupation of Detroit**

When British soldiers arrived to take possession of Detroit in early December 1760, a few months after the French had surrendered Montreal to the British and signed articles surrendering New France to British forces, they found the peoples of Detroit welcoming. Although the nations had supported the French during much of the Seven Years’ War, they had begun to waver as French military fortunes turned and the French proved unable to supply them with powder and merchandise.<sup>8</sup> When the French abandoned Fort Duquesne in 1758 and surrender of Niagara in 1759, the peoples of the region began openly negotiating a separate peace with the British at the newly renamed Fort Pitt.<sup>9</sup> Promising the natives unprecedented riches in the case of French defeat, the Britons pledged that “all the Rivers were to run in Rum, that presents from the great King were to be unlimited, [and] that all sorts of goods were to be in utmost plenty and so

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<sup>8</sup> Michael N. McConnell, “The Search for Security: Indian-English Relations in the Trans-Appalachian Region, 1758-1763» (Ph.D. diss., Dept. of History, College of William and Mary, 1983); Peter MacLeod, *The Canadian Iroquois and the Seven Years’ War* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996); Gregory Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> “George Croghan’s Journal April 3, 1759 to April [30], 1763,” ed. by Nicolas B. Wainwright, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 71:4 (Oct. 1947): 305-444.

cheap as a Blanket for two Beavers.”<sup>10</sup> The peoples of Detroit, who had often traded with the British at Oswego and who now suffered severe shortages due to the blockade of British posts, defected from the French and pledged neutrality in further hostilities. Accordingly they not only allowed the British to take of possession of the post unopposed, but celebrated the change. Meeting George Croghan near the mouth of Detroit on 27 Nov., the Hurons, Ottawas, and Potawatomis “bid us welcome to their Country.”<sup>11</sup> In the following months, they sold venison to the commandant for the garrison, and organized war parties against the Cherokees when the British invited them to do so.<sup>12</sup> In January of 1761, the new British commandant of the post, Donald Campbell, found the peoples of the region “well pleased and seemingly reconciled [*sic*] to the change of Government.”<sup>13</sup>

The honeymoon, however, proved short-lived. The peoples of Detroit and the rest of the region had apparently expected the British to administer Detroit on the same terms that the French had. Specifically, the natives expected the British to treat them as honored allies rather than subjects; they wanted them to continue offering cheap trading goods, distributing annual presents to each nation, and providing liquor. Yet the British

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<sup>10</sup> “A Court of Inquiry Ordered to Take the Depositions of the Following Persons Taken by the Savages in the Summer,” 1763, *CCOD*, 662.

<sup>11</sup> “Croghan’s Journal, 1760-1761” in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:104-5, 110-13, at 113; Donald Campbell to Henry Bouquet, 2 Dec. 1760, in Louis Waddell, ed, *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol. 5, “September 1, 1760-October 31, 1761» (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1984), 41.

<sup>12</sup> “Croghan’s Journal 1760-1761,” in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:117, 119; Campbell to Amherst, 23 Jan. 1761, *CCOD*, 33; Campbell to Amherst, 14 Feb. 1761, *ibid.*, 40; Campbell to Amherst, 10 March 1761, in *ibid.*, 51; Gladwin to Amherst, 26 Jan. 1763, *ibid.*, 290. Regarding the Cherokees, see Croghan, “Journal,” in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:116-17; Donald Campbell to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, 22 Mai 1761, *CCOD*, 73; Meyer to Bouquet, 30 September 1761, Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:787; “Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, July-September 1761,” *WJP*, 2:498; Gladwin to Amherst, 26 January 1763, *CCOD*, 291; Johnson to Amherst, 19 June 1763, *ibid.*, 525.

<sup>13</sup> Donald Campbell to Jeffrey Amherst, in *ibid.*, 34.

quickly signaled that they had no intention of continuing the French practices or fulfilling their promises to the nations of Detroit. Eager to trim his budget in the aftermath of the war, Sir Jeffrey Amherst insisted that the commandants of Detroit and other officers in the region curtail their presents to the natives. The commander frequently refused to “purchas[e] the good behavior of the Indians, by presents.”<sup>14</sup> The traders, according to Pontiac, peddled shoddy goods on the natives for higher prices.<sup>15</sup> Donald Campbell, moreover, banned the sale of liquor to natives in early 1761, prompting the same dismay and outrage the French had encountered when they tried to do the same.<sup>16</sup> A Briton who had been held captive by the Ottawas listed the “prohibition of rum” as the Ottawas’ “chief complaint” against the British.<sup>17</sup> When Thomas Hutchins, a British officer, declined to supply the natives with an annuity in gunpowder, as the French had always

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<sup>14</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 9 Aug. 1761, *WJP*, 3:515. Regarding the Ottawas’ and others’ expectation that the British would continue to distribute gifts and the British refusal to do so, see Amherst to Johnson, 22 Feb. 1761, in *ibid.*, 345; Campbell to Bouquet, 1 June 1761, Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:517; Campbell to Bouquet, 8 June 1761, in *ibid.*, 533; Amherst to Campbell, 18 June 1761, *CCOD*, 554; Campbell to Amherst, 8 Nov. 1761, in *ibid.*, 124; Amherst to Campbell, 21 March 1762, in *ibid.*, 585; Campbell to Amherst, 20 April 1762, in *ibid.*, 163; Campbell to Amherst, 1 June 1762, in *ibid.*, 176; “Gladwin’s Orders to officers commanding the outposts,” 27 Aug. 1762, in *ibid.*, 213-14; Gladwin to Amherst, 9 Sept. 1762, in *ibid.*, 204; Johnson to Lords of Trade, 1 July 1763, in *NYCD*, 7:525; Johnson to Cadwallader Colden, 30 Dec. 1763, *WJP*, 4:281; Johnson to Lords of Trade, 13 Nov. 1763, *NYCD*, 7:575; McConnell, “The Search for Security,” 296-304.

<sup>15</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 22.

<sup>16</sup> Donald Campbell to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, 22 Mai 1761, *CCOD*, 71-74. Henri Bellestre, the last French commandant at Détroit, believed “drink which governs all your actions” to be the “Sole cause” of the natives’ defection to the British in 1760 (“Il est facheux pour vous de vous être laissé Seduire par les Ennemis d’Onontio : mais la boison qui gouverne toutes vos actions en est Seule cause”). “Conseil tenu à Détroit par les Hurons, Ouiatenons, Poutéouatamis et Sauteux à François-Marie Picoté de Belestre et Réponse de Picoté de Belestre,” 28 Novembre 1760, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 105, fols. 358-358v.

<sup>17</sup> “A Court of Inquiry Ordered to Take the Depositions of the Following Persons Taken by the Savages in the Summer, 1763,” 21 Feb. 1764, *MPHSCR* 27:662-63). Although this statement was certainly an exaggeration, it does signal the extent to which the peoples of Detroit had been motivated by Neolin’s movement. That movement, after all, preached against the consumption of alcohol. Yet, native warriors frequently seized British rum and drank it during the siege, suggesting that, far from desiring to banish alcohol use, the natives sought to ensure their access to hard drink (Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 103-104).

done, he found that the natives “think it very strange that this Custom should be so immediately broke off by the English.”<sup>18</sup>

Not only did the British communicate their disregard for the natives by failing to satisfy these expectations, they often treated the natives with open contempt. While Capt. Campbell had treated them as generously as he could, his replacement, Major Henry Gladwin, neglected and mistreated the natives. According to later testimony, Gladwin not only failed to distribute gifts to the natives but also “call’d them hags and of Names, telling them to get along & go about their business, & would not hear them.”<sup>19</sup> Pontiac himself complained that the British had “endlessly” asked the natives how they “dared to speak” and reminded them that they, the British, were “the Masters of all these lands, & of all that which was your [French] father’s.”<sup>20</sup> Such declarations, combined with the neglect of traditional protocol, alienated the natives and British. They interpreted these grievances, quite logically, as evidence of British disregard for native people. Whereas Onontio had regarded the natives as indispensable allies and respected friends, Amherst saw them as racial inferiors and expensive liabilities.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Lieut. Thomas Hutchins, “Journal,” 1762, in Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds., *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1942-1943) Series 21655:173. Other British officers and officials commented upon this disappointment as well (Campbell to Boquet, 11 Dec. 1760, in Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:171; Croghan to Johnson, 1765, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*. 1:172).

<sup>19</sup> “A Court of Enquiry held by Order of Major Henry Gladwin Commandant at Detroit,” 8 Sept. 1763, *CCOD*, 513.

<sup>20</sup> “Les Anglois nous disent, sans cesse, quoi vous autre Sauvages ! vous osez parler ; voyer ce que nous avons fait ; Nous avons renversé votre pere & les Espagnols ; Nous sommes Maîtres de toutes ces terres, & de tout ce qui etoit a votre père,” “Paroles des Outaïas appuyés par un grand Colier,” 1763, *CCOD*:535. For other examples, see “Proceedings of a Court of Enquiry held by order of Major Henry Gladwin Commanding at the Detroit,” 9 Aug. 1763, *ibid.*, 522-23; [Jehu Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” in *Diary of the Siege of Detroit*, ed. by Franklin Hough, ed., (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1865), 3; [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 22.

<sup>21</sup> William Nester, “*Haughty Conquerors*”: *Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000), ix; Jon Parmenter, “Pontiac’s War: Forging New Links in the Anglo-Iroquois Covenant

By 1761 the peoples of the nations had begun grumbling about what they perceived as an abrogation of their expectations. In September the Hurons, acting on behalf of all the nations, pressed Johnson to address the poor trading conditions at Detroit.<sup>22</sup> The Ottawas likewise addressed the superintendent “chiefly on the begging order.”<sup>23</sup> That frustration remained the next summer when Campbell reported that the nations of Detroit “grumble & even threaten us.”<sup>24</sup> An Onondaga man reported to Croghan that a large number of nations had convened at the Ottawa village at Detroit and met with unnamed Frenchmen from Michilimackinac. Croghan’s informant concluded that these nations were “Meditating Something Against Us.”<sup>25</sup> Rumors from Michilimackinac also indicated trouble in that area.<sup>26</sup> By the spring of 1763, and perhaps earlier, Pontiac and the Ottawas had conferred with the Shawnees, Delawares, and Ohio Iroquois to launch a coordinated strike against the British. Angered at the British and encouraged by the message of the Delaware mystic, Neolin, natives from Sault Ste. Marie to Fort Pitt and from Niagara to Green Bay colluded to strike against the British.<sup>27</sup>

## II. “Dogs Clothed in Red”: The Anishinaabe Challenge to British Rule

By at least the summer of 1762, these grievances had convinced Pontiac to drive the British (whom he called “dogs clothed in red” in reference to the redcoated British

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Chain, 1758-1766,” *Ethnohistory* 44:4 (Fall, 1997): 617-54; Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ch. 7; Dowd, *War under Heaven*; McConnell, “The Search for Security,” 189-207.

<sup>22</sup> “Niagara and Detroit Proceedings,” July-September 1761,” *WJP* 2:496.

<sup>23</sup> “Conference at Detroit,” 1761, *WHC*, 18:235.

<sup>24</sup> Campbell to Amherst, 1 June 1762, *CCOD*:176a

<sup>25</sup> “Indian Intelligence,” 28 September 1762, *WJP*, 10:534-35.

<sup>26</sup> William Leslie to Amherst, 6 September 1762, *CCOD*, 229-30.

<sup>27</sup> Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 90-104.

regulars) out of the Great Lakes Region.<sup>28</sup> Onontio would then return triumphantly, Pontiac believed, and restore the terms of the old alliance. Yet the Ottawa leader realized that his people were “too weak” to defeat the British garrison at Detroit.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, he held a council with the Potawatomis early in 1763 to ask for their help.<sup>30</sup> In so doing, Pontiac did what his forebears had done whenever they felt Ottawa dominance was at risk: he enlisted his Anishinaabe neighbors to help him reassert Ottawa hegemony in the region. Pontiac’s admission that the Ottawas could not carry out their plans without the help of the Potawatomis, as well as the Ojibwas, and his invocation of the Anishinaabe ties explain why they had been able to dominate affairs in the pays d’en haut during the French regime. By themselves the Ottawas represented a powerful, but ultimately limited force. They derived their clout in the region from maintaining close ties to Anishinaabe people. The Ottawas were economically, strategically, and culturally situated in an impressive regional network with Anishinaabe communities from Manitoulin, Sault Ste.-Marie, and Michilimackinac in the north, Green Bay and St. Joseph in the west, and Detroit and Saginaw in the east. Stitched together by common interest, culture, and intermarriage, these Anishinaabe communities collaborated to deal with outside threats—such as the Sioux, Foxes, and Southern Alliance—and moved goods throughout the region. It is thus no surprise that when another external enemy—the British—arrived and initiated a series of unwelcome reforms, Pontiac turned to his people’s allies. Indeed

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<sup>28</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 16.

<sup>29</sup> Pontiac enjoyed the support of 250 Ottawa warriors, which outnumbered the British garrison of 156 (140 effectives). Yet the British force, well-armed and fortified and larger by far than the French garrison had ever been, still intimidated Pontiac, and he thus looked for support from his neighbors. *Ibid.*, 29; Return of the Detachment, 21 Feb., 1763, *CCOD*, 312.

<sup>30</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 5.

Pontiac himself may have been the child of both Ottawa and Ojibwa parents. The same intimacy and cooperation among the Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas, which Pontiac's own personal heritage demonstrates, made Pontiac's War possible. As British observers frequently noted, Pontiac's coalition was primarily an Anishinaabe one—led by Anishinaabe leaders like Pontiac and carried out by Anishinaabe warriors. James MacDonald, a lieutenant present at Detroit during the siege reported that the conspiracy had been generated “particularly by the Ottawa Nation.”<sup>31</sup>

Pontiac and the Ottawas had not been eager to see the French go and had never really reconciled themselves to the Britons' arrival. During the war, they had provided energetic support for the French allies. Louis Antoine de Bourgainville identified the Ottawas, along with the Ojibwas and Potawatomis as the “most attacked to our interests, never having dipped their hands in the blood of any Frenchman.”<sup>32</sup> At Fort Duquesne in 1757, for example, Pontiac had made a full-throated defense of the French alliance. He severely reprimanded George Croghan for claiming, incorrectly, that the British had already taken Québec and his neighbors who had been foolish enough to believe the Irish trader's lies.<sup>33</sup> During the siege of Fort Niagara in 1759, Ottawa warriors defending the

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<sup>31</sup> MacDonald, “Journal,” *CCOD*, 3; The Delawares only identified the “Ottawas & Chepawas” among the hostile nations at the end of May 1763. “Indian Intelligence,” 27 May 1763, *WJP*, 10:686. A few weeks later, Edward Jenkins concluded that the “Ottawas and Chippewains have drawed” the other nations into the present crisis. Jenkins to Amherst, 11 June, *CCOD*, 431. Gladwin identified the “Ottawas and Chippawas” as the, two instigators. Gladwin to Amherst, 8 July 1763, *CCOD*, 395. Daniel Claus concluded that “none but the Chipeways at Missilim<sup>k</sup> and those of the same Nation & Ottawas at Detroit” were “concerned in the present Breach.” Daniel Claus to Johnson, 6 Aug. 1763, *WJP*, 10:778. Gladwin bitterly wished that the “Ottawas were eat up” because of their centrality in the violence. Gladwin to Johnson, 11 May 1764, in *ibid.*, 11:192. William Edgar cursed “our most implacable Enemys the Ottawas.” William Edgar to Johnson, 1 Nov. 1763, in *ibid.*, 10:915.

<sup>32</sup> Louis Antoine de Bourgainville, “Mémoires sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France de Bougainville,” *RAPQ*, 1923-24, 4:46.

<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately the letter itself has been lost and all that remains is a brief description in William Johnson's calendar of papers., see *WJP*, 1:771.

French installation vowed to “die with their [French] father.”<sup>34</sup> Later that year, the Ottawas were poised to torture and kill an English prisoner, when a Huron man intervened to save his life.<sup>35</sup> Even in the waning moments of the French regime, many Ottawas refused to abandon Onontio. While some Ottawas had decided to support the British by the end of 1759, the nation was “devided, some remaining in the French Interest.”<sup>36</sup> Early the next year, an Iroquois man who had long lived with the Hurons at Detroit reported that the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and a few other nations were contemplating an attack on the Iroquois and the British that year, and felt certain that the Ottawas would defend Detroit from the British.<sup>37</sup> In August 1761, an Ottawa man told ... Gamelin, a French merchant, that “Detroit would be destroyed in a few days.”<sup>38</sup> Clearly, the Ottawas remained loyal to Onontio long after the Hurons had embraced the British. As Pontiac said shortly before he led a coalition against the British in 1763: “I am French, and I want to die French.”<sup>39</sup>

British conduct after 1760 did nothing to endear themselves to the Ottawas. Pontiac was personally insulted by British behavior. Pontiac accused the British traders of charging double what the French merchants had, denying them credit, and foisting shoddy wares on them. Moreover, the British had “insulted” the Ottawas. Instead of “bemoaning” the deaths of prominent native peoples as the French had, Pontiac claimed,

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<sup>34</sup> Pierre Pouchot, “Journal of the Siege of Niagara,” in *NYCD*, 10:982.

<sup>35</sup> “Journal of George Croghan,” in Nicolas B. Wainwright, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 71:4 (Oct. 1947): 354.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 370-71.

<sup>38</sup> “Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson Bart with the Indians on his Way to, and at the Détroit in 1761,” *WJP*, 2:460.

<sup>39</sup> [Navarre], “Journal, of Pontiac’s Conspiracy”, 100.



Gladwin only “laughs at me.”<sup>40</sup> When the Shawnees and Delawares spread Neolin’s prophesy and invited the Ottawas to join an anti-British campaign, then, the Ottawas proved more than willing to join the coalition.

To build his anti-British coalition, Pontiac relied largely on the networks of kinship and culture that bound Anishinaabe peoples living in the critical nodes of Michilimackinac, Saginaw, St. Joseph, and Detroit. Before Pontiac could reach out to his Anishinaabe neighbors, however, he first had to convince his own people—the Detroit Ottawas—to join the fight. Despite the coronation of Pontiac as the Detroit nation’s “greatest Chief (or King as they are pleased to call him)” and “over-chief” by European observers, Pontiac lacked the authority to command his community to act. He had to build consensus among not only his fellow Sinagos at Detroit, but also the Kiskakons living at the Ottawa village.<sup>41</sup> Though close neighbors, members of the two Ottawa tribes living at Detroit had often competed for status.<sup>42</sup> The defection of the Ottawa leader Mahiganne, who informed Gladwin about Pontiac’s attempted coup and thereby probably saved Detroit from capture, indicates the difficulty that Pontiac had in creating consensus

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<sup>40</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 22, 97-98; Amherst to Lords of Trade, in Hough, ed., *Diary of the Siege of Detroit*, xiii-xiv; “A Court of Inquiry Ordered to Take the Depositions of the Following Persons Taken by the Savages in the Summer, 1763,” 21 Feb. 1764, *MPHSCR*, 27:662-63.

<sup>41</sup> James MacDonald, “Journal of the Siege of Detroit By Lieutenant James MacDonald of the 60<sup>th</sup> Reg<sup>t</sup>, Oct.,” [1763], *CCOD*, 2; [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 129.

<sup>42</sup> When the Kiskakon Mikinic learned that the French had given the Sinago leader Kinasaki an ornate suit of clothes, the leader demanded the same tokens of esteem. “Occurrences in Canada during the year, 1747-1748,” in *NYCD*, 10:147-49.

even among his own people.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, he won over a sufficient “Number of Men” among his nation to move forward.<sup>44</sup>

Once he had convinced the Detroit Ottawas to join the anti-British campaign, Pontiac began building a regional alliance through his Anishinaabe connections. As we have seen, he first turned to his Potawatomi neighbors for help at least by the spring of 1763, and the Detroit Potawatomis, led by the leader Ninivois, joined the campaign. Although Robert Navarre, a French notary at Detroit who chronicled the conflict, indicated that the Potawatomi leader only consented because “Pontiac was his superior chief and treacherous” and the Potawatomis themselves later claimed that Pontiac had “obliged” them to participate, the Potawatomis apparently joined the coalition willingly.<sup>45</sup> They shared the Ottawas’ grievances against the British and a stake in preserving Anishinaabe dominance in the region. Accordingly, Ninivois hosted a conference of the conspirators at the Potawatomi village on 5 May, and the Potawatomi warriors participated eagerly from the beginning of the siege.<sup>46</sup> When Pontiac asked Gladwin to allow Donald Campbell to attend a meeting outside the fort, he left two Potawatomi men

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<sup>43</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 24; “Indian Intelligence,” 4 July 1764, *WJP*, 11:218; Potier, “Recensement des Hurons,” Texte I, in Robert Toupin, *Les écrits de Pierre Potier*, (Ottawa : Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1996), 237.

<sup>44</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 4; [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 43.

<sup>45</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 5; MacDonald, “Journal of the Siege of Detroit,” *CCOD*, 13. For other protestations of the Potawatomis’ relative innocence, see [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 22-24, 27, 43. According to a conference between Iroquois representatives and Johnson, the Potawatomis claimed that the Ottawas had threatened to kill them if they did not participate and that they only cooperated in order “to save their Lives.” “Journal of Indian Congress,” 15 Dec. 1763, *WJP*, 10:965.

<sup>46</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 21, 59-61, 65, 101, 107, 133; [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 84-85.

as sureties for their safety, indicating the degree to which the Potawatomis were implicated in the proceedings.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to supporting the siege at Detroit, the post's Potawatomis also worked to enlist the "rest of their Nation at St. Josephs" in the anti-British campaign.<sup>48</sup> As the St. Joseph Potawatomis later testified, the Detroit Potawatomis had "solicited us often to join them" in attacking the British.<sup>49</sup> Although the Potawatomis living at St. Joseph initially resisted these efforts and even "declar'd great deal of Friendship for the Garrison" in mid-May, the Detroit Potawatomis finally convinced their "Relations" at Fort St. Joseph to join in the campaign by the end of the month.<sup>50</sup> A delegation of Detroit Potawatomis arrived at St. Joseph on the morning of 25 May and informed their kin that the siege had begun at Detroit. Later that day a party of Potawatomis, including a leader named Washee (Washashe) entered the British fort to meet with Francis Schlosser, the commanding officer. On cue, these Potawatomis seized Schlosser while other warriors stormed the fort and killed ten of the thirteen British soldiers billeted there.<sup>51</sup> After sacking Fort St. Joseph, many of the Potawatomi warriors travelled to Detroit with their relatives and captives and participated in attacks on the post. Some of these Potawatomis came to Detroit "to join the Potawatomis of Detroit" in June.<sup>52</sup> Seventy more

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<sup>47</sup> MacDonald, "Diary the Siege of Detroit," *CCOD*, 7; Richard Winston to Johnson, 19 June 1763, *CCOD*, 415; [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 137-38.

<sup>48</sup> [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 42.

<sup>49</sup> Gladwin to Amherst, 11 Aug. 1763, *CCOD*, 481

<sup>50</sup> [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 11; "A Court of Enquiry held by Order of Major Henry Gladwin to Enquire into the Manner of the taking of the Forts Sandusky, St. Joseph, Miamis & Presquill," 6 July 1763, *CCOD*, 325-26.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*; [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 24-25.

<sup>52</sup> "Testimony of Caesar McCormick and Samson Fleming," 11 June 1763, *CCOD*, 408; [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 130-31.

Potawatomi warriors arrived later that summer.<sup>53</sup> After Pontiac lifted the siege in the late summer of 1763, some Potawatomis remained with the Ottawas, with whom they formed a “flying camp.”<sup>54</sup> Potawatomi warriors loitered around Detroit much of the following winter and spring, hoping to “take a Scalp if possible.”<sup>55</sup> Thus their later protestations that the Ottawas had forced them into the campaign against their will, the Potawatomis seemed to have eagerly supported their Ottawa cousins against the British.

Pontiac also convinced his Ojibwa neighbors, the Mississaguas and Sauteux settled around Lake St. Claire, and even those living on the Thames River near Lake Erie, Saginaw Bay, and Sault Ste.-Marie, to join the siege at Detroit. On 5 May, just three days before he first tried to surprise the British fort, Pontiac told the Potawatomis and the pro-French Hurons that he had “sent wampum belts and messengers to our brothers, the Chippewas of Saginaw, and to our brothers, the Ottawas of Michilimackinac, and to those of the Thames River to join us.”<sup>56</sup> The very next day, Ojibwas from the vicinity of Lake St. Clair attacked a small detachment, took the Englishman John Rutherford captive, and tortured, killed, and, according to Rutherford, ritually cannibalized two Englishmen.<sup>57</sup> In so doing, the Ojibwas became the first nation to initiate violence against the British during the conflict. Some of these warriors from the Lake St. Clair villages came to

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<sup>53</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 69-70.

<sup>54</sup> “Enumeration of Indians within the Northern Department,” 18 Nov. 1763, in *NYCD*, 7:583.

<sup>55</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 84-85, 88, 91. The Potawatomis were apparently still unsatisfied in December 1754 when they killed two Anglo-American soldiers “within a few hundred Yards the fort” at Detroit (“Indian Intelligence from Detroit,” 20 Dec. 1764, in Kent and Stevens, *The Papers of Col Henry Bouquet*, Series 21655: 254).

<sup>56</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of the Siege of Detroit,” 24.

<sup>57</sup> “John Rutherford’s Captivity Narrative,” in Quaife, *The Siege of Detroit in 1763*, 224-31. Pontiac also indicated that the Ojibwas were privy to his plot when he blamed an Ojibwa woman for informing Gladwin of the impending attack. That an Ojibwa woman would be aware of the intended attack—or at least that Pontiac would believe so—indicates the Ojibwas’ involvement in the plan and the violence. [Navarre], “Journal of the Siege of Detroit,” 30-31.

Detroit before the middle of May.<sup>58</sup> These “Saulteurs” had met with Pontiac and had together asked the French habitants for aid and supplies to support their cause. After Pontiac had spoken, they testified that they “approve[d] the words of the Outa□as” and promised to “always hold the hand of our [French] father.”<sup>59</sup>

Together with Pontiac, the Lake St. Claire Ojibwas had also sent “Belts of Wamp<sup>m</sup>” to their real and fictive kin around Saginaw and Sault Ste. Marie and Michilimackinac in May, informing them of the “Rupture with the English” and inviting them to participate.<sup>60</sup> On 15 May Navarre learned that Pontiac expected “reinforcements...from the Chippewas of Grand [Thames] River” (in southern Ontario near Lake Erie) to arrive imminently.<sup>61</sup> Those reinforcements, a hundred and twenty Mississauga warriors led by the leader Sekahos, arrived sometime around 21 May, and almost fifty more arrived in early June.<sup>62</sup> At about the same time, the Saginaw Ojibwa leader Wasson (Warsong) arrived at Detroit with even more warriors.<sup>63</sup> The Ojibwa

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<sup>58</sup> Rutherford reported around 9 May that the Ojibwa family that had captured and later adopt him had left “to join the rest of the warriors encamped at Detroit,” suggesting that there were already Ojibwas in Pontiac’s camp. “John Rutherford’s Captivity Narrative,” in Quaipe, *The Siege of Detroit in 1763*, 224-26, 233.

<sup>59</sup> “J’approuve les paroles des Outa□as,” “Je tiens toujours la main de notre père,” Paroles des Sauteurs, [1763], *CCOD*, 536. This document is unfortunately only dated to the year 1763 and does not give the date of this conference. We do know that Pontiac held a council with the influential habitants, including the merchant Antoine Cuillerier, on 12 May 1763, and this could be from that meeting. MacDonald, “Journal of the Siege of Detroit,” 1763, in *ibid.*, 6,8; “Testimony of Caesar McCormick and Samson Fleming,” 11 June 1763, in *ibid.*, 407-409. The Ottawas, their co-conspirators, and the “oldest of the French settlers,” also met on 18 May to send a request for help from the French stationed in Illinois, so these words could date from then as well. [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 87.

<sup>60</sup> The Ojibwas from the Sault St. Marie and Michilimackinac area claimed that they had received belts from Pontiac “in conjunction with y<sup>e</sup> Chiefs of their Nation living there [Detroit].” Daniel Claus to Johnson, 6 Aug. 1763, *WJP*, 10:778.

<sup>61</sup> [Navarre], “The Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 61, 79.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 79, 128-29.

<sup>63</sup> Wasson later contended that he was not “concern’d in the Beginning of the Insurrection.” [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 22, 40-41, at 103; [Navarre], “The Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 121, 175; “John Rutherford’s Captivity Narrative,” in Quaipe, *The Siege of Detroit in 1763*, 247, 255; John

communities around Michilimackinac and Sault Ste. Marie also heeded the call to arms. The Ojibwas surprised the garrison at Michimackinac on 2 June and took the commander George Etherington hostage.<sup>64</sup> Later that month, some Ojibwa warriors from the Sault came to Detroit, where they reinforced Pontiac's army.<sup>65</sup> Although the headman Kinonchamek publicly chastised Pontiac for his brutality during the siege, and especially for damaging French habitant property, some of these northern Ojibwas apparently joined Pontiac's army.<sup>66</sup> "Seventy Soutones [Saulteux] or Chippawas" joined the others in late July.<sup>67</sup> Charlotte, a "French savage" sent by Pontiac to the French in the Illinois Country, alleged that a thousand Ojibwa warriors had arrived in 200 canoes sometime in August. Although Pontiac surely inflated this number in order to impress the French and convince them to send a French army to Detroit, the number suggests the Ojibwa's key role in the siege.<sup>68</sup> By Navarre's estimates, the Ojibwa warriors outnumbered Ottawa fighters 320 to 250, and Pontiac feared alienating a "nation superior in numbers to his own."<sup>69</sup> These warriors participated in every stage of the siege, and, after it ended, many of these lived with Pontiac in his settlement on the Maumee River.<sup>70</sup> Contemporary observers

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Montresor, "Journals of Capt. John Montresor," in G. D. Skull, *Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1881*. vol. 4. (New York: New York Historical Society, 1882), 283, 288.

<sup>64</sup> Etherington to Gladwin, 12 June 1763, *CCOD*, 411-14; Daniel Claus to Johnson, 6 Aug. 1763, *WJP*, 10:777-78; [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 50.

<sup>65</sup> A native woman named Charlot, whom Pontiac had sent to appraise the French officers in the Illinois posts of what had happened at Detroit, somewhat implausibly claimed that a thousand Sauteur warriors had arrived at Detroit shortly before her departure. "Déposition du Nommé Charlot sauvage française Et Elevé a la Religion Catholique," Oct. 1763, *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 105, fols. 417-17v; [Navarre], "The Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 143; Jenkins to Amherst, 28 July 1763, *CCOD*, 445.

<sup>66</sup> [Navarre], "The Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 155.

<sup>67</sup> MacDonald, "Journal of the Siege of Detroit," 1763, *CCOD*, 13.

<sup>68</sup> "Déposition du Nommé Charlot," Oct. 1763, *COAM*, C11A, vol. 105, fols. 417-17v.

<sup>69</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 129; "The Captivity Narrative of John Rutherford," in Quaife, *The Siege of Detroit in 1763*, 255.

<sup>70</sup> "Indian Intelligence," 4 July 1764, *WJP*, 11:218. The Potawatomis persisted in their hostility at least until December 1763. Neyon de Villers to d'Abbadie, *WHC*, 18:259-60.

frequently identified both the Ojibwas and the Ottawas as the chief instigators and executors of the violence.<sup>71</sup> Daniel Claus, an Indian department official stationed in Montreal, reported in August that he could “find none but the Chipeways at Missilm<sup>k</sup> and those of the same Nation & Ottawas at Detroit, are concerned in the present Breach.”<sup>72</sup>

Of the 870 warriors that Navarre estimated had amassed at Detroit in early July, all but fifty Hurons belonged to an Anishinaabe community. The siege of Detroit was, for all intents and purposes, an Anishinaabe project begun for reasons particular to the Anishinaabe peoples and carried out by them. Granted, non-Anishinaabe groups in the Great Lakes Region, like the Miamis and Weas, staged attacks on forts near where they lived, but their involvement seemed incidental compared to that of the Anishinaabe. Many Miamis lived closer to Detroit than some of the Ojibwa and Potawatomi participants, after all, but none apparently cooperated in the assault of Detroit.

If the Anishinaabe acted in concert to remove the British from the Great Lakes region, they did not act in lockstep. Playing out a familiar dynamic, the Anishinaabe peoples acted with remarkable solidarity, but nonetheless acted as autonomous and sovereign nations. Despite being heralded as the “head chief of all the northern nations,” Pontiac failed to convince some of his neighbors to join his coalition, and even those who did continued to act as autonomous peoples.<sup>73</sup> Although Pontiac persuaded the Ojibwas from Michilimackinac, Sault-Ste.-Marie, and Lake St. Clair and the Potawatomis from both Detroit and Fort St. Joseph to participate in his anti-British campaign, he utterly

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<sup>71</sup> For instances of the British and native people identifying the Ottawas and Ojibwas as the chief culprits, see “Indian Intelligence,” 27 May 1763, *WJP*, 10:686; Jenkins to Amherst, 11 June, 1763, *CCOD*, 431; Gladwin to Amherst, 8 July 1763, *ibid.*, 395.

<sup>72</sup> Daniel Claus to Johnson, 6 Aug. 1763, *WJP*, 10:778.

<sup>73</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 7.

failed to convince others to join him. The Mississauga Ojibwas living near Toronto, for example, refused to join their Anishinaabe cousins during the conflict and remained loyal to the British.<sup>74</sup> Some Saginaw “Indians”—presumably Kiskakon Ottawas—likewise disclaimed participation in the hostilities, telling Gladwin that their people “had not enter’d into the War.”<sup>75</sup> More seriously and likely more poignantly, Pontiac could not convince his fellow Ottawas living at the Jesuit mission at Arbre Croche, near Michilimackinac, to join his cause. When Pontiac sent a wampum belt to the Michilimackinac Ottawas, the headman Bindanowan “scarcely looked on, & imediately threw away,” or at least claimed to have done so.<sup>76</sup> Even threats from the Ojibwas, who had accepted Pontiac’s invitation, could not budge the resolute Michilimackinac Ottawas. When they learned that the Ojibwas from Sault Ste. Marie had attacked Michimackinac, the Ottawas reacted angrily and intervened to save the British survivors. In July these Ottawas and their Jesuit missionary visited Detroit, where they angrily reproached Pontiac and his people for having struck against the British.<sup>77</sup>

Even those Anishinaabe peoples who had cooperated with Pontiac pursued their own course and acted independently from Pontiac. Emissaries from the Sault Ste. Marie Ojibwas, for example, visited Pontiac during the siege and chastised him for the brutality

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<sup>74</sup> Heidi Bohaker, “*Nindoodemag*: Anishinaabe Identities in the Eastern Great Lakes Region, 1600-1900 (PhD. Diss., Dept. of History, University of Toronto, 2006), 263-66.

<sup>75</sup> “A Court of Enquiry held by Order of Major Henry Gladwin Commandant at Detroit,” 8 Sept. 1763, *CCOD*, 514; *WJP*, 10:861.

<sup>76</sup> “A Conference with Foreign Nations,” 9-11 Aug. 1764, *WJP*, 4:466, 476; “An Indian Congress,” 17 July 1764, *WJP*, 11:302.

<sup>77</sup> Etherington to Gladwin, 12 June 1763, *CCOD*, 411-14; Gladwin to Amherst, 8 July 1763, *ibid.*, 391-93; Gladwin to Amherst, 26 July 1763, *ibid.*, 441b; Daniel Claus to Johnson, 6 Aug. 1763, *WJP*, 10:777; “An Indian Conference,” 9-11 Aug. 1763, *WJP*, 10:779-81.



of the siege there, particularly the damage to French habitant property and lives.<sup>78</sup> The Ojibwas and Ottawas, furthermore, feuded in early June. After the French killed one of Wasson's nephews on 4 July, the Ojibwa leader blamed Pontiac for his "ill look [luck]" and for having "caus'd them [the Saginaw Ojibwas] to enter into the War."<sup>79</sup> To appease Wasson, Pontiac grudgingly surrendered the former commandant, Donald Campbell, whom the Ottawas had held hostage since early May. When the Ojibwa leader promptly killed Campbell, a well-liked and valuable captive, the Ottawas were "enraged...and resolved upon having satisfaction." Rutherford thought that there might be a "war" between the Ottawas and Ojibwas, while Jehu Hay, a British lieutenant serving at Detroit who kept a journal chronicling the crisis, reported that the groups had "quarrel'd and were going to separate."<sup>80</sup> When the siege stalemated and the tide began to turn against Pontiac in July, furthermore, the Potawatomis defected from Pontiac's camp. Claiming that Pontiac had "hurried" them into the rebellion and "obliged" them to participate, they sought to distance themselves from the Ottawas.<sup>81</sup> They repeatedly met with Gladwin in July, pleaded for forgiveness, and turned over the loot and the prisoners they had taken.<sup>82</sup> Six Sauks who lived with the Potawatomis later alleged that the Potawatomis had only pretended to make peace in order to ransom one of their leaders whom the British had detained.<sup>83</sup> Yet the Potawatomis' willingness to conduct diplomacy without the Ottawas, discuss a separate peace that excluded Pontiac, and blame the entire affair entirely on the

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<sup>78</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 143-45.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 175; [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 40-41.

<sup>80</sup> Captivity Narrative of John Rutherford, in Quaipe, *The Siege of Detroit 1763*, 247; [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 48.

<sup>81</sup> [Hay] *Diary of the Siege of Detroit*, 27; MacDonald, "Journal of the Siege of Detroit," *CCOD*, 13-14.

<sup>82</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 135, 137-38, 178-79, 184-85; [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 22-27, 38, 41-43, 46-47; MacDonald, 13)

<sup>83</sup> [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 84-85.

Ottawas demonstrates just how far Anishinaabe solidarity stretched. The Potawatomis, like the Ojibwas, remained independent from Pontiac and the Ottawas.

Once again in the spring and summer of 1763 the Anishinaabe peoples had responded to a common cause of concern in the region. They had called on ties of kinship stretching across a wide geographic span to act in their shared interest and to defeat a foreign interloper. Once again those peoples had acted not as a monolithic whole, but as a collection of closely related and allied but ultimately autonomous peoples. This dynamic, worked out decades and even centuries before 1763, made Pontiac's War possible. Yet this Anishinaabe cooperation against the British also set up a confrontation between the old rivals, the Hurons and the Ottawas. While the Anishinaabe peoples had good reasons to oppose and little incentive to support the British, the Hurons had every reason to support them: their newfound regional ascendancy owed everything to their exceptional connections to the Iroquois and British (just as the Ottawas' former dominance had been a product of their connections to the Potawatomis and Ojibwas). The disruption of the status quo at Detroit therefore sparked another Huron-Anishinaabe conflict which became intertwined with the larger struggle between the British and the anti-British coalition.

### **III. "the Head of the Ottawa Confederation": The Hurons and Pontiac**

At the same time he invited the Potawatomis to join his campaign, Pontiac also asked his Huron neighbors to join the conspiracy. While some Hurons led by Sastaretsy

and Také consented, others firmly refused to do so.<sup>84</sup> Speaking for the Huron majority, the turtle hontaxen elders Babi and Théata dismissively returned Pontiac's war belt without "caring to listen" to his proposals.<sup>85</sup> These Hurons' curt dismissal of Pontiac's plan reveals their attitudes toward the British and highlights a fundamentally different reaction to the fall of New France from the Ottawas. While the Ottawas were never much impressed with the British newcomers and welcomed Neolin's anti-British prophesy, the Hurons seemed quite reconciled with the British occupation of Detroit and quite ambivalent about the prospect of a return to French rule. In fact, as one Onondaga man told Sir William Johnson in July 1761, "many of the Ottawas were not yet well inclined toward us, but that the Wiandots seemed to be entirely our [Great Britain's] friends." Early that summer, the Hurons had even thwarted a Seneca plan to form an anti-British coalition, and they been "vastly pleased" when the Onondaga informant told them that other five nations had no part in the Seneca conspiracy.<sup>86</sup>

Ultimately, the Hurons proved better inclined toward the British than the Ottawas and other Anishinaabe peoples because the advent of British rule had been an marked

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<sup>84</sup> Navarre identifies a man named Také as the chief leader of the "bad band" of Hurons, meaning those who collaborated with Pontiac, but that name does not appear anywhere in the Pierre Potier's writings. [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," "Journal," 6-7. A few hints indicate that Sastaretsky also led this "bad" faction. Iroquois leaders counted the "Sustaragee Chief of the Weyondotts" as among the "first disturbers of Peace." "The Onondaga and Oneida Indians: Speech to Col. Henry Bouquet," 2 October 1764, in Kent and Stevens, *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, Series 21655: 228. Sastaretsky spoke for the "Hurons of Sandusky," indicating that he was the leader of the pro-French faction which had taken refuge at Sandusky after the siege in 1763. "Bradstreet's Articles of Peace," 12 August 1764, *WJP*, 4:503; "Treaty of Peace," 12 Aug. 1764, *WJP*, 11:330. The British routinely appended the prefix "ag" to the name Sastaretsky, referring to him as "Augshatghregi chief of all the Hurons" and "Agstaghregck," the "Chief Man of the Hurons." "Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with Pontiac and other Indians," July 1766, *WJP*, 10:854; "Indian Proceedings," April 1762, *WJP*, 3:699. Moreover the death of "Aughstaghregi chief of all the Hurons" in July 1766 coincided with the internment of "sastaretsi" in the Huron cemetery. *Ibid.*; Potier, "Interments," in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 959.

<sup>85</sup> [Navarre], "The Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 6.

<sup>86</sup> "Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson Bart with the Indians on his Way to, and at the Détroit in 1761, *WJP*, 2:456.

boon for the Hurons. Their old friendship with Iroquois had led to a mediated but meaningful relationship with the British, which had begun in the seventeenth century and intensified since the 1740s. Because the Hurons enjoyed this relationship and the Ottawas and others did not, the British chose to treat the Hurons as their representatives at Detroit and in the region, a move which greatly enhanced the Hurons' status and influence in the region. In 1761, in fact, Johnson told the Hurons at Detroit that "he looked upon them as the head of the Ottawa Confederacy," in which he included most of the peoples of the eastern Great Lakes Region.<sup>87</sup> These Huron heads of the titular Ottawa Confederacy in fact dominated diplomacy in the region between 1759 and 1762. This special relationship and the Huron ascendancy it made possible ensured at least partial Huron support for the British in 1763 and 1764. It also ensured that Pontiac's struggle with the British would be bound up and invested with the long Huron-Ottawa rivalry.

This is not to say that the Hurons had no grievances with British rule. They had just as much reason to complain of the high prices, the neglect of protocol, and the dismissive British attitudes as the Ottawas, and some Hurons led by Sastaretsy even accepted Pontiac's war belt. Yet, unlike the Ottawas, the Hurons also had incentive to support British rule. The Hurons, beneficiaries of the transition from French to British rule, had good reason to support the British and the new political order they represented, even if they, like the other nations of the pays d'en haut, resented some of the British practices. In the sophisticated calculus of geopolitics, the promise of Huron ascendancy over the Ottawas at least partially compensated for these grievances. For this reason,

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 494.

many Hurons declared neutrality and actively collaborated with the British against the Ottawas and Pontiac.

The Hurons owed their newfound ascendancy at Detroit to their unusually close relationship with the Iroquois and the British. A large and “very Curiously wrought” wampum belt that the Hurons presented to Conrad Weiser in 1748 symbolizes both the intensity and dynamic of that relationship. According to Weiser, the belt displayed seven human figures “holding one another by the Hand.” The Hurons explained that the figure on one end represented the “King of Great Britain,” that the middle five figures represented the five original nations of the Haudensaunee alliance, and that the last figure represented the Hurons. Two parallel lines ran under the figures along the length of the belt.<sup>88</sup> The Hurons told Weiser that the governor of New York and the Five Nations had given them the belt some fifty years before to symbolize the covenant which the Hurons had just made with the Iroquois and the English.<sup>89</sup> The belt, in other words, was the one that the Lord Cornbury had given the Huron delegates at the 1702 council at Albany. The device—which the Hurons had carefully curated for fifty years—eloquently symbolizes not only the intimate connection that the Hurons, uniquely among the nations of the Great Lakes region, enjoyed with the Iroquois and British, but also the central dynamic of that relationship. The Hurons’ relationship with the British had always been mediated by and inextricable from their relationship with their Iroquois cousins. The

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<sup>88</sup> According to Jon Parmenter, the “Two Row” design on the belt, a common motif on Iroquoian wampum belts, symbolized the notion of a “*kaswentha*” relationship between two peoples. In this relationship, the parties recognized their mutual interest and cooperation, but promised to respect the other’s sovereignty and not to attempt to “steer” its allies course (Parmenter, *At the Wood’s Edge*, 24).

<sup>89</sup> “The Journal of Conrad Weiser, Esqr., Indian Interpreter, to the Ohio,” 1748, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:29.

“Ancient Chain of Friendship,” as a Huron speaker later put it, existed “between our Ancestors the Six Nations & you [the British].”<sup>90</sup> As the Hurons oriented themselves toward the Ohio Valley between 1738 and 1763, their relationships with both Iroquois and the British grew exponentially.

The key to the Hurons’ relationship with the British rested, as it always had, on the close identification between the Iroquois and Hurons, an identification which increased after 1738. The latest Sastaretsy testified eloquently to this intimacy when commandant François Marie Picote, sieur de Belestre, invited the nations of Détroit to strike the Six Nations people in the Ohio Valley in March 1758. When some of the nations agreed to the attack, Sastaretsy—presumably the man who had taken the title when the previous Sastaretsy died in 1747—reacted angrily. Grabbing the belt that Belestre had presented, he chastised his neighbors for so easily betraying the Iroquois. The Huron leader rhetorically asked how “I, whom am Flesh and Blood of the Six Nations and in whose Towns Number of our Friends & Children are living and settled, declare War against them.” He then reminded his neighbors that they, too, were allied with the Six Nations and implored them to reject the “French Hatchet.” Sastaretsy handed the belt, meaningfully, to the Miamis, fellow members of the decayed Southern Alliance with the Hurons and Senecas, who likewise rejected the belt.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> “George Croghan’s Journal, 1760-1761,” Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:115-219; “Indian Conference at Detroit, 1760,” Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:155.

<sup>91</sup> “Message of a Seneca to Sir William Johnson,” 25 March, 1758, *WJP*, 2:793-96. Thérèse a□e□as, an “old Iroquois woman,” had lived in the same longhouse as one of the current Sastaretsy’s predecessors, Mathias Sastaretsy, in 1746, which might suggest a family connection (Poter, “Resensement des Hurons,” Texte I, 205, 211).

Sastaretsky's angry reaction to Belestre's invitation and unwillingness to attack the Six Nations testifies to the long-term and exclusive relationship between the Hurons and the Iroquois, especially the Senecas. Reaching back to Cheanonvouzon's time, and even into the late seventeenth century, the Hurons had enjoyed social intimacy and diplomatic cohesion with the Six Nations which the other peoples of Détroit had been unable to match. The "great affinity" that Clairambault d'Aigremont had noted between the Hurons and Iroquois in 1708 had persisted well after Cheanonvouzon's death in 1707, but the conflict between the Hurons and Ottawas in 1738 intensified the relationship even further.<sup>92</sup> Shortly after that conflict, the Ottawas, well aware of the Iroquois' and Hurons' intimacy, implored the Six Nations to remain neutral in the affair.<sup>93</sup> Yet the Senecas invited the Hurons to join them once again and the Hurons seemed ready to do so in the winter of 1738-1739.<sup>94</sup> Father Richardie noted that he had to use all of his influence to dissuade the Hurons from moving to Seneca territory. Hoping to take advantage of this alliance in the summer of 1739, Orontony stopped at Niagara on his way to Montréal where he invited the Iroquois to hold a council with him, and later met with the St. Lawrence Valley Iroquois. Gov. Beauharnois suspected that the headman intended to enlist Iroquois support against the Ottawas, since the Hurons were naturally "proud, and they only search for opportunities to avenge themselves."<sup>95</sup> Shortly after the Hurons heard that the "Nations of the lakes" planned to attack the Hurons in 1743,

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<sup>92</sup> "les hurons dont la langue et les mœurs ont un grand rapport avec les leurs et avec lesquels ils ont de grands afinitées," François Clairambault d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 Nov. 1708, in C11A, vol. 29, fols. 45-45v.

<sup>93</sup> Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1738, in *ibid.*, vol. 69, 128v.

<sup>94</sup> Résumé de lettres de Noyelles, Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan et La Richardie, 1738-1741, in *ibid.*, vol. 75, fols. 130-30v .

<sup>95</sup> "les hurons sont orgueilleux, Et qu'ils ne chercheront que les occasions de se Vanger," Beauharnois au ministre, 6 Oct. 1739, CAOM, C11E. vol.16, fol. 226v.

Sastaretsky visited the Seneca village of Sonnontuan to warn them and perhaps to ask for assistance. The Senecas repaid the visit and thanked the Hurons later that year.<sup>96</sup> As they had for so long, the Hurons turned to the Senecas for help when they faced external threats.

The Hurons' reorientation toward the Ohio Valley in the 1740s and 1750s, which corresponded with a similar reorientation among the Six Nations, especially the Senecas, further cemented the alliance. The establishment of settlements south of Lake Erie allowed the Hurons to develop ever more regular and intimate contact with the Senecas and other Iroquois settlers filtering into the region from the east and north. Sandusky, for example, was easily accessible from the mostly Iroquois settlement of Cuyahoga, and the Iroquois and Hurons regularly passed back and forth between these settlements.<sup>97</sup> The French noted that several "vagabond Iroquois" had joined with the Hurons who lived at Sandusky in 1747, and Father Potier noted that Senecas and other Iroquois lived in the Huron settlements south of Lake Erie.<sup>98</sup> The French trader Joseph Guoin noted that the Hurons and Iroquois had been present at Sandusky in late 1754.<sup>99</sup> James Smith, an Englishman taken captive at the beginning of the Seven Years' War and later held by Kahnawake Iroquois living in the Ohio Valley, described the frequent contact between his adopted people and the Hurons living at both Détroit and the Sandusky settlements. One of his adopted Kahnawake brothers, for example, was married to a Huron woman,

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<sup>96</sup> Beauharnois au ministre, 17 Sept. 1743, CAOM, C11A, vol. 79, fols. 108v-109; Paroles des Tsonnontuans adressées aux Hurons, [1743], CAOM, C11A, vol. 79, fols. 179-79v.

<sup>97</sup> John Mitchell, "A Map of the British and French Dominions in North America," 1755, photostatic reproduction, VAULT oversize Ruggles 259. Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>98</sup> Journal of Occurrences in Canada; 1746, 1747, in *NYCD*, 10:115.

<sup>99</sup> Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, "Journal de Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, Lieutenant des Troupes, 1754-1755," in *RAPQ*, 8 :404-405.



and his family regularly hunted and visited with Huron people in the Sandusky and Cuyahoga areas.<sup>100</sup>

Situated together, the Hurons, especially Orontony and his band, cooperated closely with the Ohio Iroquois, as well as those of the Six Nations themselves.<sup>101</sup> The French in fact blamed the Iroquois for the Hurons' apparent rebellion against Onontio in 1747. After Orontony's failed strike on Détroit in 1747, the Huron leader claimed to be "no longer Hurons, but Iroquois" and asked the Iroquois for permission to settle in their territory. The Six Nations, and the Senecas specifically, had allowed the Hurons to settle at Conchaké—an area the Iroquois claimed—and the Iroquois had "received [the Hurons] as our own flesh." Such remarks were more than mere rhetorical flourishes. They attested to a powerful connection between the Hurons and Iroquois which was rooted in their cultural and familial ties and expressed through close political and diplomatic cooperation. The Hurons continued to visit and conduct policy in coordination with the Iroquois, especially the Mohawks, during the Seven Years' War and even into Pontiac's War.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> James Smith, "An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Colonel James Smith...during His Captivity with the Indians, in the Years, 1755, '56, '57, '58, and '59," in Samuel G. Drake. Ed. *Indian Captivities, or Life in the Wigwam*, (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1852), 190-91, 225.

<sup>101</sup> Parmenter argues that the Iroquois immigrants to the Ohio Valley remained powerfully linked to those who remained in Iroquoia and remained part of a larger Iroquoian world. "At the Wood's Edge: Iroquois Foreign Relations, 1727-1768» (Ph.D. Diss. Dept. of History, University of Michigan, 1999), 8. 119.

<sup>102</sup> "Journal of Indian Affairs," 29 May 1757, *WJP*, 9:780; "Johnson to Croghan," 14 May 1760, in *ibid.*, 10: 147. The Hurons particularly cooperated with the Mohawks during Pontiac's War. The Mohawk man Aaron, whom Donald Campbell described as "the Mohawk who is now a Wiandot" enjoyed considerable sway among the Hurons before, during, and after the siege. He may have been the unnamed Iroquois man that George Croghan noted had lived among the Hurons at Détroit for fourteen years in 1760. Campbell to Bouquet, 21 June 1761, in Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:570, Croghan to Johnson, 24 Oct. 1762, *WJP*, 3:915; Ermine Wheeler-Voeglin, *Indians of Northwest Ohio: An Ethnohistorical Report on the Wyandot, Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa or Northeast Ohio*, (New York: Garland, 1974), 42-43; Croghan's Journal, in Wainwright, ed., *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 370-71; [Hay], "Diary of

Although other nations, such as the Ottawas and Ojibwas, also increased their contacts in the Ohio Valley in this period and some married Iroquois spouses, they never managed to develop the kind of relationship that the Hurons and Iroquois enjoyed.<sup>103</sup> The Ottawas tacitly attested to the Hurons' exceptional relationship with the Iroquois—and the Ottawas' lack of such a relationship—when they “called the Wyandotts to a great Council” in April 1760. At the conference, the Ottawas “complain'd heavily” about the Iroquois conduct during the siege of Niagara the proceeding summer. The Ottawas' erstwhile Iroquois allies had not only killed several Ottawas, including two “Great Captains,” but they had failed to come and cover the dead. The Ottawas therefore suspected that the Iroquois “had some further design against them in Conjunction with the English,” and noted that, if the Iroquois failed to come to “Condole with them” within the next two months, they would go to war with the Iroquois and their British allies. In July of that year, some “Deputies of the Wyandotts” arrived at the Iroquois Confederation council at Onondaga carrying calumets and wampum belts “from 10 Different Tribes of Indians” in order to “renew their ancient Friendship” with the Iroquois.<sup>104</sup>

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the Siege of Detroit,” 70, 72-73, 85; Ensign H.C. Paulie to Col. Henry Bouquet, 16 March 1762, Stevens and Kent, *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, 18, part 1: 51; MacDonald, “Journal of the Siege of the Detroit, *CCOD*, 10-10v.

<sup>103</sup> Some Ottawas had taken part in the anti-French campaigns during King George's War, and some Ottawas, like the Ottawa man Le Gros Serpent, had married Iroquois people. MacLeod, “*Une conspiration générale*”: The Exercise of Power by the Amerindians during the War of Austrian Secession» (Ph.D. Diss. Department of History. University of Ottawa, 1992). 7. 76. James Smith noted that a few Ottawas and Ojibwas were present south of Lake Erie (Smith's Journal, in Drake, ed., *Indian Captivities*, 213, 225. Yet these contacts were sparse and infrequent compared to those between the Hurons and Iroquois.

<sup>104</sup> Croghan's Journal, in Wainwright, ed., in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 371-72, 379. The Ottawas' grievances against the Iroquois remained in 1761 when Iroquois came to Detroit to cover these deaths. “Council held at the Wiandot Town near Fort Detroit,” 3 July 1761, *CCOD*, 83.

The Ottawas' actions clearly indicate that they viewed the Hurons as mediators between the Iroquois and "all the Nations to the Westward."<sup>105</sup> In summoning the Hurons to a council and issuing an ultimatum, the Ottawas hoped that the Hurons would relay their concerns directly to their Iroquois cousins and proctor a reconciliation between them. The Hurons did just this when they traveled to Onondaga deputized to conclude a peace between the offended Ottawas (and other nations) and the Iroquois the following July. The Ottawas simply lacked the contacts with the Six Nations that the Hurons enjoyed, as the Iroquois treatment of the Ottawa captives demonstrates in the first place. That an Iroquois man who had lived with the Hurons at Detroit for the last fourteen years, perhaps the Mohawk man Aaron, relayed this message to George Croghan, further attests to the proximity of the Hurons and Iroquois, which the Ottawas had long resented and coveted and which had so frequently sparked conflict between the two nations.

As it had since 1702, the Hurons' relationship with the Six Nations facilitated their contact with the British, and, as the Huron-Iroquois alliance grew in the 1740s and 1750s, the Hurons enjoyed more frequent contact with British officials and traders in the Ohio Valley. The Iroquois who had symbolically linked hands with the Hurons in the kaswentha belt, after all, had also clasped hands with the British. In 1743, shortly before the beginning of King George's War, the Hurons ventured once more to Albany. The commissioners noted that "Three Janondadee Sachems" arrived in July of that year, most likely indicating that they represented each of the three hontaXen and hence the entirety of the Huron nation. When the Hurons produced the belt that the British and Six Nations had given them in 1702, the commissioners affirmed that the belt symbolized the

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

“Everlasting Peace between this Gov<sup>t</sup> the 5 Nations & their [the Hurons’] Nation.”<sup>106</sup>

This meeting encouraged Orontony and his followers to openly support the British when war broke out the following year. As detailed in the previous chapter, the Hurons met regularly with British representatives and, probably with British encouragement, planned an attack on Detroit and encouraged other nations to join in the campaign against the French. Testifying to the growing contact between the Hurons and British and symbolizing the growing alliance between them, a Huron woman gave birth to the child of an Englishman in 1751.<sup>107</sup>

The Hurons consolidated their exclusive relationship with the British during the Seven Years’ War by honly tepidly supporting the French cause and by maintaining contact with the British throughout the conflict. Although they purportedly accepted the French war hatchet and frequently fought for the French during that conflict, the Hurons maintained a flexible and pragmatic position during the war. When Henri Belestre, the new commandant of Détroit, prompted the Hurons and other nations to join a French campaign into the Ohio Valley in August 1754, the natives ominously and evasively replied that “We will see what will happen.”<sup>108</sup> The following year they articulated the same strategy in a message to the colony of Pennsylvania. Travelling to Philadelphia in the company of some Iroquois in August 1755, the Hurons informed the British that the principal Huron leaders could not attend the conference for fear that the French would suspect them. Yet, they promised that the “old Men” would soon “turn their Faces

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<sup>106</sup> Peter Wraxall, *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs*, ed. by Charles Howard McIlwain, (New York: Benjamin Blom, [1915] 1968), 230.

<sup>107</sup> Potier, “Registre des baptêmes,” in Toupin, ed., *Les écrits de Potier*, 860.

<sup>108</sup> “Journal de Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, Lieutenant des Troupes, 1754-1755,” in *RAPQ*, 8:400.

towards” the British. They also noted that, “If you should get the better of the French and come into our parts,” the British would “find us your Friends and we will join you.”<sup>109</sup> The Hurons thus revealed their Janus-faced and quasi-neutral status—they were simultaneously unwilling to alienate the French by travelling to Philadelphia, but were quick to assure the British of their friendship in case the British “should get the better of the French.” As some Weas complained of the Hurons and the Iroquois during the siege of Niagara in 1759, they “constantly made fine promises [to the French] without ever doing anything” against the British.<sup>110</sup> Such behavior allowed the Hurons to maintain a delicate balance: they did just enough to appease the French without thereby alienating the British.

In the latter phases of the war, the Hurons took a more explicitly pro-British position. As the French military position declined and French merchants proved unable to supply their native allies, the Hurons signaled their full support of the British. During the winter of 1756-1757, a “Tynondady [Tionontaté] Indian” named Anias and other Hurons lived in the Mohawk village near Fort Johnson, and Sir William provided them with weapons and merchandise and even consoled the death of a Huron girl.<sup>111</sup> In early 1759, following the French defeat at Fort Frontenac and the abandonment of Fort Duquesne in 1758, the Hurons accepted belts from the Cayugas enjoining them to remain

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<sup>109</sup> “Council Minutes,” 20 Aug. 1755, in Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provisional Council of Pennsylvania*, 6:568. As early as 1755, the British allegedly claimed the loyalty of the Hurons, Miamis, Weas, Shawnees, and Ojibwas, whom they counted as “friends who will support us well” (“nous avons pour frères qui nous seconderont bien : les Hurons, Miamis, Ouyatonnonns, Cha□annons et Sauteurs”). Léry, “Journal,” *RAPQ*, 8 :417.

<sup>110</sup> Pierre Pouchot, *Memoirs on the Late War in North America between France and England*, (Niagara: Old Fort Niagara Association, 1994), 116-17.

<sup>111</sup> “Account of Indian Expenses,” Nov. 1756-March 1757, *WJP*, 9:650, 652, 656; “Journal of Indian Affairs,” 29 May 1757, in *ibid.*, 780.

neutral.<sup>112</sup> That summer the Hurons regularly visited the British at Fort Pitt, and some may have lived there for parts of the year. These Hurons served as spies for the British, particularly for the Indian Agent George Croghan, passing regularly from Détroit to the French fort of Venango to Fort Pitt to report on the intentions and relative strength of the French force in the region.<sup>113</sup> Huron representatives met with Croghan in July and August of 1759 to work out a preliminary peace agreement, and the Hurons took the lead in chastising a Delaware man for “spiriting up the Indians to continue the War against the English.”<sup>114</sup> In October 1759, just over a month after the fall of Québec, several “Weyondotts who live near Fort D’Troit” visited Fort Pitt and explained that they had participated in the war only by “necessity” and that they “were obliged to come [to war] by French Measures.” In the following months, Huron parties arrived frequently to surrender British captives and to trade for the necessities which Onontio could no longer provide for them.<sup>115</sup> Even before the fall of Québec in September 1759 and Montréal in 1760, the Hurons had effectively abandoned the French war effort and had negotiated a separate peace with the British. Testifying to the Anglo-Huron relationship, a British

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<sup>112</sup> “Indian Council,” 21 July 1758, *WJP*, 9:947; Vaudreuil de Cavagnial au ministre, 2 Feb. 1759, in *CAOM*, C11A, 104:19; “Journal of Indian Affairs,” 16-19 Jan. 1759, *WJP*, 10:87; Montcalm to Bourlamaque, 12, 15 March 1759, *WHC*, 18:209; “Journal of Sir William Johnson’s Proceedings with the Indians,” 16 April 1759, in *NYCD*, 7:384; Pierre Pouchot, *Memoires sur la dernière Geurre*, in *NYCD*, 10: 981-82; Indian Conference, 12 Aug. 1760, in *PA*, 3:748; McConnell, “The Search for Security,” 89.

<sup>113</sup> For evidence of the Hurons’ presence at Pittsburgh and surveillance for the British in 1759 and 1760, see various correspondence in Stevens and Kent, eds., *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*. Series 21655: 14, 39, 46, 48, 49, 51, 57, 59, 61, 67, 68, 94; “Journal of George Croghan, 1758-1761,” in Wainwright, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 317, 320, 330, 333, 352, 373; McConnell, “The Search for Security,” 152.

<sup>114</sup> “Journal of George Croghan, 1758-1761,” in Wainwright, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 332.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 352, 356-59, 365-66, 369-70, 374.

official noted in 1759 that “tho’ engaged in the War against us,” the Hurons “have a regard for the English.”<sup>116</sup>

By the end of the Seven Years’ War, the Hurons had perfectly positioned themselves geopolitically to take advantage of French defeat and British victory. For decades their relationship with their Iroquoian cultural cousins had afforded them protection and guaranteed access, albeit indirectly, to the British. The Hurons had intensified these relationships in the 1740s and 1750s and had proven their loyalty to the British even while supporting the French in the Seven Years’ War. When the French surrendered Montréal in 1760 and the British took control of the region, therefore, the Hurons gained an unprecedented seniority at Detroit. The Hurons enjoyed a trust and familiarity of the now ascendant Iroquois and British which their neighbors simply lacked. Between 1759 and 1761 they translated that relationship into a position of heretofore unknown influence, which Cheanouvouzon had long ago dreamed of.

The implications of French defeat for the Hurons’ political fortunes were evident even before that defeat was final. When the nations of Détroit and others in the pays d’enhaut made overtures to the British in the summer of 1759, they naturally turned to the Hurons to facilitate a peace. In July Huron representatives presented themselves to Croghan at Fort Pitt and delivered a message from nine nations, including the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis, who had met at Detroit that summer and had “impower[ed] the Weyondott Deputys to treat for the whole at this meeting.” After these promising preliminaries, the Hurons pledged to return to Détroit and report Croghan’s words to the “Nations the[y] represent.” The following month, Ottawa, Ojibwa, Potawatomi, and

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<sup>116</sup> “Accounts of the Western Indians,” in Stevens and Kent, *The Papers of Col. Bouquet Papers*, 21655:86.

Miami representatives met with the British and Delawares at Pittsburgh. Once again, the Hurons had the honor of speaking “in behalf of themselves, and the other Western nations,” who only spoke to confirm what the Hurons had already said.<sup>117</sup> When the Hurons, Ojibwas, Ottawas, and Potawatomis met with Gen. Robert Monckton, the commander of British forces in the southern provinces, to conclude a more formal peace at Pittsburgh in August 1760, the Hurons had the privilege of speaking first at the council and spoke, as was now becoming common, “in Behalf of the rest.”<sup>118</sup>

The Hurons displayed this newfound authority when the British officers who had just taken possession of Detroit met with the Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Hurons on 4 December 1760. The Huron leader took the lead and spoke for the Ottawas and Potawatomis, who formed “one People” with the Hurons. The speaker thereby articulated a new, and surely contested, vision of protocol and precedence at Detroit. Just as Onontagan had claimed that the Hurons and Ottawas formed only “one body” and pretended to speak for the Hurons some sixty years earlier, the Huron speaker now claimed that the Hurons spoke for the unified peoples of Detroit. As the Potawatomis explained the following day, their “Uncles the Wyendots spoke to you for all” of the nations because they had “more Understanding in Council Affairs than us.” The Potawatomis speaker thereby acknowledged Huron seniority, even referring to them by the honorific title of “uncle,” and acquiesced to Huron judgment in diplomatic affairs.

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<sup>117</sup> “Journal of George Croghan, 1758-1761,” in Wainwright, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 324-25, 334-36, 348; “Minutes of the Conference Held by Capt. George Croghan,” in Stevens and Kent, *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, 21655:70-75; “Conferences,” July 1759, in Hazard, *Colonial Records*, 8:383-91.

<sup>118</sup> “Conference held by The Honourable Brigadier General Monckton with the Western Nations of Indians,” 12-15 Aug. 1760, in Hazard, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 3:744-50.



The Hurons, after all, knew the British and Six Nations better than the Potawatomis or Ottawas. Their “greater Understanding” derived from the Hurons’ long-term relationship with those people. Once again producing the “Belt [which] was delivered us by our Brethren the English & Six Nations when first you came over the great Water” and which they had presented to the British in 1743 and 1748, the Hurons reminded the British and Six Nations of their “Old Friendship.”<sup>119</sup> In doing so they made an explicit argument about the antiquity of their relationship with the British and a case for the Hurons’ loyalty to the British Crown and their reliability as allies. No one else at Detroit could convincingly make that argument. Although some Ottawas did marry Iroquois women and some lived in the Ohio Valley, they never enjoyed the relationship with the Iroquois that the Hurons did.

The Hurons’ leadership in these councils and their role as mediators speak not only to their unique relationship with the British and Iroquois but to the power and authority which that relationship bestowed upon them. Even the Ottawas, long the Hurons’ rivals for status and authority at *Détroit*, now asked the Hurons to conduct diplomacy for them and, we can imagine, grudgingly “impowered” them to mediate between the British and Iroquois, allowed them to speak first in councils, and even to speak in their name.<sup>120</sup> That the Ottawas would surrender their right to speak for themselves to the Hurons demonstrates that something profound had changed in the pays

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<sup>119</sup> “George Croghan’s Journal,” 1760-1761, Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:115-219; “Indian Conference at Detroit,” 1760, in Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:155. These two accounts of the conference differ slightly. While the first indicates that the Potawatomis called the Six Nations “uncles” in this passage, the second states that Potawatomis referred to “our Uncles the Weyondotts.” In the context, it appears that the Potawatomis are referring to their neighbors, the Hurons, not the Six Nations, who had in no way even pretended to have spoken for the Potawatomis or anybody but themselves.

<sup>120</sup> “Journal of George Croghan, 1758-1761,” in Wainwright, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 348; McConnell, “The Search for Security,” 313, 358.

d'en haut. By carefully cultivating relationships with the Iroquois cousins over several decades and forging a close relationship with the British from the 1740s onward, the Hurons had positioned themselves perfectly for a post-French world. When the British replaced the French in 1760, the Hurons claimed a position of seniority and prestige over their pays d'en haut neighbors.

The titles used in these councils further signaled the Hurons' new ascendancy at Détroit. Representatives invariably referred to the Hurons by a more elevated honorific title than they did the Ottawas, Ojibwas, Potawatomis, and others present. At the August 1759 conference, for example, the Delaware man whom the British called the Beaver addressed his words to the Delawares' "Uncles the Wayondotts [Hurons], and you our Cousins of the several other Western Nations," including, among others, the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis.<sup>121</sup> Almost exactly a year later, the Hurons, Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas met with the Beaver, as well as representatives of the Six Nations and Monckton. Addressing the council, the Beaver again identified the Hurons as "Uncles the Wyandots," but now demoted the "Ottawas, Cheepowees [Ojibwas], & Pottowattmies" from "Cousens" to "Grandchildren." The following day an Iroquois headman identified the same audience as his "Brethren the Wyandots, & Nephews of all the Other Nations."<sup>122</sup> These familial categories, of course, had tremendous currency

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<sup>121</sup> "Minutes of Conference Held by Capt. George Croghan," 7 Aug. 1759, in Stevens and Kent, *Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, 21655:72.

<sup>122</sup> "Conference held by The Honourable Brigadier General Monckton with the Western Nations of Indians," 12-15 Aug. 1760, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 3:744-50. The Delawares continued to refer to the Hurons and Ottawas by these differential terms. In 1777, the Delaware leader White Eyes, *Uncles the Six Nations and Wiandots our Grand Children the Ottawas and Shawanese*"; in 1779 a Delaware man referred to his Huron "Uncles" and his "Grand Children the Tawas & Chepways & Potowatomies." "Treaty at Pittsburgh," 1775, in Reuben Thwaites and Louise Kellogg, *The Revolution in the Upper Ohio, 1775-1777*,

among the native peoples of North America. While “brother,” and presumably “cousin,” signified rough equality between two peoples, the term “nephew” connoted a subservient status in a society in which maternal uncles assumed control over their sisters’ children. While “Grandchildren” did not carry the same implications for these peoples as it did for patriarchal Europeans, it nonetheless indicated a lesser status. In all these cases, therefore, the speakers suggested that the Hurons occupied a superior status to the Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas. To the Delawares, the Hurons were honored elders (uncles), while the other nations were the Delaware’s equals (cousins) or subalterns (grandchildren); the Iroquois counted the Hurons as equals (brothers) but designated the Anishinaabeg as inferiors (nephews or grandchildren).

The Ottawas and others were of course free to disagree about Huron seniority and they certainly did (even though they did recognize the Delawares as “our Grandfathers”). But this language, repeated in front of Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibwa audiences, suggested a new and alternative ordering of social and political relations at Detroit, which the British themselves embraced. In this new vision, the Hurons enjoyed seniority among the peoples of Detroit thanks to their contacts with the Iroquois and British. They were the “head” of a confederacy that included the Ottawas, Potawatomis, Ojibwas, and other nations in the region.

If the Hurons had won a new precedence at Detroit by 1760, they consolidated it in June 1761, when two Seneca delegates arrived at the post purportedly to condole the

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Draper Series, vol. 2 (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1908), 85-86; Delaware Chief to Col. Daniel Brodhead, 22 June 1779, in *ibid.*, 369).

death of the Detroit warriors killed during the siege of Niagara.<sup>123</sup> Recognizing Huron seniority and attesting to their close kinship, the Senecas went to the Hurons first and stayed with them in their village. To demonstrate their position of authority in matters of diplomacy and their centrality at Detroit, the Hurons subtly controlled events. After delaying the council for a few days during which the Huron leaders remained too intoxicated to conduct diplomacy, the Hurons refused the Iroquois' suggestion that they convene the council at Sandusky and instead insisted that it be held at the Huron village at the Point au Montréal, thereby dictating the time and place of the proceedings.<sup>124</sup> When the Hurons and Iroquois finally met with the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis on 3 July, the Iroquois deputies addressed themselves "particularly to the Wiandots [Hurons]" and confessed that "We look upon you as the head of all the Nations here, & know [that]... all the Other Nations will follow your Example."<sup>125</sup> Accordingly, they asked the Hurons to join them in attacking the British throughout the Great Lakes region. Although some of the Hurons seemed inclined to join the Iroquois, they eventually decided against it and convinced their neighbors to do the same. They instead informed Campbell of the conspiracy.<sup>126</sup> Later that month the Hurons invited the Shawnees to meet with the British and publically chastised them for having heeded the "bad Councils of the Six Nations." The Hurons then recommended their Shawnee friends "in the

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<sup>123</sup> Johnson to Amherst, *WJP*, 3:511; Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson, 1761, in *ibid.*, 2:440.

<sup>124</sup> Campbell to Amherst, 17 June 1761, *CCOD*, 75-78; Campbell to Walters, 17 June 1761, in Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:560; "Report of an Indian Council," 18 June 1761, in *ibid.*, 5:561-63.

<sup>125</sup> Council held at the Wiandot Town near Fort Detroit 3 July 1761, *CCOD*, 83-86.

<sup>126</sup> Campbell to Bouquet, 7 July 1761, Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:618-19; Campbell to Amherst, 8 July 1761, *CCOD*, 79-82. The Seneca messengers later excused themselves by claiming that the anti-British campaign had been the Hurons' idea in the first place. Yet they only made this accusation when the British confronted them and demanded an explanation for their meditated betrayal.

strongest Manner to be friends of the English.” Later that month they likely advised the Delawares not to “listen to the bad Councils of the Six Nations.”<sup>127</sup> The following year, the Hurons once again informed the British about an alleged anti-British conspiracy spearheaded by the Shawnees, Iroquois, and several southern nations.<sup>128</sup>

In not only declining the Senecas’ offer, but informing Campbell of the plot, the Hurons secured for themselves an honored place at Detroit. They had proven their loyalty to the British, ironically at the expense of the Six Nations who had long facilitated and mediated the relations between the British and Hurons.<sup>129</sup> Campbell thanked the Hurons for the “good behaviour” and loyalty to the Crown.<sup>130</sup> Sir William Johnson, the superintendent for Indian affairs, likewise commended the Hurons behavior, which “entitle[d] them to our particular notice.”<sup>131</sup> Visiting Detroit in person later that summer, Johnson personally thanked the Hurons for their loyalty and affirmed their seniority at Detroit. He greeted the Hurons first, before the Potawatomis, Ottawas, and Ojibwas, and, when all the nations assembled in council on Sept. 9, the Hurons once again responded first to Johnson’s message. At another council on Sept. 16, Johnson bluntly told the Hurons that he regarded them as the “head of the Ottawa Confederacy” and hoped that the Hurons would maintain the symbolic “Council fire” which he had just ignited at

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<sup>127</sup> The Shawnees and Hurons shared a special kinship which I simply have not found a place to discuss (Campbell to Bouquet, 22 July 1761, Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:646; Campbell to Bouquet, 30 July 1761, in *ibid.*, 5:673).

<sup>128</sup> Ensign H.C. Paulie to Col. Henry Bouquet, 16 March 1762, in Stevens and Kent, *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, vol. 18, part 1, 51; Wheeler-Voeglin, *Indians of Northwest Ohio*, 43.

<sup>129</sup> At the 1761 conference Sir William explicitly denied Iroquois authority over the “Ottawa Confederacy” and sought to drive a wedge between the Detroit nations and the Six Nations. McConnell suggests that the Hurons declined the Iroquois belt because they feared that rising Iroquois power might “mark the end of Wyandot influence” at Detroit. What he failed to understand is that the Huron-Iroquois alliance had made the Hurons ascendance possible and how much Iroquois power underpinned Huron influence at Detroit. Parmenter, “Pontiac’s War,” 630-39; McConnell, “The Search for Security,” 210, 366 (quotation).

<sup>130</sup>“ Council held at the Wiandot Town near Fort Detroit,” 3 July 1761, *CCOD*, 84.

<sup>131</sup> Johnson to Croghan, 26 July 1761, in *WJP*, 10:319.

Detroit.<sup>132</sup> Finally, before leaving Detroit Johnson spent the night of Sept. 17 at the Huron village and held a separate, private council with them at which he gave them an additional gift of trade goods.<sup>133</sup>

Observers frequently testified to the Hurons' newfound authority. In a letter to Johnson in July 1761, Campbell referred to the Hurons "whom you know leads the other Nations here."<sup>134</sup> In a letter written the same day to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, the governor of the British Province of Quebec, Campbell repeated that the Hurons "in all affairs of consequence lead the other Indian Nations here."<sup>135</sup> And of course Johnson himself told the Hurons at Detroit that "he looked upon them as the head of the Ottawa Confederacy."<sup>136</sup> In similar words, the Iroquois representatives likewise recognized the Hurons "as the head of all the Nations" at Detroit and believed that "all the Other Nations will follow [their] Example."<sup>137</sup> Even the Detroit Potawatomis attested to Huron seniority at Detroit noting that their Huron "uncles" possessed "more understanding in Council affairs than us."<sup>138</sup> In 1763, another British officer noted that the Hurons have "much influence over the rest of the [Ottawa] Confederacy."<sup>139</sup> Many years later, the Anglo-American officer Daniel Brodhead told George Washington that the Hurons "are

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<sup>132</sup> Jon Parmenter argues convincingly that Johnson took this opportunity to undermine the Six Nations, which he and other British officials feared might grow too powerful after the fall of New France ("Pontiac's War," 630-39.

<sup>133</sup> "Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson," 1761, *WJP*, 2:468, 483-87, 494-500; "Conference at Detroit," 1761, *WHC*, 18:234-47.

<sup>134</sup> "Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson Bar[one]t. on his Way to, and at the Detroit in 1761", *WJP*, 2:449; Campbell to Bouquet, 7 July 1761, in Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:619.

<sup>135</sup> Donald Campbell to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, 8 July 1761, *CCOD*, 80.

<sup>136</sup> Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson, 1761, *WJP*, 2:494.

<sup>137</sup> Campbell to Henry Bouquet, 7 July 1761, in Waddell, *Bouquet Papers*, 5:619.

<sup>138</sup> Indian Conference at Detroit, Dec. 1760, in *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>139</sup> Memorandum on Six Nations and Other Confederacies, [18 Nov. 1763], *WJP*, 4:244.

respected by the western Indians as much as the six nations are by the Northern.”<sup>140</sup> The Hurons had become, as one twentieth century historian called them, “the leading group” at Detroit.<sup>141</sup>

At length Cheanonvouzon’s plan had worked. The Hurons had translated their age-old alliance with the Six Nations into a position of power in the pays d’en haut. Not only was there a new imperial order at Detroit after 1760, but also a new hierarchy among the peoples of the post. This Huron ascendancy proved important during 1762 and 1763. Although the Hurons had the same incentive to oppose British policies that led Pontiac and the other Anishinaabe people to align against them, the Hurons also had compelling reasons for supporting the British. French rule had meant Huron submission to Ottawa seniority. British rule meant Huron ascendancy over the Ottawas. Although loyalty to Onontio and impatience with the British led Sastaretsy and other Hurons to support Pontiac, the promise of British-backed Huron seniority convinced others to support the British. Meanwhile, the Ottawas, who had not enjoyed such a relationship with the Iroquois or British and who were invested in French rule in a way that the Hurons simply were not, had less reason to tolerate British behavior. In fact the British promotion of Huron status at Detroit proved yet another reason for the Ottawas to oppose British rule. Not surprisingly, the Ottawas and Hurons not only responded differently to Pontiac’s War, but also fought bitterly over status during Pontiac’s War.

The Hurons’ ascendancy in the aftermath of the fall of Niagara did not lead to unanimous Huron support for the British, of course. Since at least the 1740s, pro-French

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<sup>140</sup> Col. Daniel Brodhead to Gen. George Washington, 7 May 1779, Thwaites and Kellog, *The Revolution in the Upper Ohio*, 311.

<sup>141</sup> McConnell, “The Search for Security,” 363.

and pro-British Huron factions had struggled to build consensus within the community. Many Hurons had supported the French during the Seven Years' War even if others remained ambivalent. As late as 1758 one Huron vowed that he would "live and Die" with his Onontio.<sup>142</sup> With just as much cause to be angry at British trading policies as the Ottawas and a tradition of loyalty to the French, Sastaretsy and the "bad (*mauvaise*) band," as the pro-British chronicler Robert Navarre called them, promised Pontiac that they would do "whatever he wished."<sup>143</sup> These Hurons participated in the siege from the beginning, contributed to the sacking of Presqu'Île and Sandusky, and may have fought in the Battle of Bloody Run in late July.<sup>144</sup> After the siege, the anti-British Hurons fled to the Maumee River and Sandusky, where they formed a "nest of thi[e]ves."<sup>145</sup> As had the same debate nearly twenty years earlier, this division between pro-French and pro-British Hurons led to an intra-community struggle. Théata and the pro-British Hurons—the "good (*bonne*) band" in Navarre's reckoning—even feared, or at least claimed to fear, that the pro-French Hurons might attack them, and sought to convince them to abandon Pontiac's alliance.<sup>146</sup> The pro-British Hurons succeeded in convincing many of the

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<sup>142</sup> "George Croghan's Journal April 3, 1759 to April [30], 1763." Nicolas B. Wainwright, ed., *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 385.

<sup>143</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 7.

<sup>144</sup> [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 23, 26, 36-37, 56; "Déposition du Nommé Charlot sauvage francaise Et Elevé a la Religion Catholique," Oct. 1763, CAOM, C11A, vol.105, fol. 417v, "A Court of Enquiry held by Order of Major Gladwin to enquire into the Particulars of the Loss of the Post at Presque Isle," CCOD, 421-24; MacDonald, "Journal of the Siege of Detroit," in *ibid.*, 12; [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 149, 155.

<sup>145</sup> Johnson to Amherst, 6 Oct. 1763, *WJP*, 10:867; "Journal of Indian Affairs," 4-17 Oct. 1763, in *ibid.*, 10:892; Gage to Johnson, 22 April 1764, in *ibid.*, 4:403; Gage to Johnson, 23 Jan. 1764, in *ibid.*, 4:303; Gladwin to Amherst, 1 Nov. 1763, *MPHSCR*, 27:676.

<sup>146</sup> [Navarre,] "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 64, 178; [Robert Navaree], "Journal de la conspiration de Pondiac," in Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 712; [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 16, 26, 43, 45; Gladwin to Amherst, 26 July 1763, CCOD, 442b.



hostile warriors to return in the summer of 1764, and as late as 1766 they still sought to reconcile a few holdouts.<sup>147</sup>

Yet the Hurons' internal struggle for power between Sastaretsy and Théata took place within the context of their larger struggle with the Ottawas (which in turn took place within a larger struggle between the British and native peoples of the Great Lakes). Whatever their internal disputes may have been, the Hurons renewed an argument with the Ottawas that they had rehearsed for at least a century. Each nation sought to augment their position; the Ottawas by effecting Onontio's return and Ottawa seniority, and the pro-British Hurons by defending their new prerogatives. This new conflict, prompted by significant changes and occurring in drastically changed conditions, echoed the same issues which the Hurons and Ottawas had hashed out since at least the 1670s.

#### **IV. "Elder brother in my heart": The Hurons, Ottawas, and Status at Detroit**

By the time Pontiac delivered his ultimatum to the Hurons on 11 May 1763, the peoples of Detroit had witnessed a profound political and diplomatic revolution. As they often had since 1649, questions over status sparked conflict between the Hurons and Ottawas. When the British had toppled Onontio, the Ottawas' had lost their favored place atop the hierarchy at Detroit, and the Hurons had gained unprecedented influence. In the context of both recent changes and decades' long processes and relationships, the Hurons' and Ottawas' reactions on that May day become more explicable and more

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<sup>147</sup> "A Conference between Bradstreet and the Wendots," 29 Sept. 1764, *WJP*, 4:547; Navarre, "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 149-50; Montresor, "Journals of Capt. John Montresor," in G. D. Skull, *Collections of the New-York Historical Society*, 275, 288-91; "Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with Pontiac and other Indians," July 1766, *WJP* 10:862; Toupin, "Introduction" to "Rescensement des Hurons," in Toupin, ed., *Les écrits de Potier*, 190.

meaningful. Pontiac sought not only to reinforce his army by demanding the Hurons join the campaign, he also sought to make an explicit statement about politics and status at Detroit. By demanding that the Hurons join his campaign, Pontiac asserted Ottawa precedence over Huron affairs and sought to demonstrate to everyone involved—the Ottawas, his Anishinaabe allies, the French habitants, the British officers, and especially the Hurons themselves—that the Ottawas would broach no disrespect. As had generations of Ottawa leaders, Pontiac relied on the Ottawas' superior numbers and extensive regional ties to the other Anishinaabe peoples to demonstrate Ottawa power. The Hurons' initial refusals to participate in the violence, the warriors' suggestion that they attack the Ottawas rather than the British, their hesitance to do so even when Pontiac threatened their lives, and their later attempts to undermine the campaign, furthermore, corresponded to a century-long Huron desire not only to assert their autonomy from the Ottawas but to regain the authority their people had long ago enjoyed in southern Ontario. The Hurons did not, therefore, oppose the conflict because they, as Catholics, rejected Neolin's message of spiritual renewal, but because they had good political reasons to oppose the movement.<sup>148</sup>

To the disappointment of the young Huron warriors, the conflict did not result in violence between the Hurons and the Ottawas as it had in 1706 and 1738; the Hurons dared not attack Pontiac's impressive Anishinaabe coalition. Instead the struggle took the form of a no less determined and serious diplomatic and political struggle between the

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<sup>148</sup> Dowd suggests that the Hurons resisted Pontiac's rebellion because they, as Catholics, were less disposed to Neolin's message than the Ottawas and others. Yet this explanation ignores the considerable inversion of status at Detroit since 1758 played in the Hurons' decision to oppose the movement. It also ignores the fact that some Catholic Hurons participated in the siege as well (Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 109-10).

Ottawas and the Hurons. Beginning in 1762 and continuing through the summer of 1764, Pontiac sought to demonstrate Ottawa sovereignty over Huron affairs by repeatedly demanding that his numerically weaker neighbors recognize Ottawa seniority and join his campaign. For Pontiac, in other words, Huron participation in the siege became a symbol of Ottawa governance in the region, and continued Huron resistance became an undeniable and unacceptable challenge to his and his people's authority. The majority of the Hurons responded to these demands impudently. Refusing first to accept Pontiac's invitations in 1762 and early 1763, the Hurons only joined the campaign under duress in May 1763 and abandoned it after two days. Thereafter, they actively sought to undermine the siege. In the months following the siege and throughout 1764, the Hurons played a part in reconciling former combatants with the British and thereby reducing Pontiac's ability to continue the war. This section first places the Hurons' recent ascendance in the context of traditional Ottawa seniority, then describes the power struggle which that inversion of status engendered.

The exchange at the Huron village that day therefore represented only the most recent exchange in a long and tumultuous dynamic the precedents of which had been set decades before 1763. After a century of intimate contact and cooperation, the Hurons and Ottawas remained distinct and autonomous from one another and sought to pursue their own advantage. Their rivalry demonstrates the degree to which longstanding local concerns shaped Pontiac's War and, by extension, the exercise of colonial power within the Great Lakes region. The Huron-Ottawa rivalry affected every phase of the conflict, from its beginning to the final reconciliation between the combatants and the British.

The relationship between the British and the peoples of Detroit, as had that between the French and those peoples, was shaped by the Huron-Ottawa relationship, which in turn was shaped by the Anishinaabe alliances and the Huron-Iroquois nexus. That colonial relationship can not be separated from the interlocking relationships which helped to constitute it, and Pontiac's War can not be understood apart from the Huron-Ottawa struggle.

The renewal of Ottawa-Huron conflict ended a period of relative peace and cooperation between the two groups. After the 1738 crisis the trajectory of the Huron-Ottawa dynamic had swung again toward peaceful cohabitation. The Hurons and Ottawas had finally reached a truce in 1741 in the aftermath of a joint Huron-Ottawa campaign against the Chickasaws. The Hurons had signaled their loyalty and reliability by participating in the warfare, and cooperative violence against an external enemy had once again affirmed the ties which bound the Ottawas and Hurons together, as had the Iroquois wars in the seventeenth century and the Fox Wars between 1712 and the 1730s. Testifying to the newly repaired Ottawa-Huron relations, the Kiskakon Ottawa leader Mikinic had promised Ottawa protection for the Hurons and had convinced them to return to Detroit in the spring of 1743. Kinosaki, a Sinago Ottawa, likewise confirmed this reconciliation at the August 1744 meeting between Longueuil and the Détroit nations. By offering the war hatchet pointedly to Sastaretsy and demanding that the Huron take it, Kinosaki signaled that he trusted the Hurons, even if the incident carried implications of Ottawa power and an implicit threat if the Hurons failed to comply. Mikinic's efforts, finally, had been instrumental in convincing the Conchaké Hurons to

return to Détroit in 1753. When the Hurons met with the Ottawas and other nations in 1753, Mikinic pledged to reunite “your heart with ours.” By then the Hurons had moved to a new village site at Point au Montréal, directly across the river from Fort Pontchartrain. This village was only a mile from the Ottawas’, close enough that an Anglo-American captive detained in the Huron village could hear the Ottawas carousing.<sup>149</sup> This proximity suggests an intimacy and mutually trust between the nations which had been seriously tested in 1738 and thereafter.

Yet the shift in local politics after the fall of New France ensured that this harmony would not last. To understand fully how Pontiac and other Ottawas experienced the Hurons’ new ascendancy—and to explain his anti-Huron and anti-British animus—we must understand the vaunted position they held during the French regime and the secondary status they enjoyed in the new British regime. Consider, for example, the August 1744 council held by the Détroit commandant, Paul-Jospeh le Moyne, Baron de Longueuil and the four nations of the post. After inveighing against the wickedness of the British, the commandant held a wampum belt aloft and turned to the Ottawas. “My eldest son the Ottawa,” he told them, “It is to you that I address myself first.”<sup>150</sup> When he finished, an unnamed Ottawa war chief began singing a war song and the other nations then followed his example. Finally, the Sinago Ottawa leader, Kinosaki, took the wampum belt and addressed the Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas. “My brothers, as it is not possible to Cut this belt so that we can each have a part, I think that you will not

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<sup>149</sup> Smith, “Journal,” in Drake, *Indian Captivities*, 219.

<sup>150</sup> “Mon fils aîné L’outaoüais, C’est-a-toi le premiers à qui je m’adresse,” “Conseil tenu par M<sup>f</sup> de Longueüil Commandant pour Le Roy au Détroit, aux 4. Naitons de Son Poste, au Sujet dela déclaration de la guerre contre L’anglois,” [1744], COAM, C11A, vol. 18, fol. 134v.

disapprove if I give the entire [belt] to our brothers the Hurons.”<sup>151</sup> Although the Hurons at first demurred, Kinosaki insisted and the Hurons accepted the belt.<sup>152</sup>

Longueuil, Kinosaki, and the Hurons, as well as the Potawatomis, and Ojibwas, had therefore dramatized Ottawa precedence at *Détroit*. Longueuil had, by speaking to the Ottawas first and referring to them as Onontio’s “eldest son,” explicitly recognized Ottawa seniority at the post. By taking the lead in singing and forcing the Hurons to be custodians of the war belt, Kinosaki furthermore had affirmed Ottawa leadership and reminded the Hurons, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas of Ottawa seniority in such affairs. And, by finally acquiescing to Kinosaki’s demands, Sastaretsy and the Hurons tacitly acknowledged the Ottawas’ authority. The conference therefore dramatically illustrates the political status quo at *Detroit* in 1744. The Ottawas, the most numerous and the best connected nation at *Detroit*, enjoyed a privileged position at the post and commanded the deference, if not the submission, of their neighbors. Although the Ottawas had long been the most powerful nation at *Détroit*, the 1740s and 1750s represented a golden age of Ottawa leadership in the region. The careers of two *Détroit* leaders, the Sinago Kinosaki and Mikinic, the headman of the *Detroit* Sinagos, demonstrate the Ottawas’ influence in the region.

Representing the two Ottawa subnations who lived at the *Détroit* village, the Sinago leader, Kinosaki, and Kiskakon headman, Mikinic, positioned themselves as indispensable statesmen in the *pays d’en haut* in the final decades of French rule and

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<sup>151</sup> “Mes freres, comme il n’est pas possible de Couper ce collier pour que nous en aïons chacun un morceau, je pense que vous ne me désaprouverés point Si je le remets tous entire à nos freres les hurons.” *ibid.*, fol. 136.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 133-36v.

thereby ensured Ottawa precedence at Détroit.<sup>153</sup> Both men played active roles in the Huron-Ottawa conflict between 1738 and 1743,<sup>154</sup> as well as the crisis of French authority between 1747-and 1753.<sup>155</sup> In recognition of their influence among the peoples of the region and loyalty to Ononio, the French showered the men with gifts and tokens of their authority.<sup>156</sup> Attesting to their loyalty and leadership during the crisis of 1747, the governor even paid the habitants of Détroit to provide the materials and build western-style houses for each Ottawa headman and to fill them with furniture.<sup>157</sup> Even

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<sup>153</sup> Donald Chaput identified Mikinic as a Michilimackinac Ottawa, but he is elsewhere clearly identified as being associated with Detroit and having a house there. Léry refers to “Mikinak chief of the Outaouais village of Détroit» (Chaput, “Mikinic,” DCB; Léry, “Journal, 1754-1755,” *RAPQ*, 8:414 ).

<sup>154</sup> Although the Mikinic and Kinosaki had been in Montréal visiting Onontio when the crisis with the Hurons erupted in the summer of the following year, the two men had worked assiduously to restore peace and to keep their young men from retaliating against the Hurons. Mikinic, for example, carried presents to his fellow Kiskakons at Saginaw to convince them to forgive the Hurons. “Estat de Depenses faites pour Moin Capitaine Command<sup>t</sup> au fort PontChartrain du Detroit En les Années 1738, 1739, Et 1740,” 20 June 1740, COAM, C11A, vol. 74, fols. 136-37. The French similarly called on Kinosaki in 1743, when the Hurons fled again to Sandusky because they feared an attack by the “peoples of the lakes”—presumably the Ojibwas and other Anishinaabe groups. The new commandant, Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Blainville, believed that the Hurons would not respond if he sent a French officer to Sandusky, so he instead enlisted Kinosaki, a “trusted man,” and five other Ottawa chiefs to speak to the Hurons. Assuring the Hurons of his friendship and protection, Kinosaki convinced the Hurons to return to Détroit that summer (“une homme assidé aux françois”). Beauharnois au ministre, 7 Sept. 1743, *ibid.*, vol. 79, fols. 108v-109v at 109; “Paroles de Kinousaki aux hurons Etablis à Sandoské portée par six chéfs Outaouacs,” 5 May 1743, *ibid.*, fols. 95-96.

<sup>155</sup> The commandant provided food and firewood to the Mickinic and Kinosaki, whom he regarded as retainers, during the summer and fall of 1747. See Estate de Boeuf, 1747, *ibid.*, vol. 117, fol. 143; Certificat, 15 Oct. 1747, vol. 118, fol. 96; Etat des fournitures faites au Roy par ordres de M. Le Commadant par moy Derusseau, 20 Oct. 1747, *ibid.*, fol. 131; Fournitures fait au Roy par moy Chesne, 30 Oct. 1747, in *Ibid*, fol. 128; Fourny pour le Compte du Roy par mois chevalié [L’huiller Chevalier] Livre au Kinosaki, Barbie, Mikiniac, 1 Nov. 1747, *ibid.*, vol. 117, fol. 142 ; Mémoire des Charriages de Bois de Chauffage et Autres faits, 17 July 1748, *Ibid*, 241 ; ]Navarre], “Journal of the Siege of Detroit,” 99 ; Journal (de La Galissionière et Hocquart), 1747-1748, CAOM, C11A, vol. 87, fols. 185-85v, 188-88v, 204-204v, 205.

<sup>156</sup> Onontio gave each an ornate suit of clothes, including a scarlet justacorps—or military coat—with silver facings, a shirt, and a silver-hilted saber and even paid for a local carpenter to build a trunk in which Kinosaki could store these valuables (Journal (de La Galissionière et Hocquart), 1747-1748, *ibid.*, vol. 87, fol. 185v; Mémoire des ouvrages de Menuiserie faittes par Moy Nicolas LaSelle au detroit sur La demande de Monsieur de Longueüil pour Le Compte et Service du Roy, 9 July 1748, *Ibid*, vol. 118, fol. 246; Mémoire des ouvrages, Feb.-Sept. 1747, *ibid.*, fols. 378-79 ; Depenses a l’occasion des pais d’Enhaut, 4 Nov. 1752, *ibid.*, vol. 119, fol. 293).

<sup>157</sup> Mémoire des Ouvrages de Maçonnerie, 22 June 1748, in *ibid.*, vol. 118, fol. 364; Fournitures, faites par Jorian et Compagnie au detroit, 30 June 1748, *ibid.*, fol. 125v ; Mémoire des ouvrages de Menuiserie, 9 July

the Hurons, normally loathe to recognize Ottawa authority, acknowledged the authority these men commanded. When the Conchaké Hurons returned to Détroit in 1753, they addressed Mikinic by the honorific “father” which, if it did not imply subjection, at least signaled the Hurons’ respect for the man. They likewise promised that they “would never forget the name of the dead nor the Sentiments of Kinousaki,” who had died shortly before the conference.<sup>158</sup> Finally, the Hurons allowed that the Ottawas possessed “a force of Virtue that we do not have.”<sup>159</sup> In so doing, they publicly attested to the Ottawas’ seniority and, at least outwardly, accepted their place as junior brothers in Onontio’s family.

This, then, was the legacy Pontiac inherited when he became a senior Ottawa chief, probably soon after the death of Kinosaki in 1751.<sup>160</sup> As Cadillac had proclaimed in 1707 and Longueuil repeated in 1744, the Ottawas represented the “eldest brother” of the Detroit nations.<sup>161</sup> The Ottawas were, as scholars have recognized, New France’s “most important ally,” “principal intermediary for the French,” in the Great Lakes, and

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1748, in *ibid.*, fols. 246-46v ; Ouvrages fait par moy Janisse masson [maçon] au detroit, 16 July 1748, *ibid.*, fol. 198; Dépenses a l’ocassion des pais d’Enhaut, 4 Nov. 1752, *ibid.*, 119:291v, 292v, 293, 293v, 295v, 297, 299v.

<sup>158</sup> “nous n’oublions point le nom des morts ni les Sentiments de Kinousaki,” May 1753, “Conseil des hurons en presence des outaouïais, et pouteouatamis [et Sauteux] et reponse,” *Ibid*, vol. 99, fol. 76.

<sup>159</sup> “Nos freres les outaouais nous vous Remerçons de nous parler, comme fait notre père, nous avés une force d’Esprit que nous n’avons pas.” *ibid.* 77-77v.

<sup>160</sup> Although Pontiac was clearly one of the senior Detroit Ottawa leaders by 1763, there is little direct evidence that indicates when he acceded to that position. Potier listed him as a chief in 1747 and he had been listed along with two other Ottawa headman who received firewood from the French in 1748. Potier, “Recensement des Hurons,” Texte I, Toupin, *Les écrits de Potier*, 231; “Mémoire des Charriages de Bois de Chauffage,” 17 July 1748, COAM, C11A, 118:241. He claimed to have confronted Mikinic in 1747, suggesting that by that point he had already assumed some influence, particularly among the Sinago warriors. [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 99. If he was indeed a Sinago, then , he might have become a senior chief when Kinosaki died in the spring of 1751. He gave a speech decrying the British in 1757 at Fort Duquesne, which was recorded but subsequently lost (see *WJP* 2:771).

<sup>161</sup> “L’outaouais étoit mon fils aîné,” Procès-verbaux des conseils tenus à Détroit, Aug. 1707, in COAM, C11A, vol. 26, fol. 143v.



the “central nation of the alliance,” and they expected to retain this status during British tenure.<sup>162</sup> The British promotion of the Hurons as the “Head of the Huron Confederacy,” therefore constituted both an inversion of status and an unacceptable slight to Pontiac and the other Ottawas. Pontiac and his fellow leaders must have seethed as they watched the Hurons speaking first in council, purportedly for the Ottawas, the Potawatomis accede to Huron judgment, and the Hurons and British conferring privately. The erstwhile elder brothers now listened as the Delawares, Shawnees, and Iroquois referred to them as “grandchildren,” and “nephews” while addressing the Hurons as the Ottawas’ elders. The Hurons claim in December 1760 that the peoples of Detroit lived “as one People” for whom the Hurons spoke also surely nettled the Ottawas.<sup>163</sup> The exchange almost perfectly mirrors one in Montréal in 1701, when the Ottawa leader Ontontagan claimed that the Hurons and Ottawas shared “one body” and proceeded to speak in the name of the Hurons. Ontontagan’s claim to speak for the Hurons in 1701 triggered an immediate retort from Cheanonvouzon and, eventually, to an armed conflict between those nations.<sup>164</sup> The Hurons’s claim to speak for the Ottawas in 1763 was scarcely any more palatable for Pontiac and the Ottawas.

The Ottawas resentment about the Hurons’ new status probably encouraged them to oppose British rule. The Ottawas expected the British to recognize them as the senior nation at Detroit as the French had, just as they expected them to continue the French

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<sup>162</sup> Newbigging, “The French-Ottawa Alliance,” 1, 249; Dennis Delâge, “L’alliance frano-amérindienne, 1660-1701,” *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 19 (1989), 13; “la nations central de l’alliance,” Havard, *Empire et métissages*, 223.

<sup>163</sup> “George Croghan’s Journal, 1760-1761,” in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:118.

<sup>164</sup> “quoique les hommes soient souvent de differens sentiments, les Hurons que voici, & nous Outaouaks, nous ne faisons cependant qu’un même corps,” Claude-Charles Bacqueville de La Pothérie, *Histoire de l’Amérique septentrionale*, Tome IV, (Paris : Chez Jean-Luc Nion et François Didot, 1722), 237, 256-59.

practices of distributing gifts and trading on advantageous terms. When the British not only failed to recognize Ottawa authority but actively supported the Hurons, the Ottawas reacted angrily. In order to restore their privileged place and to address the other grievances, the Ottawas sought to return the French to Detroit. Although they never explicitly registered their resentment of the Hurons' pretensions, the Ottawas behavior nonetheless demonstrated their frustration and unwillingness to concede authority to the Hurons. In response to this attack on Ottawa precedence at Detroit, the Ottawas feebly sought to reassert their old precedence at Detroit. At the August 1760 meeting with Gen. Monckton, the Delawares, and Six Nations, for example, the Ottawas sought to speak for themselves and the Potawatomis. The minutes first record that a Huron man, demonstrating the Huron's newfound ascendancy, arose to speak "in Behalf of the rest" of the nations gathered. Yet after he had finished, the Ottawa headman Missinago claimed to speak "in Behalf of themselves and Pottowattimies."<sup>165</sup> This claim, made just moments after the Hurons had purported to speak for the Ottawas, reads as a rebuttal to Huron claims of seniority. An Ottawa speaker again asserted Ottawa dominance in 1761 when he claimed to "speak on the part of all our Confederacy here present," perhaps including the Hurons.<sup>166</sup> In 1763, the Ottawas also referred to the Delawares, who had once referred to the Ottawas as "Grandchildren" and "Cousens," as the Ottawas' "Nephews," thereby signaling their intent to reassert Ottawa authority in the Great Lakes.<sup>167</sup> These dueling claims to represent the Detroit nations constituted a determined

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<sup>165</sup> "At a Conference held by The Honourable Brigadier General Monckton with the Western Nation of Indians, at the Camp before Pittsburg, 12 day of August, 1760," in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 3:750.

<sup>166</sup> "Minutes of the Proceedings..." 1761, in *WJP*, 2:487.

<sup>167</sup> "Journal of Indian Congress," 15 Dec. 1763, *WJP*, 10:965.

argument about status at Detroit. The Ottawas' insistence that the Huron participate in the siege of Detroit, moreover, signals the extent to which the campaign against British excesses was also a campaign against Huron pretensions of authority.

This inversion of authority, as had similar inversions in 1649, 1706, and other times, prompted a power struggle. The Ottawas, who were more invested in French rule than the Hurons, saw their struggle both as a campaign to revenge the disrespect which the British had shown them and an opportunity to reassert Ottawa authority. By using his Anishinaabe connections to force the Hurons to participate in the campaign, Pontiac would demonstrate who the true "Head of the Ottawa conspiracy" after all. More importantly, the movement, as Neolin had promised, was destined to return the French to the Great Lakes. When they did so, the Ottawas could expect to regain their old authority. For Pontiac, in other words, Huron participation in the siege became a symbol of Ottawa governance in the region, and continued Huron resistance became an undeniable and unacceptable challenge to his and his people's authority. For the Hurons, resisting the Ottawas' demands became not only proof of their continued autonomy and independence, but also a way to ingratiate themselves to their British friends. As a result, the two nations performed a delicate and highly ritualized dance. The Ottawas frequently demanded that the Hurons join their struggle against the British, relying on their superior numbers and connections with other Anishinaabeg to intimidate the Hurons. The Hurons responded by refusing these demands when they could, grudgingly participating when they were compelled to do so, quickly abandoning the siege, and finally working with the British to undermine Pontiac and the Ottawas.

The first indications of trouble came when Pontiac invited the Hurons to join his campaign in the late winter or spring of 1763. Although Navarre claimed that Pontiac demanded that the Hurons join his campaign because his force of Potawatomi and Ottawa warriors was still not “large enough” to accomplish ends, this explanation rings false.<sup>168</sup> The Hurons in question only amounted to some sixty warriors and thus would have represented merely fraction of the total force. Rather Pontiac’s insistence upon Huron compliance was a politically charged demonstration of Ottawa authority and a sustained attack on Huron aspirations to autonomy and influence at Detroit. Pontiac needed the Hurons to join the campaign less because he needed warriors and more because he sought to demonstrate the Ottawa political and diplomatic dominance of the region. By forcing the Hurons to participate, Pontiac reminded the Hurons of their place and, in the process, sought to alienate the Hurons from the British friends.

Suffering under no illusion of Pontiac’s intentions, the Huron leaders Théata and Babi scoffed at Pontiac’s suggestion. Although some Huron warriors did accept the war belt, these two turtle elders, who had both played key roles during the crises of the 1740s and 1750s, unceremoniously dismissed Pontiac’s messengers without “caring to listen” to his propositions.<sup>169</sup> If they had accepted the invitation, after all, the Hurons would have not only implicitly acknowledged the Ottawas’ influence in the region, but would have removed the central prop to the Hurons’ newfound ascendancy: British tenure of the Great Lakes region. Pontiac’s extension of an invitation to the Hurons, and the Hurons rejection of that invitation therefore signified something much more significant than

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<sup>168</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 6.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

whether the Hurons would participate in Pontiac's campaign. The exchange pitted two alternate visions of diplomatic and political relations at Detroit: one which reasserted the suzerainty of the Ottawa "elder brothers" over the Hurons, and another which defended Huron ascendance as the "head of the Ottawa Confederacy."

The Hurons' casual rejection of Pontiac's invitation underlined the Hurons' newfound autonomy and hence clearly nettled Pontiac. Accordingly, the Ottawa leader once again tried to enlist the Hurons in his campaign. Meeting with the Hurons sometime in early May, Pontiac informed them that he would soon begin the attack and demanded the Hurons "give him an immediate answer." The Huron headmen, insisted that they must first consult with their people and deferred their response, and Pontiac grudgingly granted them two days to consider the proposal. As late as May 8, the day before hostilities began at the fort, Pontiac remained "occupied with the Hurons and Potawatomis who had remained in their villages."<sup>170</sup> Yet after fully considering Pontiac's proposition, the Hurons once again elected to "remain neuter in the War," and therefore did not participate in Pontiac's abortive attempt to surprise the fort on May 9.<sup>171</sup> Far from participating in the attack, the Hurons sought to undermine Pontiac's campaign. On May 10, the "Wiandotes [Hurons'] Chiefs," presumably Théata and Babi, visited Gladwin at the British fort on their way to a meeting with the Ottawas, where they promised "to endeavor to solicitate and perusuade the [Ot]Tawas from committing further Hostilities." Although Robert Roberts believed that Pontiac had "prevailed on [the Hurons] to sing the War Song" after "counceling a long while" later that day, the

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>171</sup> "Journal of Indian Congress," 15 Dec. 1763, *WJP*, 10:965.

Hurons appeared determined to persist in their neutrality given Pontiac's demand for cooperation on the following day.<sup>172</sup>

If Pontiac was already annoyed, the Hurons' latest insolence enraged him. Not only had they failed to recognize Ottawa seniority at Détroit, but had even collaborated with the British against his plans. Pontiac therefore visited the Huron village in person on 11 May and issued an ultimatum. If they did not join the fight, Pontiac would order his followers to attack the Hurons themselves. The Potawatomis likewise visited their Huron allies either the same or following day and informed the Hurons that Pontiac had likewise threatened them that "they were to die the next Morning, unless they [the Potawatomis] Joined the *Ottawas*." The Potawatomis had finally decided to join Pontiac and encouraged the Hurons to do so as well. Pontiac's threats reminded the Hurons of their vulnerability and the long tradition of Ottawa dominance of Huron affairs. Still disinclined to join the campaign, the Huron warriors advocated "attacking the *Ottawas*" instead of the British.<sup>173</sup>

At length Théata and Babi accepted the hopelessness of refusing Pontiac's demands. Finding themselves "threatened and crowded so closely" by Pontiac's warriors and admitting that they "were weak," the Huron leaders eventually consented to join the Ottawas rather than risk the Ottawas' wrath. As Théata and Babi explained to their warriors, they had little choice in the matter. Pontiac's forces, already numbering some four hundred Ottawa, Ojibwa, and Potawatomi warriors far outnumbered the Hurons' sixty warriors then present. And even if the Hurons abandoned Detroit to escape Pontiac,

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<sup>172</sup> Robert Rogers, "Journal of the Siege of Detroit, taken from the Officers who were then in the Fort," in Hough, *Diary of the Siege of Detroit*, 128-29.

<sup>173</sup> "Journal of Indian Congress," 15 December 1763, *WJP*, 10: 965.

they worried that the Ottawas and Potawatomis would “fall upon us and kill our wives and children.”<sup>174</sup> As the Hurons later pointed out, the British lacked the strength to “assist [the Hurons] in case they should be attack’d,” and justifiably feared that the Ottawas “should declare War against them.”<sup>175</sup> Accordingly, the Hurons grudgingly accepted the futility of resisting Pontiac’s demands. They agreed to join the siege on May 12 and joined the Potawatomi warriors, who had taken positions south of the British fort.<sup>176</sup>

The Ottawas and Hurons had therefore played out a familiar drama in early May 1763. By demanding that the Hurons join the campaign, Pontiac had thus demanded that the Hurons recognize Ottawa seniority at Détroit. Pontiac, who had gathered an army of several hundred warriors, had little need for the paltry force of sixty Huron warriors. Rather Pontiac’s insistence that the Hurons join the campaign had more to do with political and symbolic considerations. Pontiac sought to show everybody—his allies, the British, the Iroquois, and most of all the Hurons—that the Ottawas remained the elder brothers at Détroit and that the Hurons would accept their position or face the same fate as the hated British. To the Hurons, veterans of a long-running dispute with the Ottawas over status, the message was abundantly clear. The Ottawas had asserted their seniority and the Hurons must acknowledge it or suffer the consequences. By resisting Pontiac’s pretensions, the Hurons had denied that seniority and had instead asserted their autonomy. Ultimately, however, Théata and Babi acknowledged an unpleasant truth that their

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<sup>174</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of the Siege of Detroit,” 62.

<sup>175</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 44. The Hurons also sought to keep their negotiations with the British secret from the Ottawas by requesting for a “secret council” and entering the fort through a “false gate.” [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 139, 186.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-65.

ancestors had often been forced to confront. Although they could often act autonomously and exert considerable influence, they remained a relatively small community dwarfed by their Anishinaabe neighbors who “crowded [them] so closely.”<sup>177</sup> As had so many of their ancestors, these Huron leaders acknowledged the Ottawas’ might and acquiesced to their demands. As the Hurons bitterly complained to anyone who might listen in the following months, the Ottawas had “Compelled” them to fight.<sup>178</sup> But, as their ancestors had, the Hurons continued to plot against the Ottawas.

Although Pontiac had forced the Hurons to join the campaign in the short term, he had not resolved the issue. The Hurons continued to resist Pontiac’s assertions of Ottawa suzerainty at Detroit. Never enthusiastic supporters of the conflict, Huron warriors only fought perfunctorily and soon abandoned the siege altogether. The Hurons participated in the siege all day on May 12, but did not return on the following day. Instead they attacked a barge commanded by Chapman, seized Chapman’s merchandise, including rum, and took several British survivors captive. Apart from participating in the capture of Presqu’Île in June, once again under duress from the Ottawas, the Hurons refused to participate in the hostilities.

By May 16, only four days after they had grudgingly joined Pontiac’s campaign, Théata and Babi sought to abandon it completely. On that day, Gladwin learned that the Hurons “had withdrawn from the plot,” and had left their fort.<sup>179</sup> A week later, on May 22, they therefore sent the long-time Huron interpreter, Jacques Baudry *dit* des Buttes *dit*

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>178</sup> “Extract of a Court of Enquiry Held by Order of Major Gladwin to Enquire into the Manner of the Taking of Presqu’Isle, Detroit,” 20 June 1763, *MPHSCR*, 27:638-39.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 81.



Saint-Martin, to speak to Gladwin in their name.<sup>180</sup> Admitting that they had participated in the siege and confiscated Chapman's goods, the Hurons wondered if Gladwin "wou'd make Peace with them" if they surrendered their prisoners and made restitution for the stolen merchandise. Yet the Hurons did not simply offer neutrality. They also offered to install themselves at a "small Island" near the mouth of the Detroit River where they could protect British vessels on their way to the fort.<sup>181</sup> Although Gladwin did not trust the Hurons enough to approve of their move to the mouth of the river, he did promise to "make Peace with them." He also asked them to "remain quiet, or use their Endeavors to separate Pontiac & his followers." The following day, the Hurons responded that they would "remain neuter" for five or six days and to try "by some Means" to alienate Pontiac from his supporters. After those five days, on 27 May, the Hurons once again sent Saint-Martin to speak to Gladwin. The interpreter reported that the Hurons were "still resolv'd to remain Neuter" and that they would abandon Detroit altogether if the Ottawas "oblig'd them to take up Arms."<sup>182</sup>

At the same time, the Hurons also offered to "oblige Pontiac to come to their Terms" in conjunction with the Shawnees and Delawares.<sup>183</sup> By doing so, the Hurons sought once again to leverage their relationship with other nations into power over the Ottawas and other Anishinaabe peoples. As had Cheanonvouzon with the Iroquois and Miamis in the 1700s and Sastaretsy with the Iroquois and Flatheads in the 1730s, Théata

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<sup>180</sup> Baudry, more often referred to as Saint-Martin, was married to Robert Navarre's daughter, Marie Anne. Navarre likely learned much of what he knew about the Hurons during the siege through his son-in-law (ibid., 82).

<sup>181</sup> The diarist did not specify the island, but it may well have been Bois Blanc Island, the site of the Huron mission from 1742 until 1749.

<sup>182</sup> [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 12-14, 16.

<sup>183</sup> In the event the Hurons did not convince the Ottawas and Shawnees to abandon the siege, but the Shawnees nearly convinced the Hurons to join the fight (ibid., 14, 33).

and Babi sought to secure Huron autonomy from the Ottawas by appealing to powerful allies. The Hurons had, after all, enjoyed an especially familiar relationship with the Delawares and Shawnees, dating to their first forays into the Ohio Valley in the 1730s and they hoped to use that friendship to their advantage. Although the gambit had little hope for success since the Delawares and Shawnees proved just as hostile to the British as Pontiac and had in fact initiated the violence, the Hurons' promise speaks to their desire to use their diplomatic pull with Ohio Valley nations to assert Huron autonomy and undermine Ottawa power.

While Navarre credited the French habitants, and especially Father Potier, for the Hurons' defection, the Hurons had their own reasons for distancing themselves from Pontiac. Navarre noted that Potier had held a council with the Hurons on May 14 in which he implored the Hurons to remain neutral and refused to grant the sacraments to any Huron who participated in the siege.<sup>184</sup> When the Hurons announced that they would no longer participate in the campaign on May 16, therefore, Navarre credited the "efforts of Father Potier" in securing their neutrality.<sup>185</sup> Yet Navarre almost certainly exaggerated Potier's role in the Huron decision to leave the siege in order to demonstrate the loyalty of the French habitants to the British Crown. Gladwin and the other British officers suspected that the habitants had colluded, or at least encouraged, Pontiac's plot.<sup>186</sup> Therefore Navarre sought to demonstrate that Potier and the other French people at the post remained loyal to their new sovereign by emphasizing the role that Potier had played

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<sup>184</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 76-77.

<sup>185</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 81.

<sup>186</sup> Jenkins to Amherst, 28 March 1763, *CCOD*, 401; Affidavit, 11 June 1763, *ibid.*, 407-408; Jenkins to Amherst, 22 June 1763, 434; Gladwin to Amherst, 8 July 1763, *ibid.*, 392.

in the Hurons' decision to abandon Pontiac. In reality, however, the Hurons had consistently resisted the Ottawas' invitations and had only participated perfunctorily when they did participate. The Hurons' decision to abandon Pontiac, then, owed more to their aversion to Pontiac and to Ottawas' pretention of authority over the Hurons. Their offer not only to remain neutral but to actively undermine the Ottawas' efforts likewise suggests that the Hurons had their own reasons, quite apart from being denied Communion, for opposing the Ottawas. The Hurons sought once again to gain the advantage in their age-old struggle with the Ottawas for dominance at Detroit.

Although the bulk of the Hurons remained neutral through the rest of May and into June, Pontiac once again sought to force the Hurons into hostilities with the British. Around June 15, several war parties, including some Hurons, left Detroit for the British post at Presqu'Île, at the site of current-day Erie, Pennsylvania.<sup>187</sup> The native warriors attacked the fort on May 20. During a cease-fire in the fighting, the Huron warriors told John Christie, the commanding officer of the garrison, that they had been "compelled to take up arms against Detroit by the Outawas."<sup>188</sup> The Hurons also offered to let Christie and his garrison leave in peace if he surrendered the post. Although the Hurons reneged on their promise, took Christie and his soldiers captive, and may have killed some, they delivered Christie and some others to Gladwin soon after they returned to Detroit.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> [Hay], "The Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 26.

<sup>188</sup> "Extract of a Court of Enquiry Held by Order of Major Gladwin to Enquire into the Manner of the Taking of Presqu'Isle, Detroit," 10 July 1763, *MPHSCR*, 27:638-39.

<sup>189</sup> "A Court of Enquiry held by Order of Major Gladwin to enquire into the Particulars of the Loss of the Post at Presque Isle," 9 July 1763, *CCOD*, 421-24; MacDonald, "Journal of the Siege of Detroit," in *ibid.*, 13; "Proceeding of a Court of Enquiry Held by Major Gladwin's Order to Examine the Following Persons upon an Oath," 20 Dec. 1763, *MPHSCR*, 27:658, Jenkins to Amherst, 11 June 1763, *CCOD*, 431.

While some Hurons participated in the assault on Presqu'Île under duress, Théata and Babi sought to withdraw from the campaign altogether. Heretofore, the Hurons, fearing Ottawa retribution for their overtures to the British, had dealt with the British only through the mediation of their interpreter, Saint-Martin. As soon as the bulk of the Ottawa warriors left to attack Presqu'Île, the Hurons felt emboldened to visit the British fort in person and speak with Gladwin.<sup>190</sup> On June 16, the day after the warriors had departed, the Hurons entered Detroit by a "false gate" and held a council with Gladwin. The Hurons offered "many excuses" for their participation in the siege, most likely arguing, as they would do ceaselessly in the months to come, that they only joined the campaign when the Ottawas had forced them to. They noted, however, that they had not taken part in the fighting for a month and asked Gladwin to grant them peace. Although he made no firm peace with them, Gladwin presented the Huron leaders with a flag as a "sign of union" between the Hurons and British.<sup>191</sup> This basic position—that they had been forced into fighting by the Ottawas, but had only fought briefly and under duress—thereafter became the official Huron line, repeated every time they met with British representatives.

Encouraged by this meeting and by the Potawatomis' apparent pending defection from the alliance, the Hurons resolved not only to make a separate peace with the British, but also actively to undermine Pontiac's coalition. On July 7, shortly after the Hurons who had participated in the attack on Presqu'Île returned to Detroit, the entire Huron

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<sup>190</sup> The Hurons could not have relied on Saint-Martin if they had wanted, as the habitant had taken refuge from the Hurons inside the British fort on 1 July. [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 37; [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 158.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 138-39.

village held a council and decided to meet with Gladwin the next day.<sup>192</sup> Arriving at the British fort the following day, the Hurons once again disclaimed any responsibility for the start of the hostilities. They claimed, somewhat disingenuously, that they had known “nothing of this Affair at the Commencement” because Pontiac had not revealed his plans until he had gathered a force sufficient to “overpower them.” Even then, the Hurons had only fired at the British for “one day” before leaving the siege. Gladwin accepted the Hurons’ explanation for their participation.<sup>193</sup> If the Hurons returned all the goods that they had looted and the prisoners they had taken, the commandant told them, their “errors would be pardoned and the past forgotten.” The Huron delegates returned to their village, where they reported Gladwin’s promises.<sup>194</sup>

True to their word, the Hurons returned to the fort the following day, 9 July, and brought seven British captains, including Christie from Presqu’Île. They also pledged to bring in the merchandise they had looted from Chapman and others, down to the last “needle.”<sup>195</sup> Furthermore, the Hurons informed Gladwin that they planned to escape with the Potawatomis and “build a kind of Stockade” on the Huron River, near the mouth of the Detroit River, where they could defend themselves “against the Ottawas in case they should declare War against them.”<sup>196</sup> The plan, which the Hurons apparently tried to enact in early August, demonstrates the enmity between the Ottawas and Hurons and the always present possibility of violence between the Ottawas and the Hurons. Fully aware

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>193</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 43.

<sup>194</sup> [Navarre], “Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy,” 179.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 181-82; Gladwin to Amherst, 8 July 1763, *CCOD*, 395; James MacDonald, “Journal of the Siege of Detroit,” *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>196</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 44.

that they could not oppose the Ottawas alone, the Hurons reached out to the Potawatomis for protection and for help implementing their plans for the region.

The Hurons' proposal also underscores the extent to which they found their freedom to act circumscribed in 1763. The Hurons' protestations that they had participated in the conflict only under duress from Pontiac was much more than self-serving spin. Pontiac, at the head of a large Anishinaabe army, vastly outnumbered the Hurons. The Ottawa leader had directly confronted the Hurons and threatened to attack them if they did not join the fight. Théata explained his reason for joining the siege by noting that, if they refused to participate, they would have to "abandon our lands and flee with our wives and children" and even then, they could not guarantee their own safety.<sup>197</sup> In July they were still considering leaving Detroit until British reinforcements arrived who could "assist them in case they should be attack'd." They even suggested moving with the Potawatomis to the Huron River south of Detroit where they could erect a "Stockade...to defend themselves against the Ottawa in case they should declare War against them."<sup>198</sup> Moreover, as soon as threat of Ottawa reprisals dimmed, the Hurons sought to reassure the British of their loyalty. When many of the Anishinaabe warriors left in June, the Hurons contacted Gladwin. When the warriors left for good in September, Babi likewise visited the British to assure them of their good intentions, explaining that the Ottawas had theretofore blocked them from coming to visit the British.

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<sup>197</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of the Siege of Detroit," 62.

<sup>198</sup> [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 44.

The Hurons' determination to make peace with the British, which coincided with Potawatomi overtures of peace toward the British, once again outraged Pontiac. On July 10, the day after the Hurons had turned their prisoners over to Gladwin, Pontiac came to the Huron village to reassert Ottawa authority, as he had on May 11. Pontiac reminded the Hurons of the Ottawas' might and threatened them not to make peace with the British. To drive home his point, he brought "fifteen of his best Warriors completely arm'd." Unlike the meeting in May, however, Pontiac's show of force had "no effect" on the Hurons.<sup>199</sup> Buoyed by their talks with Gladwin, the return of some of their warriors, and the Potawatomis' wavering allegiance to Pontiac, the Hurons refused to acquiesce to the Ottawa's demand. Instead they returned to the British fort the July 11, where they surrendered the rest of their prisoners, as well as the goods they had pilfered from Chapman and other traders. The Huron leader Babi even surrendered a native slave who had been adopted into his family which, as Hay noted "was a very extraordinary thing, as they seldom give up a Prisoner that is adopted."<sup>200</sup> As British lieutenant Edward Jenkins observed, the Hurons seemed "very anxious to get out of the scrape which the Ottawas and Chippewains [Ojibwas] have drawn them into." Satisfied that the Hurons had met the terms of peace, Gladwin extended a provisional peace to the Hurons and promised to recommend that General Amherst sign an official treaty with them.<sup>201</sup> Satisfied with the Hurons' defection, James MacDonald, noted that the British "had several Councils with the Waindotes [Hurons]... during the Siege."<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.; Jenkins to Amherst, 11 [July] 1763, *CCOD*, 431.

<sup>201</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 183.

<sup>202</sup> MacDonald, "Journal of the Siege of Detroit," *CCOD*, 13.

Although Gladwin thought that the Hurons might rejoin Pontiac's confederacy again in late July, the majority of the Hurons honored their peace agreement with Gladwin.<sup>203</sup> On July 26 the Hurons met with the Ottawa, Shawnee, and Delaware delegates at the Huron village. Some of the Hurons apparently agreed to resume the hostilities at the meeting.<sup>204</sup> They even fired a few shots at a barge carrying British reinforcements to Detroit, and some may have participated in the Battle of Bloody Run a few days later.<sup>205</sup> Yet on July 27 André, a Huron leader from the Lorette community, informed Gladwin that the Hurons "told the Ottawas that notwithstanding" their promise to resume hostilities, "they wou'd not fight"<sup>206</sup> Anticipating the Ottawas' anger at this latest refusal, the Hurons briefly moved to the relative safety of Grosse Île in late July and invited the Potawatomis to join them. Although Navarre interpreted this move as a ploy to lure the British into a false sense of security, the Hurons likely moved in order to escape the Ottawas.<sup>207</sup> Three weeks earlier, after all, the Hurons had told Gladwin that they intended to move to the Huron River—which empties into Lake Eriet near Grosse

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<sup>203</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 197, [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 48-49, MacDonald, "Journal of the Siege of Detroit," *CCOD*, 14-15; Gladwin to Amherst, 26 July 1763, *ibid.*, 442b, Jenkins to Amherst, 28 July 1763, in *ibid.*, 445; 8 August 1763, Gladwin to Amherst, 8 Aug. 1763, in *ibid.*, 455-57.

<sup>204</sup> [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 195-98

<sup>205</sup> [Hay], "Diary of the Siege of Detroit," 26, 53-54.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53; Gladwin to Amherst, 26 July 1763, *CCOD*, 442b; Jenkins to Amherst, 28 July 1763, in *ibid.*, 445.

<sup>207</sup> Navarre reported that the Hurons had only pretended to leave, but had really set up an ambush to surprise the British whom they expected to attack the village. Yet Navarre offered no proof for the claim, and Navarre or his informants might have mistaken the Hurons' efforts to flee the area as subterfuge. [Navarre], "Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy," 203.



Île—and build a stockade with the Potawatomis to defend themselves from the Ottawas.<sup>208</sup>

During the spring and summer of 1763, Pontiac had consistently tried to force the Hurons to participate in his siege and, in doing so, acknowledge Ottawa suzerainty. The Hurons, who had more reason to support the British, had successfully resisted Ottawa attempts to force them to participate in the war. The Hurons were, as Gladwin admitted, “less culpable” than the others, and had been “led into the War, and have done but little Mischief.”<sup>209</sup>

Having struggled over status the entire summer of 1763, the Ottawas and Hurons continued their fight even after the Ottawas left Detroit to establish hunting camps on the Maumee River in the fall of 1763. Although he expressed half-hearted regrets for his action, Pontiac remained defiant and intent upon resuming his campaign against the British, hopefully with French help, in the spring. Still determined to force the Hurons to acknowledge Ottawa supremacy, Pontiac warned the Hurons not to make peace with the British and actively patrolled the road to Detroit to keep them from visiting the fort. As the Mohawk man, Aaron, told Sir William Johnson in early October, the Ottawas had promised the Hurons “if they attempt to make Peace without their [the Ottawas’] Consent or Advice they will directly destroy them, and that if they attempt to come to the [British] Fort they will be considered by them [the Ottawas] as Englishmen.” More explicitly, the

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<sup>208</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 44, 54, 56, 59; [Henri-Louis Boishébert], “Carte du Detroit et Partie du Lac Erie, et du Lac Ste. Claire,” 1731, MapPhoto France MC no. 545, Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>209</sup> Gladwin to Amherst, 8 July 1763, *CCOD*, 395; Gladwin to Johnson, 11 May 1764, *WJP*, 10:191.

Ottawas told the Hurons that, since they “liv’d near the English and lik’d them...they should perish with them.”<sup>210</sup> The Ottawa leader thereby sought to restore the age-old status quo at Detroit. He sought to remind the Hurons of their tutelage to the Ottawas by prohibiting them from acting without his “Consent.” He alluded to the Ottawas’ superior numbers by assuring them that he could “destroy them.”<sup>211</sup> Pontiac maintained this position as late as July 1764, after the Hurons had concluded a formal peace with the British, when the Ottawa again “threaten[ed] to extirpate the Hurons for making their Submission.”<sup>212</sup> Yet the Hurons did not submit to the Ottawas’ threats. The Hurons had, as they had intermittently since their time at Michilimackinac, defied Ottawa attempts to dominate them and chartered an autonomous course.

In contrast to, and in defiance of, the Ottawas, the Hurons not only maintained their loyalty to the British in the fall and winter but even fashioned themselves as ambassadors for the British to other nations in 1764. As soon as the Ottawas left the Detroit region in the fall, the Hurons regularly returned to assure Gladwin of their goodwill and loyalty. On Sept. 24, for example, Babi visited Gladwin at the fort and paid “him his Respects.”<sup>213</sup> The Huron leader explained that he would have come in sooner, but the Ottawas and Potawatomis, who had recently left, had been patrolling the road to the fort. In early December, the Mohawk man Aaron told Johnson that the “old Men of the Wiandots Nation” wanted to meet with him, and sent him wampum belts in order to

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<sup>210</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 118.

<sup>211</sup> Robert Rogers to Johnson, 7 Oct. 1763, in Hough, *Diary of the Siege of Detroit*, 178.

<sup>212</sup> Gage to Johnson, 15 July 1764, *WJP*, 4:482.

<sup>213</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 72.

ask for peace.<sup>214</sup> On 10 January 1764, Babi returned with Théata and wished Gladwin a happy new year. Four days later, the two chiefs returned once again along with another leader identified as “the Doctor’s Son.” The Hurons discussed the “Beginning of this Indian War” with Gladwin, almost certainly pointing out their innocence in the hostilities.<sup>215</sup> Again in late April, Théata and several other Huron leaders met with Gladwin, and “repented of all the Ill we may have done.” Promising to never contemplate “any bad Thing for the Future,” Théata asked Gladwin to communicate their goodwill and loyalty to General Gage.<sup>216</sup>

Gladwin did indeed inform his superiors of the Hurons eagerness to reconcile with the British, and the Hurons began formal treaty negotiations with the British (Gladwin had lacked the authority to grant them anything more than a provisional peace). In early May, William Johnson, in his capacity as the superintendent, sent a Mohawk named Peter, to discuss the preliminaries of a British-Huron peace.<sup>217</sup> Peter relayed Sir William’s message that he had decided not to “extirpate” the Hurons, if “*Sasterredsey*”—here apparently used as a metonym for the Huron community—“heartily repent[ed] of what he has done.” Responding for the Hurons, Babi admitted that he and other Hurons had participated in the strike but he now hung his “Ax up in the Air” and refused to fight against the British any further.<sup>218</sup> These preliminary negotiations led to a formal treaty summit at Niagara in July. Blaming the Ottawas once again, the Hurons reminded

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<sup>214</sup> Aaron to Johnson, 1 Dec. 1763, *WJP*, 10:939; Johnson to Lords of Trade, 20 Jan. 1764, in *NYCD*, 7:599.

<sup>215</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 85-86.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>217</sup> Johnson to Gage, 16 March 1764, *WJP*, 4:367, [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 91.

<sup>218</sup> The Hurons also sent “Several Belts” to General Gage as well “Assureing me of their sorrow for what they had done.” Gage to Johnson, 2 June 1764, *WJP*, 11:217.

Johnson that they had been “Compelled to [fight the British] by your powerful Enemies the *Ottawas*” but had nonetheless tried to “Observe our Engagements” and had regularly communicated with Gladwin during the crisis.<sup>219</sup> Apparently satisfied with their explanations and convinced of their goodwill, Johnson agreed to a “firm and absolute peace” with the Hurons and pledged that any “past offenses shall be forgotten.”<sup>220</sup>

Even before they concluded peace with Johnson in July 1764, the Hurons began serving as intermediaries for the British and their neighbors in the region. The pro-British Hurons, who had largely remained around Detroit in the fall and winter of 1763-1764, began an energetic campaign to reconcile with their fellow Hurons at Sandusky in the spring. After the pro-British Hurons met with Johnson’s representatives in May, Théata visited Sandusky and told the Hurons there that he had made a preliminary agreement with the British.<sup>221</sup> Although the meeting went poorly and the other pro-French Hurons mocked Théata’s faith in the British, a delegation of pro-French Hurons from Sandusky did arrive at Detroit at the beginning of the following month. They met with Gladwin on July 4 and surrendered five prisoners and asked for peace with the British. The following day, these pro-French leaders came to Gladwin again, this time accompanied by “some of the Hurons of this Village.” According to Gladwin, these Hurons had decided to “join their own Village” once more and hence to abandon their hostility toward the British. By doing so, the erstwhile rebellious Hurons reported that they hoped to encourage “those of Sandusky” to do the same.<sup>222</sup> As late as 1766 Théata acknowledged that “there are some

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<sup>219</sup> “An Indian Congress,” 17 July 1764, *WJP*, 11:281-83.

<sup>220</sup> “Articles of Peace between Sir William Johnson and the Huron Indians,” 1764, in *NYCD*, 7:650-51.

<sup>221</sup> “Indian Intelligence,” June 1764, *WJP*, 11:227-29.

<sup>222</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 101.

whose Hearts are not well inclined” and promised to do “every thing in our power to unite all our nation as far as to Sandusky.”<sup>223</sup>

In a particularly ironic twist, the Hurons even worked to help some of the Ottawas reach an accommodation with the British. In May 1764 a portion of the Ottawa village, presumably the peace faction led by a leader named Manitou, requested “the intercession of the Hurons” to help them finalize a peace deal with the British.<sup>224</sup> Later that month Manitou and other Ottawa leaders asked the British to send representatives to their villages on the Maumee River and to “get one or two of the Huron Chiefs to go with them.” This request suggests that they recognized the Hurons’ favored status with the British and hoped to convince their erstwhile allies to mediate a peace between them and the British.<sup>225</sup> When British officers met with the Ottawas at Detroit the following September, the Hurons, who had already made peace in July, heralded the move and gave their consent to the proceedings.<sup>226</sup> By officially condoning the proceedings and daring to give the Ottawas advice, the Hurons demonstrated their role in the new order.

They played this role again in 1765, when they sought to proctor a peace between the Shawnees and Delawares, the Hurons’ longtime allies, and the British. The Hurons launched raids against the still defiant Shawnees and Delawares in the winter of 1764 and 1765, but stopped when they learned that those nations had accepted a provisional truce.<sup>227</sup> The following August, the Hurons met with the Shawnees and others in the

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<sup>223</sup> “Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with Pontiac and other Indians,” July 1766, in *NYCD*, 7:862.

<sup>224</sup> The letter has unfortunately not survived and all we have is a brief description in Johnson’s calendar of papers. Du Couagne to Johnson, 12 May 1764, *WJP*, 4:422; Parmenter, “Pontiac’s War,” 631.

<sup>225</sup> [Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” 71, 104, 116 (quotation).

<sup>226</sup> “Congress with the Western Nations,” 7-10 Sept. 1764, *WJP*, 4:530.

<sup>227</sup> Johnson to Gage, 21 Sept. 1764, *WJP*, 4:544; “Statement of General Bradstreet,” in Hough, *The Siege of Detroit in 1763*, 157; Alexander McKee to Johnson, 14 Jan. 1765, *WJP*, 11:531; John Campbell to

company of George Croghan and other officials. The Hurons “exhorted the several Nations to behave themselves” and to make peace with the British.<sup>228</sup> Again in 1767 the Hurons chided some Saginaw Ottawas for killing Englishmen. They “Spoke to them & Gave them a Belt to extort them to behave well for the future.”<sup>229</sup>

The Hurons’ newfound authority and precedence was on display at July 1766 meeting between Johnson and those Ojibwas, Ottawas, and Potawatomis who had yet to make peace with the British, including Pontiac himself. After Pontiac and the others had begged for forgiveness and Johnson had agreed to grant them peace, Théata addressed the assembly. Noting that he and his people had long-since made peace with the British and had since acted faithfully, he exhorted the Ottawas and others to “behave in the same way we do.” In case Pontiac failed to catch the first warning, Théata repeated that he advised “all the rest of our Breth<sup>n</sup>” to follow the Hurons’ lead and obey the British. Théata concluded by noting that he spoke “in the name of all the Nations about *Detroit*.” In a none-too-subtle way, Théata had reminded Pontiac of the new order of things at Detroit. Now the Hurons, allied to the British, acted as the elder brothers who advised the junior Ottawas. Moreover, the Hurons freely spoke for all their neighbors at the post. The Hurons seemed to be serving at this conference, as they had before, as the trusted allies of the British.

Their loyalty during the conflict and assistance afterwards garnered the Hurons what they had always wanted, a place of prestige at Detroit and autonomy from the

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Johnson, 20 Feb. 1765, *ibid.*, 11:587-88; “Croghan’s Journal,” 1765, in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 155.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> Jehu Hay to George Croghan, *WJP*, 5:729.

Ottawas. That process had begun with the fall of New France and had been consolidated by the summer of 1764 when the Hurons became the first of the combatants to conclude a formal peace with Sir William. In 1767, George Croghan spoke to the Hurons in the presence of their neighbors and thanked them for their “Steady and good behavior since the Peace,” as well as the good conduct of their “Young Men.”<sup>230</sup> The Ottawas at the assembly certainly appreciated and likely resented the tremendous inversion that had taken place since 1760. In what must have been a poignant inversion, Théata and Babi served as spokesmen and intermediaries for the British, just as the Ottawas Mikinic and Kinosaki had done for the French in the 1730s into the 1750s. Cheanonvouzon’s plans had been accomplished.

## **Conclusion**

Ironically Pontiac, one of the most acclaimed pan-Indian leaders in history, could not convince his nearest neighbors, the Hurons, to join his campaign in 1763. This paradox speaks volumes about what sort of place Detroit was not only in 1763 but also for decades before then. This story reinforces the interrelated contentions that have run throughout this study: that the peoples of Detroit remained distinct and autonomous, and that the interactions among them shaped the region and created the context in which colonialism operated.

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<sup>230</sup> George Croghan, *George Croghan's journal of his trip to Detroit in 1767, with his correspondence relating thereto: now published for the first time from the papers of General Thomas Gage in the William L. Clements Library*, ed. by Howard H. Peckham (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1939), 43.

In 1763, as they had in 1706 and 1738 and other times, the Hurons and Ottawas demonstrated that neither they nor their neighbors in the region had abandoned their individual corporate identities. Even though they had been “inseparable companions” since the fall of Huronia over a century before, had lived at the same place, and had struggled against the Iroquois, Foxes, English, British, and Flatheads together, they still remained distinct peoples who prioritized the needs of their peculiar communities over the needs of their regional allies. When the Hurons saw an opportunity to gain the upper hand over their neighbors in 1763, many did so, risking their own safety in the process. The Michilimackinac Ottawas likewise refused to participate in the conflict, and the Potawatomis and Ojibwas did so only conditionally, willing to defect from Pontiac and the Detroit Ottawas if it suited their interests. That these peoples not only remained separate, but carried on a tradition of competition suggests that Detroit and the Great Lakes Region more generally was inhabited not by orphaned refugees clinging to each other and to their European foster parents, but by robust and proud peoples. Detroit, and the surrounding region, was peopled by culturally and ethnically distinct communities that vied or cooperated with one another to achieve their goals.

The interactions between these peoples in turn shaped Pontiac’s War. Although historians of Pontiac’s War have paid close attention to the dynamics of inter-native relations, they have tended to focus more on those things which united the peoples of the Great Lakes Region with natives elsewhere, particularly in the Ohio River Valley.<sup>231</sup> As

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<sup>231</sup> Richard White sees the action as an attempt of Onontio’s children either to secure their purported “father’s” return, or to force the British to take his place (White, *The Middle Ground*). Gregory Dowd argues that the conflict was a pan-Indian conflict about status within the empire, and that the Delawares, Ottawas, and others found unity in Neolin’s promise of renewal (Dowd, *War under Heaven*). Michael



a result, these accounts have replicated a very traditional colonial narrative of Pontiac's War: a pan-Indian coalition, united by their distaste for British conduct and by a shared religious narrative articulated by Neolin, fought against the British in order to forestall territorial expansion and to maintain their autonomy.

Yet, as we have seen, Pontiac's War was shaped by a larger set of dynamics whose roots extended farther back in time than the advent of British rule or Neolin's vision quest. Without the geo-strategic cooperation and social connections between the Anishinaabe communities, Pontiac would have scarcely been able to field an army large enough to threaten the British (or the Hurons). If the Hurons had not maintained a long relationship with the Iroquois, moreover, the Hurons would not have enjoyed their newfound status at Detroit and would have been more inclined to join Pontiac's movement. Had the Hurons and Ottawas not fought for status since at least the 1670s, they might have acted in concert against the British instead of working at cross-purposes. The Anglo-Indian conflict, in short, was entangled within and circumscribed by a whole set of relationships that were only partly related to the larger imperial struggle. Had these interactions not been present, or had the people of the Great Lakes Region acted as a single, collective entity, the outcome of the conflict might have been different. As it was, they shaped the contours and limits of that movement in consequential ways. Pontiac's War was much more than an Anglo-Indian struggle over the nature of empire or the place of Indians in the new regime, it was also a story of Anishinaabe cooperation, Huron-Iroquois diplomacy, and Huron-Ottawa rivalry, as well as intra-Huron conflict. The war

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McConnell presents a more nuanced understanding of the event, finding "a complexity that belies the notion of a pan-Indian movement to forestall the English at any price." He likewise suggests that those who did participate did so for quite different reasons (McConnell, "The Search for Security," vii).

was indeed a “fight over status” as Gregory Dowd maintains, but that fight was more complicated than Dowd allows.<sup>232</sup> The conflict was simultaneously a war about natives’ abstract status in the empire and a very local conflict about status between the Hurons and the Ottawas. Those two fights cannot be disentangled.

The fact that Pontiac’s War, a paradigm of the struggle between invading colonizers and resistant natives, was situated in a set of relationships among native peoples demonstrates the extent to which the colonial relationship in general was embedded in a whole set of relationships. The pattern in which French and British people interacted with native peoples was constituted by the ways in which native peoples interacted with one another. Any time the French interacted with the Hurons, for example, they did so in the context of the complicated lines which connected the Hurons to their Iroquois and Miamis allies, their Ottawas rivals, and even rival Huron factions. Indeed, much of the care the French took to keep the Hurons satisfied owed to the omnipresent possibility that the Hurons would defect from the French alliance and join the Covenant Chain. In the first years of his administration as governor, the Marquis de Beauharnois removed Alphone de Tonty from his post at Détroit because the Hurons demanded it. When the Hurons petitioned for his removal, they ominously threatened to take their “fire”—meaning their village—“elsewhere,” presumably to Seneca territory.<sup>233</sup> Conversely, Onontio could only claim the influence he did in the Detroit region because of the cultural and kinship connections between the Anishinaabe peoples. As Beauharnois observed in 1738, New France could not afford a conflict between the

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<sup>232</sup> Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 2.

<sup>233</sup> Beauharnois au ministre, 27 Sept. 1727, COAM, C11A, vol. 49, fols. 109-112v.

Hurons and Ottawas because the “hurons are allied with the 5 Iroquois Nations, and the Outaouïais with all those of the pais d’en haut.”<sup>234</sup>

Conversely their relationship with the French reshaped the patterns of interactions among native people. Conflict for access to French and British merchandise and technology intensified rivalry between the Hurons and Ottawas. When Gov. Callières ordered that a house be built for Cheanonvouzon the Ottawas demanded the same mark of French regard.<sup>235</sup> The French decision to anoint the Ottawas as the “elder sons” of the region both recognized the Ottawas’ status among their neighbors and enhanced that status.

“Euro-Indian” relations therefore cannot be abstracted from a whole set of relationships which fundamentally shaped and continued to reshape the terms on which native and European encountered one another. Relationships between native peoples constrained the ways in which French and British officials could act and defined the limits of the possible in the region, just as the presence of European technologies, peoples, and alliances in the region constrained native autonomy and created new opportunities. Rather than resorting to metaphors about a cultural “middle ground” or an impenetrable “American woods,” we should view intercultural interactions in the Great Lakes Region in the same way an ecologist views an ecosystem: as a complicated and integrated system of interlocking processes and mutually constituting relationships.<sup>236</sup> An ecologist knows that no two organisms in an ecosystem interact in a closed system.

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<sup>234</sup> “les hurons étant alliez avec les 5 Nations Iroquois, et les Outaouïais avec tous celles des pais d’en haut,” Résumé de lettres de Beauharnois, Jan. 1739, in *ibid.*, vol. 72, fol. 393v.

<sup>235</sup> Cadillac to the Minister, 31 Aug. 1703, *MPHSCR*, 33:166.

<sup>236</sup> White, *The Middle Ground*; James Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiations on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999) 37-38.

Rather each relationship is connected to, and inseparable from, a whole host of others, and each process is contingent upon a score of other processes. While I do not intend to equate the native and European peoples of Detroit with non-human organisms, or to suggest that power relations between groups functioned like a food chain, I nonetheless believe that the analogy is productive. Only by understanding the totality of these relationships can we understand how colonial relationships worked.

Yet this story is not only about Detroit, or about the Great Lakes region. It also has significance for the whole New World and other colonial contexts. Researchers have shown that events that we have typically seen as the paradigms of colonialism were actually profoundly shaped by and enmeshed in interactions among native American peoples. Take, for example, Hernan Cortés's conquest of Tenochtitlan in Mexico in the 1520s. Traditional accounts of the Conquest have ascribed that victory to the superiority of Spanish arms and technology, as well as to epidemic diseases. But analysis has suggested that Cortés could never have conquered the city without the aid of the Aztecs' traditional enemies, particularly the Tlaxcalans and tribute city-states, who provided support to Cortés and whose warriors outnumbered the Castilian conquistadores by a factor of ninety-nine to one. As in the Great Lakes, the relationship between the "colonized" and the "colonizers" was embedded in and inextricable from a whole host of other relationships between native peoples.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Camilla Townsend, "Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico," *Journal of American History* (June 2003): 659-87; Ross Hassig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006).

## EPILOGUE

### Exploring the Detroit River with Tocqueville, 1831

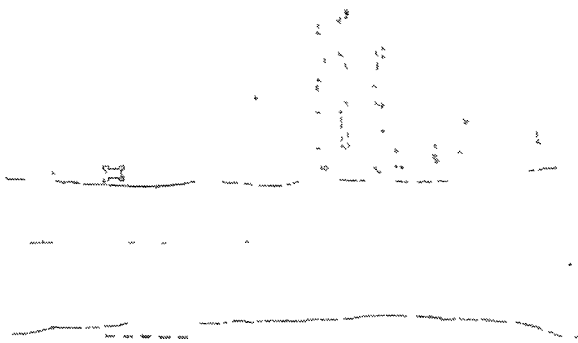
In 1831, a little more than a century after Charlevoix visited Détroit, another celebrated French traveler, Alexis de Tocqueville, visited the region. Tocqueville encountered a dramatically changed place. Where Charlevoix had found the palisades of the native villages surrounded by native fields, Tocqueville saw the houses and barns of Euro-American inhabitants, which had, he judged, a “French appearance.”<sup>1</sup> Referring to the French practice of building their houses and buildings on the river’s edge in 1781, the Moravian missionary David Zeisberger noted that the riverbank was “thickly settled, and is built like a village along the river.”<sup>2</sup> Where Charlevoix had seen Fort Pontchartrain proudly flying the white Bourbon banner, Tocqueville arrived at the post just a few years after the last fortress at Detroit had been dismantled, and the French flag replaced by Old Glory.<sup>3</sup> Where Charlevoix had encountered a social space connected by the rivers and lakes, Tocqueville found a river that served as a political divider between the United States and the British province of Upper Canada. Detroit had, in short, ceased to be a

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<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America*, trans. George Lawrence, ed. J. P. Mayer, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 134-135.

<sup>2</sup> *Diary of David Zeisberger, A Moravian Missionary among the Indians of Ohio*, trans. and ed. Eugene F. Bliss, (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co, 1885). As was the custom throughout the French riverine world, the plots at Detroit were laid out in long rectangular lots, with the short end abutting the river. This ensured that all habitants had access to the river for transportation purposes. See Carl Ekberg, *The French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 36.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Dunnigan, “Fortress Detroit, 1701-1826,” in David Skaggs, and Larry Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years’ War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 183.



**Figure 15: [Henri-Louis Boishébert], [Plans des terrains appartenant aux français autor de Fort de Pontchartrain], 1731. Centre des archives d’outre mer, Aix-en-Provence, France.**

This 1731 map illustrates the characteristic longlots which immigrants from the St. Lawrence Valley established at Détroit. This

native place and had become the province of Euro-Americans and enslaved African Americans.<sup>4</sup>

The transformations that Tocqueville encountered in 1831 had their roots in the French period. Although Cadillac had envisioned the post as a thriving agricultural space and a feudal fiefdom, Détroit had fallen far short of his aspirations.<sup>5</sup> In 1708, Aigremont had noted that few inhabitants of the area bothered to farm in the region and there were only a few lonely horses and cattle to pull plows.<sup>6</sup> Conditions scarcely improved over the next thirty years. Vaudreuil, who had always opposed the establishment of Détroit, had tried to undermine the post through neglect, and his client, Alphonse de Tonty, did very little to encourage French settlement there. During that period the French population at Détroit had stagnated and even declined on occasion.<sup>7</sup> As a result, by 1755 Charles

<sup>4</sup> Norman MacRae, “Blacks in Detroit, 1736-1833: The Search for Freedom and Community and Its Implications for Educators” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> Lina Gouger, “Le peuplement colonisateur de Detroit, 1701-1765,” (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, Université Laval, 2002), 53, 87-93 ; Guillaume Teasdale, “The French of Orchard Country : Territory, Landscape, and Ethnicity in the Detroit River Region, 1680s-1810s,” (PhD. diss., Dept. of History, York University, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> “Letter from Sr. d’Aigremont Denouncing Cadillac Methods,” 14 Nov. 1708, in *MPHSCR*, 33:425-26.

<sup>7</sup> Gouger, “Le peuplement colonisateur de Detroit,” 86-90.

Stuart counted “But 360 Familys” at the post, while George Croghan dismissed the habitants as “a lazy, idle” people, “depending chiefly on the savages for their subsistence.” A British officer, Dedrick Brehm, put it bluntly in 1760: “The Settlement seems very little improved in 60 years.”<sup>8</sup>

Although Stuart and Croghan may not have been aware of it, the French population at Détroit had been growing since the mid-1730s. Finally securing encouragement from the crown, Louis Henry Deschamps, sieur de Boishébert began to grant more land outside the fort in the mid-1730s. With the Fox threat abated, habitants could finally start living on their lands, rather than in the safety of Fort Pontchartrain.<sup>9</sup> The French further encouraged this movement in the 1750s, when, after Orontony’s failed coup demonstrated their vulnerability, colonial officials began actively encouraging migration to the fort. Supplying any volunteers with goods and livestock, the officials convinced a large convoy of settlers to move to Détroit in 1749.<sup>10</sup> By 1754, those inhabitants had begun to sell their surplus grain; and a year later the governor could boast that the post “is a considerable one and well populated.”<sup>11</sup> This growth continued after the British assumed control of the post. Between Boishébert’s tenure in the mid-

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<sup>8</sup> Likening Detroit to “Siberia,” Brehm requested a transfer from the settlement. Brehm to Amherst, 23 Dec. 1761, in *CCCOD*, 44; Brehm to Bouquet, 30 Nov. 1763, in Stevens and Kent, *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, 21:1.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit, 1701-1838* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 21.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-37 ; Gouger, “Le peuplement colonisateur de Detroit,” 93-117 ; Gouger, Lina. “Les convois de colons de 1749-1750: Impulsion gouvernementale décisive pour le développement de la région de Windsor.” in Marcel Bénétteau, ed., *Passage du Détroit*. (Windsor, Ont.: Humanities Research Group, University of Windsor, 2003):47-57.

<sup>11</sup> François Bigot au ministre, 10 Oct. 1759, in *CAOM*, C11A, vol. 104, fol. 136; Vaudreuil de Cavagnal au ministre, 30 Oct. 1755, in *WHC*, 18 :157 ; *Memoir de Bourgainville*, in *Ibid.*, 170-73.

1730s and 1765, the population had grown from around 200 to nearly 900.<sup>12</sup> An English observer encountered three Canadian families moving from Montréal to Detroit in 1760, and Lt. Col. John Bradstreet observed in 1764 that the “Colony of Detroit grows fast.”<sup>13</sup> Cadillac’s vision had finally been realized.

Although the habitants and natives developed close ties, the growth of the European population had strained that relationship. Cheanonvouzon had long ago resisted the idea of moving to Détroit because he feared that his young men might kill French livestock.<sup>14</sup> While that fear might have been unfounded in 1702, it was not by 1760. The Hurons complained to Johnson in 1762 that the “French Inhabitants commit great Trespass on their...lands” and cut wood on their lands while the Hurons were away hunting. Johnson predicted that such activity “must create uneasiness in y<sup>e</sup> minds of y<sup>e</sup> Indians and produce misunderstandings.”<sup>15</sup> In late April 1764, Théata met with Gladwin and told him that “Wood & Bark is very unhandy to us at our old Village” and asked for permission to move elsewhere.<sup>16</sup> In the face of this immigration, many of Detroit’s native peoples began moving to literally greener pastures, such as Sandusky and the southern reaches of the Detroit River. By 1777 the Hurons had four different settlements in the Detroit region, and the Potawatomis had moved to the Huron River.<sup>17</sup> Finally, in

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<sup>12</sup> Gouger, “Le peuplement colonisateur de Detroit,” 53.

<sup>13</sup> “The Detroit Journal,” 1760, in *WJP*, 13:230-31; Colonel Bradstreet’s Thoughts on Indian Affairs,” in *DRCHY*, 7:693. Catherine Cangany argues that Detroit became a fully articulated part of the Atlantic World during the British period. “Frontier Seaport: Detroit’s Transformation into an Atlantic Entrepôt, 1701-1837, (Ph.D. diss., Dept. of History, The University of Michigan, 2009), 39.

<sup>14</sup> Mermet à Cadillac, 19 April 1702, *MDE*, 5:220.

<sup>15</sup> Johnson to Croghan, 24 Oct. 1762, in *WJP*, 10:560-61.

<sup>16</sup> Despite this request, it is not clear whether the Hurons moved away at this time, and indeed they maintained their village at Detroit. [Jehu Hay], “Diary of the Siege of Detroit,” in Franklin Hough, ed., *Diary of the Siege of Detroit*, Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1865), 89.

<sup>17</sup> Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis*, 71.



1790 the Ottawas, Ojibwas, Potawatomis, and Hurons ceded much of their holdings around Detroit to the British crown and retained only two small reserves in the area.<sup>18</sup>

Yet if Detroit was no longer a predominantly native place in 1831, the natives had not disappeared. On his way up the Detroit River, Tocqueville saw “two stark naked savages in a canoe” adorned with “Rings hanging on the nose.” He also saw an Indian village—perhaps the Huron Reserve halfway between Lake Erie and Detroit.

Tocqueville juxtaposed the Hurons’ bark houses and naked children with the British fort on the Windsor shore, marveling at the contrast between “extreme civilisation” and “the



**Figure 16: E.H., “A View of Detroit,” July 25, 1794. From Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.**

This view of Detroit in 1794 portrays the trappings of an expanding Euro-American presence at Detroit, such as buildings, sailed sloops, as well as evidence of continued native presence in the canoe filled with native people in the lower left-hand corner.

<sup>18</sup> R. Allen Douglas, *Uppermost Canada: The Western District and the Detroit Frontier, 1800-1850* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 5; Teasdale, “The French of Orchard Country.”

extreme opposite.”<sup>19</sup> Contrary to Anglo-American fantasies about the vanishing Indian that had inspired the policy of removal, the peoples of Detroit had not vanished, and had not really gone very far. Nor had these people renounced their identities as separate and distinct communities. Just two years before Tocqueville’s arrival, the Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Ojibwas laid claim to the Huron Reserve, launching a bitter struggle between the Hurons and the Anishinaabe claimants, which, in turn launched an internal debate among the Hurons.<sup>20</sup> Such quarrels had a long lineage. That the Hurons and the Ottawas, who now only represented small communities in a large sea of Euro-Americans, continued to squabble over territory in the 1830s tells us much about the nature of that relationship. Despite the wholesale changes that had transformed Detroit from a native place to a Euro-American one, despite their movement from the heart of Detroit to its peripheries, despite the changes in colonial administrations, declarations of independence, and wars, the Hurons and Ottawas remained separate and sought advantage over their neighbors, and the Hurons responded to challenges through factional politics. Much had changed at Detroit. This, at least, had remained the same.

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<sup>19</sup> Tocqueville, *Journey to America*, 135-36.

<sup>20</sup> Douglas, *Uppermost Canada*, 126-30; R. Cory, “A 19<sup>th</sup> c. Wyandot Site on the Detroit River,” *Kewa: Newsletter of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society*, 87:1 (1977): 11-19.

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