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## A new people in an age of war: The Kahnawake Iroquois, 1667–1760

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**A new people in an age of war: The Kahnawake Iroquois,  
1667-1760**

**Green, Gretchen Lynn, Ph.D.**

**The College of William and Mary, 1991**

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A NEW PEOPLE IN AN AGE OF WAR  
THE KAHNAWAKE IROQUOIS, 1667-1760

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History  
The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Gretchen Lynn Green

1991

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APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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## Dedication

To my grandfather,  
Frank Besau,  
who first taught me  
the value of history.

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Kahnawake Iroquois were a group of Iroquois Indians converted by Jesuit missionaries and invited to emigrate from their homeland to a mission community just outside of Montreal starting in 1667. This dissertation focusses on them from that beginning to the Seven Years' War and closes in 1760 with the demise of the French in North America. Kahnawake history from 1667 to 1760 is tied to the colonial and imperial struggle in the colonial Northeast between the English, the Iroquois, and the French, so the defeat of the French meant that their subsequent history differs dramatically and is not in the scope of this study. While there have been community studies written by Jesuit apologists about these Indians, the Kahnawakes have never been studied in the context of the diplomatic-military struggle between the English, the Iroquois League, and the French, but have been dismissed as probably being under the heel of the French.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate that they were not mere puppets of the French, but that there was a real power struggle between the Kahnawakes and New France, as well as between the Kahnawakes and New York, and even between the Kahnawakes and the Iroquois League.

Although the Kahnawake people originated in an era of struggle and warfare, they survived and developed as a

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Jennings, Empire of Fortune (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 190.

distinct group. They maintained their identity in the face of strong pressure from both the Iroquois League and the French. Although overseen by Jesuit missionaries, the Kahnawakes managed to retain much of their independence and self-determination. They also held their kinfolk of the Iroquois League at arm's length when it suited their purposes. Even with their factional splits, the Kahnawakes forced the French, the English, and the Iroquois League to deal with them as a separate power in the geopolitics of northeastern North America. They are an example of a native group which adapted to changing circumstances but kept control over the adaptations they made and changed in ways which kept their identity and autonomy intact.

This argument alters the interpretation of colonial history in the Northeast because the Kahnawakes have never been studied as a separate group. A few community studies have been written about the community of Kahnawake, either by Jesuit apologists, antiquarians, or activists who have ignored pertinent evidence and have not subjected their findings to critical analysis.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the Kahnawake people have never been analyzed within the context of the

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<sup>2</sup>E. J. Devine, Historic Caughnawaga (Montreal: Messenger Press, 1922); Henri Béchar, The Original Caughnawaga Indians (Montreal: International Publishers, 1976); David Blanchard, "Patterns of tradition and change; the re-creation of Iroquois culture at Kahnawake," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1982).

politics of the colonial Northeast.<sup>3</sup> The assumption has been made that since they emigrated to a Jesuit réserve within New France, they did the bidding of the French, and were mercenaries for them when hostilities between the French and the English broke out. But more than a superficial reading of the documents reveals that the situation was more complicated, and this dissertation examines those complications.

The significance of my findings impinge on the existing picture of power relationships in the colonial Northeast. If it is true that the Kahnawakes were a force to be reckoned with, then power was more widely shared than past interpretations have shown. Within the past few decades, scholars have shown that the Iroquois League was not just a mercenary force for the English against the French.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, other Indian groups were important as independent players and at times pivotal. The Kahnawakes were an

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas R. Agan made a start in this direction with his Master's thesis, "The Caughnawaga Indians and their influence on English-Indian relations to 1763," (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of New Hampshire, 1965).

<sup>4</sup>For instance, see Richard Aquila, The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier, 1701-1754 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983); Francis Jennings, The Ambiguous Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its beginning to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 (New York: Norton, 1984); Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1984); Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell, eds., Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800 (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987).

indispensible fighting force for the French, but the French had to send embassies to their village to convince them to participate in expeditions. Once on the warpath, Kahnawake warriors often determined the strategy and outcome of the fighting. For instance, they singlehandedly decided the outcome of the Battle of Lake George in the Seven Years' War by sabotaging the French effort. Therefore, we must refigure our interpretation of power relationships in the period of English-French-Iroquois conflict in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries to take other groups into consideration; the Kahnawakes were a group which, although small in number, cannot be overlooked when writing the history of the colonial wars. Also, they are significant in their project of cultural re-gensis. They successfully developed a distinct sub-culture which was a mixture of traditional Iroquoian and European Catholic traits. And they creatively manipulated their situation instead of surrendering their autonomy to European overlords.

One reason why no scholars of the colonial Northeast have isolated these Indians for study is that they appear in the historical documents, both in English and in French, by a wide variety of names and therefore are difficult to trace or even notice as a distinct group. For the first few years of their existence as a group separate from the Iroquois proper, they were known as "praying Indians," "French praying Indians" (by the English only), "domiciliated Indians," "mission Indians,"

"mission Iroquois," or other variations.

They soon came to be known by their geographical location, however. Their first destination on leaving Iroquoia was La Prairie, a tiny outpost settlement south of Montreal. After nine years, the mission village moved two or three miles west to a place called Sault Saint-Louis, or the St. Louis Rapids. After one more move of the village site a few miles west again but still near these rapids, the Indians developed a name in the Mohawk language for Sault Saint-Louis -- "Kahnawake," or "Caughnawaga," with many variations on these spellings. Most nineteenth- and twentieth-century antiquarians used the "Caughnawaga" orthography but the modern reserve community has chosen "Kahnawake" as the name of their place and their people. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents the French came to call them "Sault (St.-Louis) Indians" or "Sault (St.-Louis) Iroquois," to be more specific than "mission Iroquois" since by the 1720s there was a neighboring mission village inhabited by Iroquois as well as Nipissing and Algonquin Indians. I use the terms "Kahnawake" and "Sault Iroquois" interchangeably, and "mission Iroquois" when it is possible that some of these neighboring Indians were included.

All translations of documents in French are mine.

The first chapter provides background on Iroquois history and culture to 1667, the second chapter traces the exodus of Iroquois people to the new mission community, and the third,

fourth, and fifth chapters trace Kahnawake relations with the Iroquois League (Five/Six Nations), the French, and the English from the 1680s to 1701. Chapter Six continues with the history of Kahnawake foreign relations to 1760. Chapter Seven outlines and analyzes the role of Kahnawakes in trade from the 1680s to 1760. As a concluding chapter, Chapter Eight analyzes the extent of cultural change among the Kahnawakes in the eighteenth century and summarizes their effect on the diplomatic, military, and economic landscape of the colonial Northeast.

This study could not have been undertaken without the assistance of many people. Professor James Axtell provided much leadership, advice, and editorial help from beginning to end. Professor Cornelius Jaenen of the University of Ottawa, and Professors John Seiby, Kevin Kelly, and Thomas Sheppard of the College of William and Mary, undertook thoughtful and helpful critiques. Other people who generously provided information and expertise were Professor Louise Dechêne of McGill University, Shirley Scott of the Kanien'kehaka Raotitionkwa Cultural Center at Kahnawake, Rev. Laurent Tailleur of the Archives du Séminaire de Québec, Michel Wyczynski of the National Archives of Canada, Bill Gorman of the New York State Archives, and Gil Kelly and Frederika Teute of the Institute of Early American History and Culture. I profitted greatly from giving a colloquium paper at the



Institute of Early American History and Culture. Thanks to Michael McGiffert and Frederika Teute for including me in the schedule and to them and others who attended the session and provided constructive comments and helpful insights. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the College of William and Mary were generous with their financial support. Carol Linton of Interlibrary Loan at Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William and Mary and many at the Computer Center at the College of William and Mary never failed to fulfill my requests, no matter how tired they had grown of seeing me at their doors. Darlene Crouch in the History Department at the College of William and Mary was always ready to fix administrative problems and make life easier for graduate students. Many friends in Williamsburg, too numerous to mention, have provided moral support as well as critiques of chapters. My parents, Paul and Sarah Green, have lent every kind of support imaginable with large doses of patience. And finally, Dave Cozad made sure that my feet are firmly planted on the ground, made me ask the tough questions, and was always ready to listen.

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## ABSTRACT

This study focusses on the Kahnawake Iroquois Indians, a collection of individuals who emigrated from the Iroquois homeland to a Jesuit mission community, or réserve, outside of Montreal, starting in 1667.

Their history and development as a people is traced from the beginnings in 1667 up to the end of the French power in Canada, at the end of the Seven Years' War in 1760. Through the topics of diplomacy, warfare, and trade, these Kahnawake Indians are examined and it is determined that they were important players in the power politics and military balance between the English, the French, and the Iroquois proper from the 1680s to 1760.

They became a pivotal group within the French military machine in northeastern North America, but forced the French to meet them on their own terms, refusing to become subject to French authority. They initiated and sustained an illegal but highly important trade in furs and European blankets, defying the mercantilist rules of both the French and the English imperial authorities in New France and New York.

Culturally, the Kahnawake people developed a distinct identity, successfully blending elements of both traditional Iroquois and European Catholic culture. Born in an era of struggle, they thrived and maintained their distinct identity and culture in the face of imperial powers and the designs of their Iroquois relatives.

**A NEW PEOPLE IN AN AGE OF WAR**  
**THE KAHNAWAKE IROQUOIS, 1667-1760**

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## CHAPTER ONE

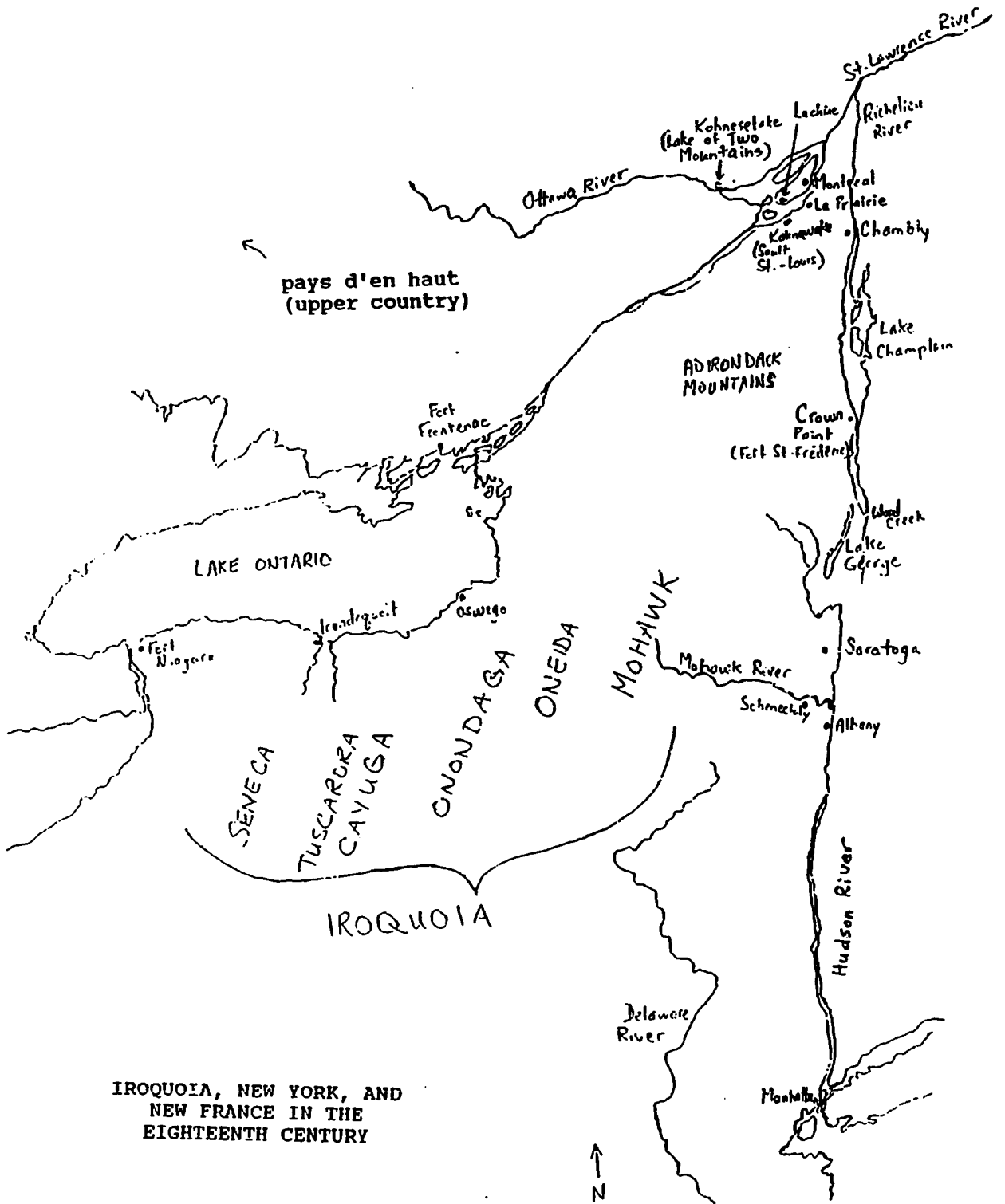
### IROQUOIS HISTORY TO 1667

Centuries ago, across what is now New York State, five Iroquois nations, the "people of the longhouse" or the "Ho-de-no-sau-née," formed a League which aided them in becoming a powerful people.<sup>1</sup> These five tribes were the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and the Senecas. The political center of the League was at Onondaga. The Onondagas would be the keepers of the council fire, since they were at the center of the longhouse (the longhouse representing the geography of Iroquoia, along an east-west axis across what is now central New York State), the Mohawks would be the keepers of the eastern door of the longhouse, since they were the easternmost nation, the Senecas the keepers of the western door. Younger brothers to these doorkeeper and firekeeper nations, the Cayugas and Oneidas, would take their place on either side of Onondaga and help to keep the balance between the three older

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<sup>1</sup> Dates assigned to the founding of the League vary from 1400 to 1600. William N. Fenton says that Horatio Hale and Lewis Henry Morgan judged it to be in the mid-fifteenth century, and that William Beauchamp and J.N.B. Hewitt revised it to the late sixteenth century. Fenton argues that archaeological evidence increasingly supports an earlier date. (William N. Fenton, "The Iroquois in History," in Eleanor Burke Leacock and Nancy O. Lurie, eds., North American Indians in Historical Perspective (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 133. See also Elisabeth Tooker, "The League of the Iroquois," in Handbook of North American Indians (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978- ) [William Sturtevant, ge. ed.], Volume 15, Northeast, Bruce G. Trigger, ed. (1978), pp. 418-422; and James W. Bradley, The Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois: Accommodating Change, 1500-1655 (Syracuse University Press, 1987), pp. 43, 105-106.)

Map 1



IROQUOIA, NEW YORK, AND  
NEW FRANCE IN THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

brothers of the longhouse. These two "sides" or moieties of Elder and Younger Brothers were the mechanism by which the longhouse people worked out problems and condoled each other. When a Mohawk chief died, his "side" (the Mohawks, Onondagas, and Senecas) became the mourning side, and their opposite, the Younger Brothers, became the clear-minded side, so-called because their minds were not clouded with the grief of a kinsman's death. The clear-minded side condoled the mourning side in a ritual which became the identifying ceremony of the Great League. The spirit of the deceased chief was requickened in a newly installed chief, and the "requickening address" was made to the mourning side by the clear-minded one as part of the condolence ritual. The Great League was not strictly a political institution, but partly a religious and cultural one as well.<sup>2</sup>

The ritual of the condolence was the main mechanism by which the League would function. Chieftainships were to pass through groups of families (clans) but their titles did not belong to the men who bore them. The right to choose them was hereditary, and heredity was traced through the female line. Therefore, a man's son did not belong to his father's family or even clan. Men were identified through their mothers' families, and therefore the chiefly titles -- of the Great

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<sup>2</sup>See Christopher Vecsey, "The Story and Structure of the Iroquois Confederacy," Journal of the American Academy of Religion LIV (1986), p.90.

League of Peace as well as at other levels of political organization -- belonged to the women of the family or clan. In fact, the word in Mohawk for family, ohwachira, translates as maternal family, or as some have interpreted it clinically, the uterine family.<sup>3</sup> When a League (federal) chief died, the women in his ohwachira met together to appoint a candidate, submitted the nomination to the council of male elders, and the latter either agreed or vetoed the choice. When the choice was finalized, a condolence ceremony took place to condole the "side" of the League from which the deceased had come and in the requickening address to "raise up" or install the new chief who would take his place.<sup>4</sup>

With all of its chiefly offices filled, the Great League could carry on the business for which it was formed: the mediating of disputes between member tribes or villages. However, this political forum differed from its counterparts in European cultures. Since Iroquois society was tribal and not a "state society," the Longhouse people had neither the

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<sup>3</sup>J.N.B. Hewitt, "A Constitutional League of Peace in the Stone Age of America: The League of the Iroquois and its Constitution," Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1918, p. 530.

<sup>4</sup>George S. Snyderman, "Behind the Tree of Peace: A Sociological Analysis of Iroquois Warfare," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1948), pp. 11-18; Tooker, "League..." in Handbook of North American Indians 15:426; A.A. Goldenweiser, "Iroquois Work, 1912," in Elisabeth Tooker, ed., An Iroquois Source Book 3 vols. (New York: Garland, 1985), Vol. 1, p. 468; William N. Fenton, ed., Parker's "Constitution," in Fenton, ed., Parker on the Iroquois (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1968), pp. 91-92.



technical ability nor the inclination to coerce or enforce any policy, and held a different concept of leadership.<sup>5</sup> A person installed in a political position guided rather than ruled. He or she had only the prerogative to speak, deliberate, and cajole his or her peers, but never to decide anything on their behalf.<sup>6</sup> Iroquois politics worked by consensus; a motion stayed on the floor until every person present agreed, or the motion was dropped. The Longhouse people tended to minimize conflict, because reaching unanimous agreement was so difficult. Instead of remaining in disagreement, a group might rather split off and physically leave their home to start a new community, as happened numerous times in Iroquois

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<sup>5</sup>William N. Fenton, Introduction to Lewis Henry Morgan, League of the Iroquois, pp. 67-73; Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," p. 33.

<sup>6</sup>Use of "she" here is guarded; there is much debate over the actual role of women in politics, and the disagreement is partly due to a change over time. Ethnologists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries noticed that women were only marginally involved in politics, whereas Father Joseph François Lafitau, the French Jesuit, in the 1710s observed a prominent presence in politics for women. (Joseph François Lafitau s.j., Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times 2 vols. [William N. Fenton and Elizabeth Moore, trans. and eds.] (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974-77) 1:71, 293-295. This is significant, especially since he was observing at Sault Saint-Louis, the Jesuit mission community, which one can assume was heavily influenced (forty-odd years old at that point) by French Catholic gender role models, and he still found women to be very prominent. There has been a great change since; see David Blanchard, "Patterns of tradition and change: the re-creation of Iroquois culture at Kahnawake" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1982) on twentieth-century Kahnawake Iroquois women in politics. Twentieth-century ethnologists find no overt involvement for women in ceremonies, speaking, etc. (George S. Snyderman, "Behind the Tree of Peace...", p. 16.

history.<sup>7</sup> Lafitau noticed this attitude among the Iroquois: "Each one, regarding others as masters of their own actions and themselves, lets them conduct themselves as they wish and judges only himself."<sup>8</sup>

When the League of the Five Nations was first formed, the business conducted at the council fire concerned internal disputes between tribes or nations. But by the seventeenth century, the Iroquois had to develop a policy toward outsiders, native and European. The European newcomers posed a diplomatic challenge to the longhouse people.<sup>9</sup> From the beginning they had caused conflict among the five tribes of the Ho-de-no-sau-née. The first information that the Five Nations had of them came in the form of the strange materials

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<sup>7</sup>William N. Fenton (in "Locality as a Basic Factor in the Development of Iroquois Social Structure," in Elisabeth Tooker, ed., An Iroquois Source Book, Vol. 1, p. 52) mentions examples of this, such as the Oneida split in the nineteenth century over religious issues. Some Oneidas went to Wisconsin and some to the Thames River in western Ontario. The 1838 Buffalo Creek Treaty split the Senecas -- Cornplanter's group left for Pennsylvania. The American Revolution brought about a split between those who sided, however nominally, with the Loyalists and removed to Canada, and those who stayed in New York. The small Gibson reserve near Owen Sound, Ontario was the result of a split among the Oka Iroquois near Montreal.

<sup>8</sup>Lafitau, Customs... 1:300. Snyderman also mentions the Iroquois respect for individual freedom to either abide, or not to abide, by decisions taken by the group. (In "Behind the Tree of Peace...", p. 13.)

<sup>9</sup>Bradley, The Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois, p. 187; Fenton, Introduction to Morgan, League of the Iroquois, p. 66; Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," p. 27; Snyderman, "Behind the Tree of Peace," p. 27.

they used for tools, trinkets, and textiles. Iron, European copper, and glass beads were known to the Iroquois long before the first white person ever set foot on their soil. They were psychologically prepared for the intruders by the advance information they received from coastal peoples and by their own experience using European materials which they traded for with their neighbors to the east.

These eastern tribes were the Algonquins, Montagnais, Micmacs, and the Abenakis, peoples situated at or near the North Atlantic coast. They were the first North Americans to absorb the shocks of cultural contact, the first to be shot at with firearms, the first to taste liquor, the first to suffer from European diseases, the first to see and trade for trinkets, iron and copper ware, and European cloth. They were also the first to deal with the pretensions of the bearded Europeans to their land; they observed the cross being planted in the ground in the Gaspé by Jacques Cartier, the profession of sovereignty by Cartier at Stadacona (Quebec City), and this nervy Frenchman's kidnapping of Donnacona's sons in 1534. The Iroquois were shielded by geography from these first contacts. Aside from these occasional intrusions, most of the sixteenth century was a period of relative stability among tribes of the eastern woodlands. Most groups were locally self-sufficient, with little need for external trade for subsistence materials. Long-distance trade was limited in most cases to luxury items such as marine shell and Great Lakes copper, and intertribal

warfare was common but mostly symbolic. Casualty rates were low. The aim of warfare was to display one's bravery and to keep the numbers of wounded and killed at a minimum. Surprise was everything; to frighten the enemy, not to kill him, was the goal. Warfare was to change greatly within the next century.<sup>10</sup>

The chief exception to the rule of local self-sufficiency and limited trade was the Huron Confederacy. This group of Iroquoian-speakers (linguistically and culturally related to the Iroquois tribes) native to the area north of Lake Ontario and east of Georgian Bay had been entrepreneurs for several centuries before Europeans came to North America. Situated at the northern edge of the horticultural belt, they took advantage of their position between agricultural and hunter-gatherer peoples on either side of them and developed a broker's role between the two types of economies. They exchanged the products of the northern hunter-gatherers (Algonquins, Ottawas, Nipissings, and Montagnais) to the farmers further south (Eries, Westoes, Petuns, Neutrals, perhaps the Iroquois as well).

The Hurons were well-placed, both geographically and by inclination, to take advantage of a broker role in the trade which was to develop once the French established themselves on

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<sup>10</sup>Bruce G. Trigger, "Early Iroquoian Contacts with Europeans," in Handbook of North American Indians 15:344; Snyderman, "Behind the Tree of Peace," p. 7.

the St. Lawrence River.<sup>11</sup> But at the turn of the seventeenth century, the groups benefitting from direct contact with the French and able to drive the hardest bargains in peddling the novel items to inland groups were the Montagnais and Algonquins who lived along the northern shore of the St. Lawrence. Around 1600, Iroquois raiding parties were able to penetrate as far downriver as the spot where Quebec City would soon be built, but could not get all the way to Tadoussac, where the French had established a seasonal trading post. Montagnais Indians were blocking their way. Therefore, the Iroquois began to resort to violent raids. They made it difficult for St. Lawrence Valley Indians to fish in the river for fear of a Mohawk attack. More contact and travel, but also more warfare, were the results.<sup>12</sup>

When Samuel de Champlain, the French explorer and venturer, decided to settle permanently on the St. Lawrence in 1608, he envisioned furs as the prime commodity in the colony's economy. He therefore cultivated his existing relationship with the Montagnais and Algonquins in order to tap their hinterlands for furs, knowing that the Iroquois

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<sup>11</sup>Bruce G. Trigger, "Settlement as an Aspect of Iroquoian Adaptation at the Time of Contact," American Anthropologist LXV (1963), pp. 90-97.

<sup>12</sup>Bruce G. Trigger, The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976), passim; Trigger, "Early Iroquoian Contacts with Europeans" in Handbook of North American Indians 15:347; Fenton, "The Iroquois in History," in Leacock and Lurie, eds., North American Indians in Historical Perspective, pp. 140-142.

would bring neither the number nor the quality of peltries which their adversaries to the north could provide. Champlain inadvertently plugged himself into the rivalries already established between these groups and became a natural enemy of the Iroquois when the Montagnais, Algonquins, and their recently allied neighbors, the Hurons, suggested an expedition against the foe to the south. Champlain had an interest in making the St. Lawrence safe as a highway for trade. Since among the Five Nations the Mohawks were the main foes of these easterly people, the war party was to attack just the Mohawks, and in the summer of 1609 a group of Mohawks met musket fire for the first time, on recently renamed Lake Champlain. They were easily and quickly routed, more because of the psychological effect of the firepower than its actual damage. The noise and smoke from the muskets were no doubt disorienting and the standard wooden armor was instantly outdated.<sup>13</sup>

If Champlain had travelled a few miles farther south to the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, he would have met fellow Europeans Hendrick Hudson and his crew sailing for the Dutch. Hudson and his mate Robert Juet were having their own cross-cultural experiences with the Mahicans, neighbors of the Mohawks to the east. The latter did not meet any Dutch newcomers face-to-face until the following Dutch visit in

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<sup>13</sup>H.P. Biggar, ed., The Works of Samuel de Champlain, 6 vols. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1922-1936), Vol. 2, pp. 82-101.

1614, but also did not succeed in becoming preferred trading partners with these entrepreneurs of the Hudson River area. The Mahicans became the primary trading partners of the men at the Castle Island outpost (at a site now in modern Albany, New York). The longhouse people, particularly the Mohawks, were obstructed from trading with both European powers recently established on nearby soil.

The Iroquois response was to continue raiding and blockading, so they turned the Ottawa River into a war zone by attacking Hurons or any other Indians who came down that river with peltries headed for the St. Lawrence. By 1615, Champlain and his allies again decided to humiliate the Iroquois and travelled south of the St. Lawrence along the eastern shore of Lake Ontario, attacking a large Onondaga, or possibly an Oneida, village. This was not as successful as the earlier ambushes of the Mohawks; the Iroquois had prepared and were able to withstand the assault. The psychological advantage which firearms had given Champlain and his allies a few years earlier had evaporated. These Indians were ready and forced the invaders to withdraw after only three hours of fighting. The advantage of guns was not so great after all. Champlain himself was wounded twice in one leg and had to be carried back to friendly territory.<sup>14</sup> This victory for the Five Nations was a much needed boost after the unfortunate events

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<sup>14</sup>Biggar, ed., The Works of Samuel de Champlain 3:63-77; Bruce G. Trigger, "Champlain Judged by his Indian Policy," Anthropologica XIII (1971), pp. 85-114.

of 1614. In that year, the Dutch returned to the Hudson River and established formal trade relations with the Mahicans. This Mahican monopoly was a great disadvantage to the Mohawks, who set about a policy of near-incessant hostilities against their eastern neighbors until in 1628 they finally drove them out of the Hudson River Valley into the Connecticut Valley.<sup>15</sup> Understandably, the Dutch were not happy with this outcome because they had supported the Mahicans against the Mohawks; they had to tread lightly around the latter for years to come.<sup>16</sup>

In 1624, the Five Nations enjoyed a short truce with the French and concentrated on developing trading ties with the Dutch. The latter offered goods which the French did not have, such as wampum, manufactured on Long Island and along Delaware Bay. Copper kettles, iron hatchets, hoes, and duffels (which were becoming standard sources of attire in Iroquoia) were important trade items at the Dutch post. That year the trading post became an outpost of permanent settlement as well when the first shipload of settlers sent by

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<sup>15</sup>J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Narratives of New Netherland, 1609-1664 (New York: 1909), p. 89; Allen W. Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960), pp. 32, 47; Bruce G. Trigger, "The Mohawk-Mahican War (1624-28): The Establishment of a Pattern," Canadian Historical Review 52 (1971), pp. 276-286.

<sup>16</sup>Charles T. Gehring and William A. Starna, trans. and eds., A Journey into Mohawk and Oneida Country: The Journal of Harmen Meyndertsz Van den Bogaert (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1988), pp. xvii-xviii.



the West India Company arrived at Castle Island and renamed it Fort Orange. Six years later, these strange newcomers began farming, although not with methods familiar to the Iroquois, on the patroonship of Rensselaerswyck. This was a manor on which the owner, Nicholas van Rensselaer, installed tenant farmers. The people of this patroonship soon became involved in the Indian trade and much friction was to develop because of unfair trading practices and brutality to the Indians who did business with these people. Two particularly potent trade items which became important in the next few decades were guns and liquor. Technically these commodities, especially firearms, were not to be sold at all to Indians, but abuses and illegalities were rampant.<sup>17</sup>

At least officially, however, Dutch-Iroquois relations were friendlier because the Iroquois were able to trade with the Dutch unobstructed by other native groups. Nevertheless, Europeans saw the Iroquois as hostile because the policy of the Longhouse seemed to be one of sustained hostility toward all neighboring tribes from at least the 1610s on. Father Lafitau's observation made just after the turn of the eighteenth century could just as well have been made by a European observer a century earlier: "War is a necessary exercise for the Iroquois, for, besides the usual motives which people have in declaring it against troublesome

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<sup>17</sup>Trelease, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century*, pp. 93-97.

neighbours..., it is indispensable to them also because of one of their fundamental laws of being."<sup>18</sup> In the mid-eighteenth century Cadwallader Colden also remarked that "it is not for the Sake of Tribute...that they [the Iroquois] make War, but from the Notions of Glory, which they have ever most strongly imprinted on their Minds."<sup>19</sup> Numerous Jesuits echoed these impressions in the Jesuit Relations throughout the seventeenth century; whether true or not, European newcomers perceived the Iroquois as the fiercest tribe on the continent.

In the 1630s the Five Nations abandoned their brief peace with the French and their native allies and once more assaulted all comers to the St. Lawrence.<sup>20</sup> Trade patterns caused anxiety within the Iroquois confederacy as well; the Oneidas were angry at the Mohawks for monopolizing the Dutch connection. They wanted equal access to Fort Orange, despite the fact that the Mohawks were geographically in a position to dictate the upper tribes' access to the Dutch trading post. This was the underlying problem found by a Dutch barber-surgeon in 1634 who was sent into Iroquois territory by his colony to learn more about these tribes. Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert found that the Oneidas (and probably the Onondagas as well, although he never visited them) had been

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<sup>18</sup>Lafitau, Customs... 2:98-99.

<sup>19</sup>Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada... 2 vols. (New York: Allerton, 1922, reprinted from the London 1747 ed.), Vol. 1, p. xix.

<sup>20</sup>Biggar, ed., The Works of Samuel de Champlain 6:3-6.

trading with the French before 1634 and had developed a habitual place of meeting with them downriver from Lake Ontario, in Onondaga country.<sup>21</sup> The Mohawks could not have looked kindly on this arrangement but could do nothing to stop it, short of declaring war on fellow kinsmen of the League.<sup>22</sup> Despite the lack of documentation, this was probably a situation in which the League was a major force in keeping the longhouse alliance intact under great pressure. The Dutch did not encourage the upper Iroquois trade with the French, but it was ironically advantageous to the French that the Mohawks had eliminated their Mahican competition for the Dutch trade and were now controlling access to Fort Orange, even though the French were enemies of the Mohawks. It meant that the Mohawks would not allow any northern tribes such as the Algonquins, Montagnais, Hurons, or Ottawas (recent additions to the French-Indian alliance) to do business with the Netherlanders. The French trade had already reached a profitable level, with 10,000 to 12,000 pelts changing hands each year.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to his observations on trade, Van den Bogaert noticed the effects of devastating epidemics on the longhouse people. The early 1630s had brought much death, probably

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<sup>21</sup>Gehring and Starna, eds., A Journey into Mohawk and Oneida Country, pp. 13, 19.

<sup>22</sup>Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century, p. 54.

<sup>23</sup>Trigger, "Early Iroquoian Contacts with Europeans," in Handbook of North American Indians 15:349-351.

through smallpox, to the eastern Iroquois, as well as to the Hurons.<sup>24</sup> By the early 1640s, the population of the Five Nations was halved by the diseases Europeans had unwittingly imported.<sup>25</sup> This nightmare brought on a sense of spiritual crisis within all the tribes affected. For the Huron people the crisis was exacerbated or highlighted by the advent of Jesuit missionaries, who first entered Huronia in 1625 and opened permanent missions among them in 1634. The religious/cultural crisis which the death of so many people caused was aggravated by the simultaneous intrusion of the religious revolutionaries from France.<sup>26</sup>

No Jesuits visited the longhouse people this early, but the Ho-de-no-sau-née went through their own traumas in dealing with the large loss of population, in addition to their political rifts over trade policy. Epidemics had brought the "mourning war" (war in which the deaths of kinsmen were avenged by replacing them with adopted captives) new meaning. The period of severe epidemics coincided with the era of massive Iroquois war against both traditional and recent

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<sup>24</sup>Gehring and Starna, eds., A Journey into Mohawk and Oneida Country, pp. 4, 32; William A. Starna, "The Oneida Homeland in the Seventeenth Century," in Jack Campisi and Lawrence M. Hauptman, eds., The Oneida Indian Experience: Two Perspectives (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1988), p. 16.

<sup>25</sup>William A. Starna, "Mohawk Iroquois Populations: A Revision," Ethnohistory XXVII (1980), pp. 371-382; Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," p. 73.

<sup>26</sup>See Trigger, The Children of Aatentsic, Ch. 8.

enemies. The sporadic attacks on Indians laden with furs for the French market gave way to comparatively large-scale warfare in which the Five Nations proceeded to try to annihilate, not just cripple, their enemies: the French, the Algonquins and Montagnais, the Hurons, Petuns (Tobacco People), Neutrals, Eries, Ottawas, Susquehannas, and others. For the first time in 1642, the Iroquois set about to completely destroy an entire village rather than just surprise it, take a few prisoners and some booty, and perhaps claim a few casualties on the way. Jesuit observers were shocked at the extent of hostilities: " a band of...Iroquois having surprised one of our [Huron] frontier villages, spared neither sex, not even the children, and destroyed all by fire, except a score of persons."<sup>27</sup>

This series of serious wars waged by the Iroquois have traditionally been called the "Beaver Wars" by historians and anthropologists because they believed the hostilities were economical motivated.<sup>28</sup> Recently, however, it has been suggested that the wars were not motivated by the need for hunting territory for peltry procurement, nor by the desire to

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<sup>27</sup>Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," pp. 86-87; Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows, 1896-1901) (hereafter cited as JR) 24:271-273, 26:175 (quotation), 181.

<sup>28</sup>See George T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940); Charles Howard McIlwain, "Introduction," in Peter Wraxall, An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs in the Colony of New York, 1678-1751, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (New York: Blom, 1968, reprint).

take over the role of middleman between the French and remote Indian groups in the trade. Rather, they were the result of the loss of population from the epidemics and from the past few decades of warfare in which casualty rates had escalated. The Iroquois people needed to bolster their numbers, so they waged war, it is argued, in order to take captives for adoption into families by the matriarchs of each ohwachira. This vast increase in adoption, according to the new interpretation, caused additional social and political change. The position of women in politics and village events expanded in the first half of the seventeenth century because of their role in deciding whether to adopt captives, which had become an important occupation in Iroquois society.<sup>29</sup>

The Mohawks declared a truce with the French in 1645 amid the escalation of war with Indian groups. In the following year Jesuit Isaac Jogues ventured into Mohawk territory to confirm the armistice and to survey the possibilities of founding a mission among these belligerents. Unfortunately, he got himself involved in a Mohawk-Onondaga feud and, by insisting on visiting the more friendly Onondagas on his way

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<sup>29</sup>JR 45:207; Richter, "Ordeals of the Longhouse," in Beyond the Covenant Chain, pp. 19-21; Snyderman, "Behind the Tree of Peace," pp. 17-19, 80; Colden, History of the Five Indian Nations 2:xix-xxi.

back from his Mohawk trip, he incurred the wrath of the latter group and they killed him.<sup>30</sup>

The Mohawks then returned to a war footing with the French and joined other longhouse brethren, mainly the Senecas, in destroying whole nations of neighbors. The first nation to suffer this fate was the Huron, and the Senecas and Mohawks accomplished the annihilation in 1649-1650 largely out of defiance of the Onondaga attempts (motivated by hatred of the Mohawks) to establish an alliance with the Hurons in 1647 and 1648.<sup>31</sup> The destruction of Huronia probably involved more captive-taking (which provided numerous adoptees) than outright killing. The Huron nation was almost destroyed; the few refugees who had escaped with their missionaries took asylum at first on an island in Georgian Bay and later in a small settlement near Quebec City called Lorette. Other Hurons survived in large numbers to be adopted into Iroquois families so that they lost their identity as a separate people, but often constituted a sizeable faction (often pro-

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<sup>30</sup>Bradley, The Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois, pp. 182-183. The Onondagas were much more pro-French at this point than their eastern neighbors, and were leaning toward actual alliance with both the French and their Huron allies in the 1640s.

<sup>31</sup>Bradley, The Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois, p. 184; Trigger, The Children of Aatentsic, Volume 2.

French and pro-Christian/Jesuit) in a number of Five Nations villages.<sup>32</sup>

The demolition of Huronia was followed in 1651 by the same fate for the Neutral Indians who lived southwest of Huron territory. The Petuns, or Tobacco People, also were eliminated and the survivors absorbed into Ho-de-no-sau-née families as individuals. In 1655 came the end of the Erie people as a distinct group, two years after a large-scale attack on the Iroquois by the Ottawas, Nipissings, Sauteurs, and remnants of the Huron people. These Indian groups were fighting back against the massive hostility of the longhouse people. In 1653 the Onondagas had concluded a genuine peace with the French authorities, after which this tribe warned the French of a Mohawk attack -- an indication of seriously strained relations between these two brother tribes as well as the sincerity of the peace agreement. Jesuit missionaries came to Onondaga territory (what is now central New York State) following the rapprochement and established a mission complete with craftsmen near present-day Syracuse, New York in 1656. Two years later, however, this along with fledgling establishments among the Oneidas had to be abandoned by the Black Robes because of overwhelming hostility from the

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<sup>32</sup>JR 44:151; Daniel K. Richter, "Iroquois versus Iroquois: Jesuit Missions and Christianity in Village Politics, 1642-1686," Ethnohistory XXXII (1985), pp. 1-16.



Mohawks. Mohawk-Onondaga tensions ran high in the late 1650s.<sup>33</sup>

Conflicts between member nations, hostilities with virtually all surrounding peoples, and on-going epidemics throughout the 1650s exhausted the Five Nations by 1660. Only two years later they were to suffer from an unprecedented smallpox epidemic, which wiped out a thousand people in one year alone.<sup>34</sup> Fortunately, they were able to withstand this decimation of their population (which was about 10,000 to 11,000 in 1660)<sup>35</sup> largely because of their policy of adopting conquered peoples. In 1668, fully two-thirds of the Oneida population were Algonquins and Hurons who had been captured in war.<sup>36</sup> Other nations with which the Iroquois or various tribes of Iroquois had been in conflict since the 1650s were their eastern neighbors the Abenakis, the Sokokis, the Maliseets, and the Mahicans (again). These were mostly Mohawk conflicts. The Senecas had been busy with tribes to the west of Iroquoia, in the upper Great Lakes region and the Ohio

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<sup>33</sup>JR 40:165, 44:149-151.

<sup>34</sup>Trigger, "Early Iroquoian Contacts with Europeans," Handbook of North American Indians 5:352; Starna in Campisi and Hauptman, eds., The Oneida Indian Experience, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup>Based on Jerome Lalement's estimate in 1660 of an Iroquois warrior population of 2,200. (JR 45:207.) Fenton suggests a multiplication of five times from a warrior population to find the total population of Iroquois people. (In "Problems Arising..." in Tooker, ed., An Iroquois Source Book Vol 1, p. 233.)

<sup>36</sup>JR 51:123, also 43:265, 45:207, 51:187.

Valley. The Susquehannas to the south had been a favorite target of all five longhouse tribes, although by 1655 this southern nation had made peace with the Mohawks and concentrated its efforts on the four upper tribes.

One of the reasons the Iroquois were able to carry on all of this military activity in addition to the conquest of other groups was their initial comparative advantage in weaponry; throughout the 1640s and 1650s they were more heavily armed than other Indian groups. But by the 1660s, other tribes were obtaining guns in greater numbers from the Dutch, French, or English, and the Iroquois technical advantage evaporated. Proof of the chink in Iroquois armor was the flight of Cayuga communities north of Lake Ontario in 1663, fleeing the depredations of the Susquehannas who were now armed with muskets. Also in that year the upper nations of the Ho-de-no-sau-née wisely made a formal peace with New France, steered by Garakontié, the Onondaga diplomat. This policy was prudent because the French colony that year was taken over by the royal government (it had formerly been under the management of a company) and was now managed with an eye to its long-term welfare. The French government's main goal was to make the settlement along the St. Lawrence safe from Iroquois attack, and a crack regiment of government troops soon arrived to attempt to solve the Iroquois problem and to make the colony permanently stable. Government control of the colony meant much greater intervention, and the Five Nations could no

longer afford to attack at will. Still defiant of the new regime in New France, however, were the Mohawks, who refused to make peace with the French in 1663-1664.

At the same time, a change of administration occurred in New Netherland along the Hudson River. The fledgling colony was taken over with the arrival of English ships in the harbor off Manhattan Island, and Dutch officials returned to their motherland, replaced by English administrators. But most of the Dutch settlers remained in the colony and watched it become a strategic part of the English empire in North America over the next few decades. Within two years, changes in the type of government of New Netherland (now New York) and New France signalled the shift from a primarily economic emphasis in colonial development and Indian diplomacy to a predominantly imperial frame of mind.<sup>37</sup>

Although the four upper nations sent representatives to Quebec to conclude peace talks in 1665 and even to talk optimistically of the possibility of inviting Frenchmen to live among them, the Mohawks remained unimpressed by the French. Instead they continued raiding French outposts and Algonquin bands and waited until Daniel de Rémy de Courcelles arrived with six hundred French troops at Schenectady to react to French power. The Dutch community offered supplies to the French when they learned that the invaders had come to attack

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<sup>37</sup>See Donna Merwick, Possessing Albany, 1630-1710: The Dutch and English Experiences (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

the Mohawks. Military confrontations between the French and the Mohawks continued through the first half of 1666, with no sign of Mohawk capitulation in sight (although some chiefs favored surrender). In September the sieur de Tracy arrived with reinforcements from the Carignan-Salières regiment of almost one thousand troops to aid Courcelles' effort. Having heard of their approach, the Mohawks fled their villages and the French army satisfied itself with burning all the Mohawk villages and fields and destroying stockpiles of food.<sup>38</sup>

The June 1667 negotiations between the eastern Iroquois tribe and the French went smoothly. Having been humbled, the Mohawks agreed to all of Tracy's terms, which involved returning hostages and preparing to accept Jesuit missionaries among their people as soon as possible. Two decades of peaceful Iroquois-French relations followed the 1667 capitulation, but it was not a pax Iroquoia. The Five Nations now had to accept the shift in power relations which existed in the 1660s and after; the upper nations had merely acceded to it earlier, taking the path of least pain. The new era was to involve more direct contact -- both friendly and hostile -- between the Iroquois and Europeans. Other tribal groups were no longer their main concern in external relations. The period after 1667 was to be that of the French peace and of growing English power adjacent to the longhouse people. Most immediately important, the path was now open for serious

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<sup>38</sup>Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," pp. 122-125.

Jesuit proselytizing of the Ho-de-no-sau-née and for Iroquois Christian migration to the south shore of the St. Lawrence River.

The Jesuits had many zealous converts in the Oneida village in 1667, and Gandeaktena was one of these. Flushed with the spirit of the new religion brought by the Jesuit "Black Robes," she and a few others at Oneida decided to seize the opportunity to see the settlements from whence the Jesuits had come. Gandeaktena was ready to leave Iroquoia. She had not been born among the Oneidas anyway, as had several of her companions on the winter 1667 trip. When the Iroquois had destroyed Gentagega, the main village of the Erie nation, in 1655, they had spared many of their captives' lives, including hers. Adopted into the Oneida nation involuntarily, she now chose to be adopted by the Catholic Church and perhaps by the French colony.

Tensions between Christians and traditionalists at Oneida were rising and Father Jacques Bruyas agreed that the neophytes would be better able to pursue their prayers and devotions away from such hostility and temptation. Family members, clan members, had been growing apart from each other, at first calmly, as a whisper, but then much more vociferously, until insults escalated to stone-throwing. It looked as if the clans would disintegrate, with mothers and

daughters, sisters and brothers, husbands and wives, wrenched apart by these disagreements.<sup>39</sup>

Although it was late 1667 and time for the first snow, the small group of Oneidas set out with Father Bruyas' assistant, Charles Boquet. If the travellers took the Lake Champlain route rather than the Lake Ontario route to New France, they would have passed by Mohawk villages on their way east. The Mohawks now had a population of about two thousand, half of what it had been thirty years earlier. They had barely rebuilt their longhouses, inside still charred skeletal palisades, since the fierce attack of the French the preceding year. The travellers then would have by-passed the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson rivers to avoid the Dutch-English settlements of Schenectady, Albany, and their hinterland outposts and finally turned north toward the lakes named Saint-Sacrement and Champlain.<sup>40</sup>

Eventually, after many days of travel past the Adirondack Mountains, the travellers reached the plain, with its scrubby, squat trees. Montreal then lay only a few days' journey to the north and La Prairie was even closer. This aptly named stretch of plain lay directly in the path to Montreal, situated along the bend in the St. Lawrence River which seemed to curve in order to make room for the island of Mont Royal,

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<sup>39</sup>See Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," Ch. 5.

<sup>40</sup>JR 51:147; Starna in Oneida Indian Experience, p. 20; Fenton, "Problems Arising..." in Tooker, ed., An Iroquois Source Book Vol. 1, p. 207.

on which French men and women had settled in 1642. It was to be the western edge of French settlement for most of the seventeenth century.

On the south side of the great river at La Prairie, there had been as yet no white men or women willing to settle the land, for the French fear of the Mohawks had been an impediment to habitation until the military blow was struck from which the Mohawks were still reeling. But Father Bruyas and many of the other Black Robes who had been in Montreal in the summer of 1667 had known that Father Pierre Raffeix was going to examine La Prairie and its surrounding lands, which had been granted to the Jesuits decades earlier. The Jesuits' plan had been to provide a retirement place for their missionaries as well as a seigneurie for French habitants (censitaires). But Father Raffeix also extended an invitation to Indian converts to stay on the south shore. Concessions on the seigneurie were being parcelled out to the habitants, many of whom, soon to arrive, were ex-soldiers in the Carignan-Salières regiment, famed for taming the Mohawks in 1666.<sup>41</sup>

In the winter of 1667-1668, the small group of Oneidas, having arrived with Charles Boquet safely to the St. Lawrence, wintered at La Prairie with Father Raffeix and a few French families who would soon settle down on farms. Just as Father

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<sup>41</sup>JR 48:295, 50:215-217, 51:149, 167-169, 55:33-35; Camille Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVIIe siècle d'après beaucoup de documents inédits[...] 3 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1895), Vol. 2, pp. 418-419.

Bruyas had done at Oneida, Father Raffeix instructed the natives in the mysteries of Christianity and the priest, habitants, and Indians shared a hastily constructed shed through the months of snow and cold. These pioneers of the plow and the cross waited together for spring and its promise of warmer weather and the chance to start building their respective communities. This was the inauspicious beginning of the Iroquois mission which would later develop a few miles west at Kahnawake.<sup>42</sup>

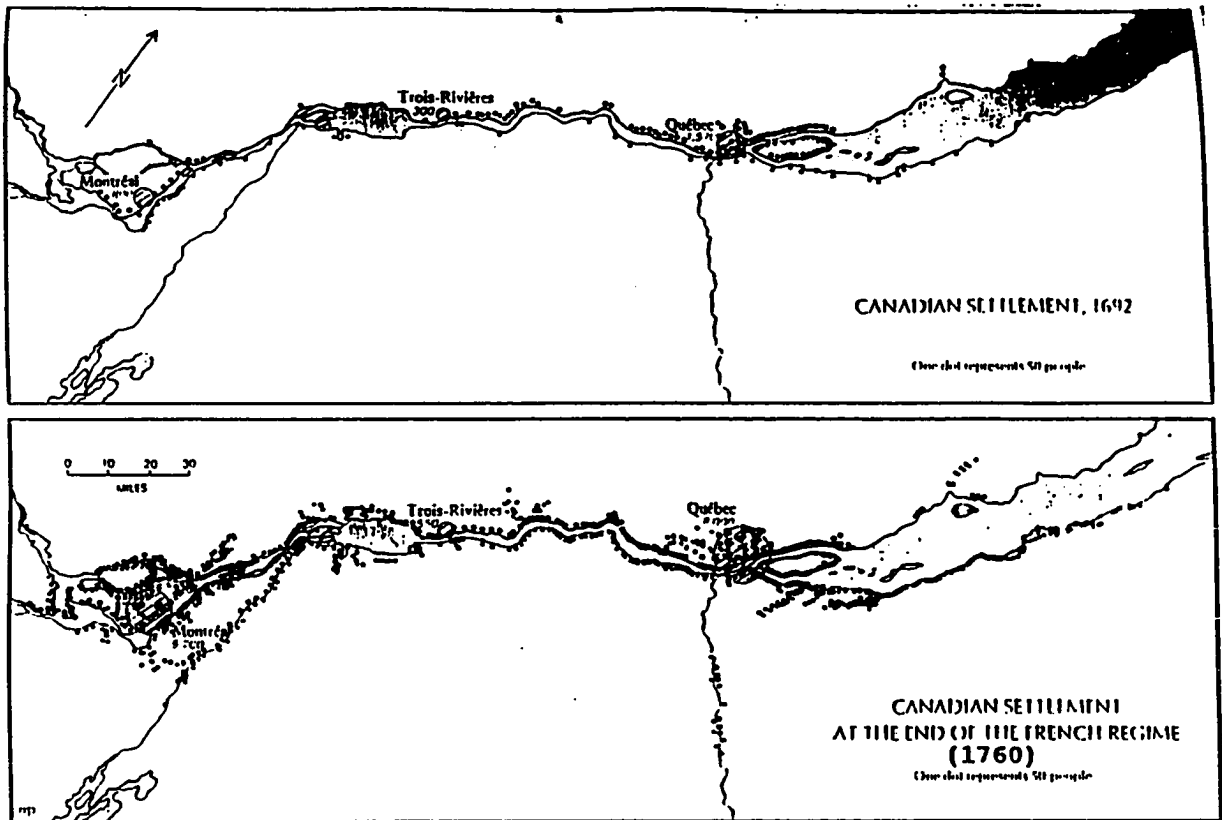
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<sup>42</sup>JR 63:151, 153. Some details of the 1667-1668 founding of the mission at La Prairie are unclear, as various Jesuit accounts (the only evidence available) contradict each other. This account is composed from the most trustworthy sources -- those written most recently after the event -- and using only details which could be verified in at least two accounts.

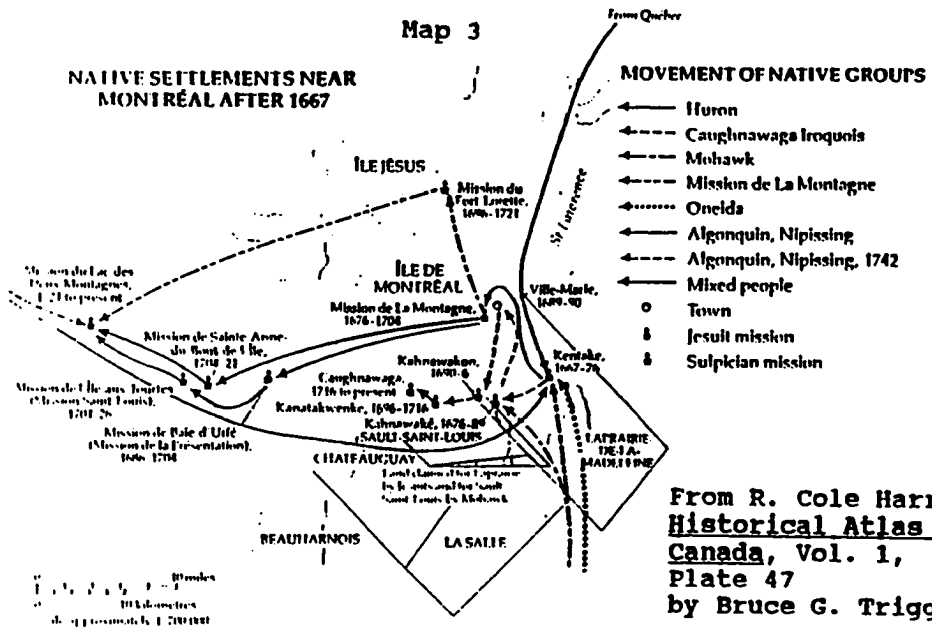
Gandeaktena and some or all of her companions on the pilgrimage may have picked up interested Mohawks along the way, and may have gone to Quebec some time in the winter or early spring to be baptized, returning to La Prairie later. This could not be verified, however. It is difficult to separate myth from fact in the Jesuit accounts of the 1667 founding. See also Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," pp. 179-180. Richter suggests that accounts of these events written in 1679 and in 1686, twelve and nineteen years after they took place, may have changed because of a tendency to exaggerate the zeal and saintly character of Gandeaktena, whom the Jesuits designated as the foundress of the mission community.



Map 2



From R. Cole Harris and John Warkentin, Canada Before Confederation



From R. Cole Harris, ed., Historical Atlas of Canada, Vol. 1, Plate 47 by Bruce G. Trigger

## CHAPTER TWO

### "OFF TO LA PRAIRIE:" LIFE AT THE NEW COMMUNITY

"Among the iroquois, this saying became a proverb, 'I am off to la prairie,' - that is to say, 'I give up drink and polygamy.'"<sup>1</sup> So Father Claude Chauchetière, the Jesuit superior, explained the massive exodus of Five Nations people from their homeland to the Christian community in New France. But what had become a flood by the time Chauchetière commented on it in 1686 started nineteen years earlier as a small trickle with Gandeaktena and her group of a dozen or so, and did not increase significantly until the 1670s. Only a handful of converts appeared each year after the initial group had arrived at Father Pierre Raffeix's threshold, but they were zealous. The Jesuits who planned the new settlement as a vacation spot and retirement home for missionaries began to see that there might be another use for this outpost development. The French in general would come to like the idea of an Indian village at this place, nearer than any other French soil in North America to their potential and real enemies.<sup>2</sup> The Indian community could serve as a buffer protecting the Montreal region from neighboring belligerents,

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<sup>1</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows, 1896-1901), 63:167. (Hereafter cited as JR.)

<sup>2</sup>Pierre F.-X. de Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France 6 vols., John G. Shea, ed. and trans. (New York: Harper, 1866-1872), Vol. 3, p. 164. Later on, the French court thought this Indian réserve advantageous for imperial reasons. (Vol. 3, p. 193.)

either Indian or white.

As early as 1668, Father Raffeix was given official charge of the fledgling group of Indians at La Prairie, and he reported that pilgrims who came in these early years were baptized as soon as possible.<sup>3</sup> Children and adults on their deathbed were also baptized.<sup>4</sup> These first few years were not only a sort of utopian religious experience for the neophytes, but also an experiment in cross-cultural living. Since Indians and French combined numbered fewer than a hundred and accommodations were scant, close quarters were inescapable and cooperation necessary.<sup>5</sup> With only one building in 1667-68, everyone stayed under one roof. It was not until 1669 that Pierre Tonsahoten, Gandeaktena's husband (who took the baptismal name François-Xavier) built a house, and began the separation of the two communities. The following year, a makeshift chapel was built to serve the entire community, and the placing of individual dwelling buildings was determined by the central location of this chapel: Indians built longhouses on one side, and French built European-style houses on the

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<sup>3</sup>There was no mention of extensive catechetical preparation in these accounts; emphasis was placed on the haste with which these inductions into the religion were made.

<sup>4</sup>JR 63:155, 51:145. By 1675, however, criteria for baptism were much more stringent. Two to three years of catechism were necessary before baptism, according to Father Frémin, who was at La Prairie in the mid-1670s. JR 59:259.

<sup>5</sup>JR 55:33.

other.<sup>6</sup> In 1672 the little church was divided into two sections, one for the French and one for the Indians. Chauchetière, who reported this change, did not explain why it was done. He only disclaimed any problem between the two groups by saying that the church was separated "although the french and savages all acted as one body, as was seen in the public rejoicings, and in the visits and the little services that they rendered one another."<sup>7</sup> It is unclear whether the practice of separating worship facilities for French and for Indians was a Jesuit policy, or the result of pressure tactics by the French or the Indians at La Prairie. And linguistic considerations may have been involved in the decision. The Jesuits had long believed in segregating their Indian converts from French settlers in New France, but this has always been seen as an attempt to shelter Indians from the negative influences of Europeans, especially from their eau-de-vie. It may have been the reason for an early separation in the chapel of Indians and whites.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Henri Béchard, The Original Caughnawaga Indians (Montreal: International Publishers, 1976), p. 81.

<sup>7</sup>Later in the same Relation, Chauchetière revealed evidence of a segregationist policy: the Indians "formerly held mass, or rather were merely present at mass and at vespers, which were sung by the french; but now they do everything themselves in their chapel." JR 63:209. (1679) See also E. J. Devine, Historic Caughnawaga (Montreal: Messenger Press, 1922), p. 43.

<sup>8</sup>Already in 1672, some French settlers at La Prairie were attempting to profit from a ready-made and growing market among Indians for brandy. The Jesuits there frowned on the establishment of taverns so close to the Indian utopian

In addition to the complications of interracial relations, the native community itself was a mosaic of ethnic origins. Oneidas and some Mohawks from the lower Mohawk town were the first arrivals, but even they were more ethnically diverse than they appeared. Many were captives who had been adopted into Iroquois families after wars of conquest over the Hurons, Eries, Neutrals, Petuns, Susquehannas, Ottawas, Montagnais, Algonquins, Nipissings, Mahicans, Abenakis, and other peoples. Thus the Jesuits noticed right away that the mission contained a mixture of over twenty tribal groups.<sup>9</sup> Some Iroquois people came to La Prairie not from their native land at the instigation of Jesuit missionaries there, but from the Ottawa River where some Iroquois had moved to hunt. In 1669 many of these Ottawa River hunters heard of the new community and came to find out what it was like. They stayed and converted to Christianity and in turn went out on hunting trips with the added motive of meeting non-Christian hunters

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community. JR 63:175. The French habitant population was growing each year; by 1668, forty concessions had been parcelled out on the Jesuit tract of land at La Prairie. JR 51:149. On Jesuit segregationist policy, see James L. Axtell, The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures on Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) Ch. 4, and John Webster Grant, Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), Ch. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup>JR 58:75, 57:73, 55:35, Joseph François Lafitau, Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times ed. and trans. William N. Fenton and Elizabeth Moore, 2 vols. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974-77), 1:xxxii.

and convincing them to come to the mission south of Montreal.<sup>10</sup>

The early years at La Prairie were known for the extreme devotion practiced by native zealots. Hunting trips were not a chance to escape from the liturgical and devotional rigor of the chapel; prayers were said on the trail, and daily mass was still celebrated whenever possible. The women were known for their piety, for saying prayers and devotional exercises in the woods.<sup>11</sup> Some women formed the nucleus of a society for the particularly devout led by Father Philippe Pierson. The purpose of this society was spiritual guidance of others, the promotion of piety among each other, and works of charity done in the community. The Confraternity of the Holy Family became a large organization, whose membership grew over the decades.<sup>12</sup> The mission Iroquois sent at least one of its daughters to Montreal to become a nun.<sup>13</sup> Prayers and psalms were patiently memorized by the neophytes - Jesuit

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<sup>10</sup>JR 63:159, 58:249; F. de Montezon and F. Martin, eds., Relations inédites de la Nouvelle-France 2 vols. (Paris, 1861) 1:185.

<sup>11</sup>Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1984), pp. 171-172, 190.

<sup>12</sup>Confrérie de la Sainte Famille du Sault St. Louis, in Caughnawaga parish registers, Vol. 2. (Archives de Québec à Montréal). Membership lists of this group attest to the mixing of cultural identity; names such as Marguerite Tiia8eton (first name Christian, last name Iroquois) are the norm.

<sup>13</sup>JR 62:179.

catechetical techniques did not include teaching Indians to read and write. Pictures and mnemonic devices such as rosaries were ideal tools for teaching by rote, and music was also important. The atmosphere was that of a "religious hothouse."<sup>14</sup> In the village, each day was defined by the observance of religious exercises; prayers were said in the chapel at morning and at night, as well as in each longhouse by individual families, and mass was said daily in the chapel. Several catechism classes for adults were held every day, as well as religious instruction for children. Even a Jesuit priest judged the rigors of everyday religious life at La Prairie to have been excessive.<sup>15</sup>

In 1670, after only three years, there were eighteen to twenty Indian families at La Prairie, and Father Claude Dablon realized that the mission was a great success even without much effort by the Jesuits. He spoke of the "throng" of Indians at La Prairie and the great demand for priests who

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<sup>14</sup>JR 55:35, 63:175, 231, 58:77-83; William Ingraham Kip, trans. and comp, The Early Jesuit Missions in North America (New York: 1847), p. 107; Axtell, Invasion Within, pp. 120, 124-127; Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série C11A (Canada: Correspondance Générale, 1540-1784, 122 vols.), 5:49v (hereafter cited as C11A); Pierre F.-X. de Charlevoix, Journal of a Voyage to North-America 2 vols. (Reprinted from the London 1761 edition: Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), 1:269-272; Grant, Moon of Wintertime, p. 59 (quote); John G. Shea, History of the Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1529-1854 (New York: P.J. Kennedy, 1854), p. 300.

<sup>15</sup>JR 55:35; Camille Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVIIe siècle d'après beaucoup de documents inédits [...], 3 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1895), Vol. 3, p. 379.

could speak Iroquois languages and say mass for the neophytes. But he also recognized that some may have been "attracted by the beauty and advantages of the site [as well as] by the facilities for receiving the instruction necessary for their salvation."<sup>16</sup> Another Black Robe admitted in 1674 that La Prairie was strategically located, "a real crossroads - hardly a band of Indians stops at it without some of them being induced to stay." Within fifteen months in 1673 and 1674, the mission welcomed more than 180 newcomers.<sup>17</sup> But not all of them could have come expressly to live in a Christian community. Father Frémin, now residing at the mission, explained in 1672 that "upon the arrival of a stranger, the first thing our Indians do is to instruct him, and urge him to ask for Baptism." If an Indian had come with conversion in mind, she or he would not need to be convinced of the need for baptism. Frémin also said that "all Indians who come here, either to dwell or to visit their friends, resolve to become Christians, or pretend to be such, well knowing that otherwise they would not be welcome."<sup>18</sup>

The La Prairie Jesuits had some help from their colleagues in the Mohawk Valley and in other missions across Iroquoia. Father Jean De Lamberville wrote from La Prairie in 1673 of "the coming of nearly Fifty persons, who started from

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<sup>16</sup>JR 55:35.

<sup>17</sup>JR 58:249.

<sup>18</sup>JR 56:21.



a single Iroquois village on The faith of a promise given Them by Father Bruyas, on behalf of monsieur de Courcel and Monsieur Talon,<sup>19</sup> that They would be in want of nothing when they should have reached here," and marvelled that "The mere promise to take care of them here upon Their arrival has had such an effect upon Them." Lamberville attributed the swelling ranks of Indians at La Prairie in 1673 to "The prayers of good people, And the slight assistance which we lead Them to hope for."<sup>20</sup> This "slight assistance" may have been as powerful a motivator as the lure of the gospel. The Jesuits at La Prairie provided food and clothing on arrival at the Mission of Saint-François-Xavier-des-Prés (the official name of the mission) and also provided land and housing for newcomers so that within a year or two they were able to provide for themselves. La Prairie was also closer to bountiful hunting and trapping areas than most localities in Iroquoia had been. Clearly, religion was only one motivation for moving.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>The governor and intendant of New France respectively.

<sup>20</sup>JR 57:71.

<sup>21</sup>See also the comments of Father Lamberville in JR 57:71. Later Jesuit clerics writing about Jesuit missions admitted that there were always ulterior motives for converting to Christianity. (See Father Nicolas Lancilloto's comments in Manfred Barthel, The Jesuits: History and Legend of the Society of Jesus, trans. and adapted by Mark Howson (New York: William Morrow, 1984), p. 178; John G. Shea, "The Jesuits, Recollects, and the Indians," in Justin Winsor, ed., Narrative and Critical History of America 8 vols. (Boston, 1884-1889), Vol. 4, p. 285.)

Another was freedom from the drunkenness which plagued the Five Nations. François Dollier de Casson and René de Bréhant de Galinée noticed in 1669 that whenever a cask of liquor arrived at an Iroquois village from some Dutch source, domestic disasters such as murder followed.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, by the 1670s, alcohol abuse was the premier social problem of the longhouse people.<sup>23</sup> Since it was well known to the Five Nations people that the Jesuits frowned severely on the use of alcohol by Indians, they could be fairly sure that the community of the devout would be dry. Indeed, some testified to viewing the mission as a detoxification center. A contemporary commented that this was "so well known that when any one says, "I have made up my mind to go and settle at Saint Xavier des Praiz," it is as if he said, "I have resolved never to get drunk again."<sup>24</sup> Kryn, or "The Great Mohawk" as the English knew him, was a chief who was converted by his wife and brought forty people with him to La Prairie in 1673. He later told some New York provincial officials that one of the reasons many Iroquois left their homeland for the New

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<sup>22</sup>James H. Coyne, ed. and trans., "Exploration of the Great Lakes, 1660-1670, by Dollier de Casson and Bréhant de Galinée," Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records IV (1903), p. 29.

<sup>23</sup>Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations[...] 2 vols. (Reprinted from the London 1747 edition, New York: Allerton, 1922), Vol. 1, p. xl.

<sup>24</sup>JR 55:37.

France réserve was the policy of temperance practiced there.<sup>25</sup>

This policy was self-enforced, not imposed by the Jesuits. When, in 1671, there were enough Indians at the Jesuit outpost of La Prairie that it was decided to make the settlement permanent, the Indians set about governing themselves, using a mechanism of appointing chiefs based on the political tradition of their homeland. Of the two chiefs elected in 1671, one was delegated to deliberate over matters of war and community sovereignty, and the other was to watch over Christian practice and behavior. This included some general social guidelines such as abstinence from alcohol, the prohibition of divorce and of traditional religious practices such as dream observance and healing rituals. The community decided that no one would be permitted to live there without promising to abstain from all of these, as well as without promising to seek the Christian god and baptism in the Catholic Church.<sup>26</sup> To anyone who had been terrified by the social consequences of alcohol in Iroquoia, La Prairie offered

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<sup>25</sup>Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York 15 vols. (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1853-1887) (hereafter cited as NYCD), Vol. 3, p. 436. Sept. 1 1687. New York: Examination of Adandidaghkoa. Kryn contributed to the flood of migrants from Iroquoia to the south shore of the St. Lawrence. In less than two years (1672-73) two hundred souls were added to the population of the réserve. In 1673, in less than seven years since the mission had first begun, there were more Mohawk warriors at La Prairie than in their own country. (JR 63:179.)

<sup>26</sup>JR 55:37, 63:163, 60:145-147, 58:75; Shea, History of the Catholic Missions, p. 300.

a safe haven from the drunken rages which resulted in flashing knives or smashed heads.<sup>27</sup> Father Vincent Bigot admitted that many Iroquois came to the St.-François-Xavier-des-Prés mission because there was no drinking there. However, such an admission was probably unselfconscious because seventeenth-century Jesuits saw an Indian's decision to abstain from liquor as a sign of Christian conversion. The two issues were inextricably related in the missionary mind.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, Jesuits used the degree of temperance at an Indian réserve as a yardstick of piety. One lamented in 1673 that alcohol had ruined the Sillery community (no doubt because of the close proximity to whites who sold liquor to Indians) but not the La Prairie Iroquois.<sup>29</sup> Father Frémin boasted in the preceeding year that "since I have been here, there has not come into their cabins, so far as I know, a single drop of the liquor which causes so many disturbances among the Indians." He was also proud of their will power in the face of temptation: "For more than three weeks the people here have had a dramshop at their very doors, but not a man

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<sup>27</sup>JR 56:21, 57:73; NYCD 3:436. The mission community may generally have been much more stable socially than Five Nations villages in the homeland, in which traditional social norms seemed to be breaking down. (Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," p. 196.)

<sup>28</sup>JR 61:239-241. See also 63:131, 175, and Cornelius Jaenen, Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 110-116.

<sup>29</sup>JR 58:83.

has thought of setting foot inside it," a not inconsiderable feat, given that, according to Frémin, fifty or sixty of these teetotalers had once been hard drinkers.<sup>30</sup> However, three weeks was not a very long time to have gone dry to prove one's long-term abstinence. The habitants of La Prairie did not help; it was they who set up dramshops under the Indians' noses. The chapel segregation may indeed have been initiated in order to minimize contact between thirsty Indians and peddlers of liquor. La Prairie whites wanted a tavern by the mid-1670s, by which time their numbers would have supported a public meeting place. But the Jesuits had succeeded temporarily in convincing the current governor, Count Frontenac, to pass an ordinance prohibiting the sale of liquor at La Prairie. But this only lasted two or three years. Since Frontenac despised Jesuits on principle and conspired against them with the Recollects and Sulpicians, his protection against the traffic of alcohol was short-lived.<sup>31</sup> Shortly after repeal of the ordinance, a tavern was opened in the village of La Prairie. This situation may have been a reason for the Jesuit decision to move their Iroquois mission

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<sup>30</sup>JR 56:19-21.

<sup>31</sup>On Frontenac versus the Jesuits, see Jean DeLanglez, Frontenac and the Jesuits (Chicago: 1939), pp. 20, 129-133; Henry Horace Walsh, The Church in the French era from Colonisation to the British Conquest (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1966), pp. 144-165. Also, Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVIIe siècle d'après beaucoup de documents inédits [...] 3:389-391; Charlevoix, History, 3:192-193.

in 1676, although the ostensible cause was soil exhaustion.<sup>32</sup> Father Chauchetière gleefully reported that Father Frémin stopped the brandy traffic at La Prairie from ruining his charges at the mission, but less than a decade later liquor had become a severe problem at the Saint-François-Xavier mission, even after moving the site to the west away from the growing white population of the south shore.<sup>33</sup> At the new village, a Frenchman offered his services as a gun repairman for the mission Indians. In 1679 they gave him a corner of a longhouse in which to set up his workspace and equipment. He also set up a store in this space, in which he planned to deal in brandy as well as more benign commodities. Alarmed at this situation in the midst of the village, the missionaries succeeded in petitioning Intendant Jacques Duchesneau to order the man to leave after only one winter.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>JR 63: 175, 181; Charlevoix, Journal 1:219. In Montezon, Relations inédits... 2:167, Father Claude Dablon reported that the soil was bad, that the Indians had been complaining about it. However, in 1670-71, he had seemed unqualifiedly optimistic about the soil, saying it was wonderful and highly productive. (JR 55:33.) The claim was that it was too damp, but that would have been obvious enough by 1671. In 1673, the La Prairie Indians had saved up two years' worth of corn. (JR 58:81.) Therefore, poor crop yield because of the soil could not have been a reason for moving only three years later.

<sup>33</sup>JR 63:181, 62:183.

<sup>34</sup>JR 63:215. Similar enterprises by local whites were initiated in New York; farmers sold liquor, among other goods, to Indians, because it was a lucrative venture compared to most in the limited colonial economy. These whites pursued such trade without thought of the consequences in terms of inebriated Indians wreaking havoc on neighboring communities. (See Thomas E. Norton, The Fur Trade in Colonial New York,

Political problems plagued the Indians of La Prairie during the 1676 move. These involved the various blocs of ethnic groups within the community. The early immigrants were mainly Oneidas, some Mohawks, and a few Onondagas, but with the coming of Kryn, the high-profile Mohawk headman, in 1673, many more Mohawks than any other group started migrating north. Another reason that so many Mohawks moved was that the Christian/anti-Christian factionalism and violence was much worse among the Mohawks in Iroquoia than among tribes farther west. Soon the Mohawks and the Onondagas were the two largest ethnic groups, while the Hurons, most of whom had been captives among the Iroquois, constituted a third. These Hurons were able to stand as a separate group, and they seemed to find they had little in common with the Ho-de-no-sau-née politically.

When chiefs were first elected or appointed<sup>35</sup> in 1671, the Hurons elected one and the Mohawks and Oneidas the other. By 1676, the Mohawks, Onondagas, and Hurons each chose their own chief. But during the deliberations in that year for chief selection, the Hurons stalled, refused to decide on a candidate, and finally announced that they were leaving the Jesuit mission. They were negotiating with the Sulpicians to set up a new réserve at the foot of Mount Royal on Montreal

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1686-1776 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), p. 69.)

<sup>35</sup>It is unclear exactly how these chiefs were chosen.

Island.<sup>36</sup> Clues as to the nature of the dispute lie in Father Pierre Cholenec's letter in the Relation of 1676-77 in which he stated that bad feelings existed between the Huron captain and the other captains, or chiefs, of the original mission. Cholenec hinted that the Huron chief had once been preeminent but had lately failed to gain the respect and deference of the other chiefs.<sup>37</sup> There had been little love lost between the Huron people and the Black Robes since the latter failed to defend their native refugees in the 1650s at

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<sup>36</sup>JR 63:181 This mission was known as the Mission of the Mountain, and was moved to the other side of the town of Montreal at the Sault au Recollet in the 1680s. Finally in 1717, the village moved again, incorporating some other Indian groups such as a refugee group of Nipissing Indians, to Lake of Two Mountains on the northwest side of Montreal. The mission was then also known as Kahnasetake, Oka, or "the Mountain mission." (See Olivier Maurault, "Les Vicissitudes d'une mission sauvage," Revue Trimestrielle Canadienne XVI (1930), pp. 121-149; and William Fenton and Elisabeth Tooker, "Mohawk" in William C. Sturtevant gen. ed., Handbook of North American Indians Vol. 15 Northeast, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, D.C.: 1978), p. 472; William Henry Atherton, Montréal, 1535-1914 2 vols. (Montreal: S.J. Clarke, 1914), Vol. 1, p. 267; E.R. Adair, "The Evolution of Montreal Under the French Regime," Canadian Historical Association Annual Report XXIII (March 1942), p. 37.) Some convert/refugees from Iroquoia were to come to this Sulpician mission after it opened, and some went to the (predominantly Huron) Jesuit mission at Lorette near Quebec. The St.-François-Xavier mission was only one of several possible destinations for Iroquois migrants. This makes Iroquois depopulation even more striking; not just one but several missions were being populated at the expense of the homeland population in the late seventeenth century. (Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," pp. 183-188.)

<sup>37</sup>JR 60:277-287.



Ile d'Orléans near Quebec from being abducted by the Iroquois.<sup>38</sup>

A modern Jesuit historian of the Kahnawakes claims that the real bone of contention may have been a dispute over the allocation of space at the new site for the St.-François-Xavier mission one and a half leagues west of La Prairie. (The new site was near the Sault Saint-Louis (St. Louis rapids) about ten miles up the St. Lawrence River from Montreal.) The Huron Indians apparently were not given enough arable land at the new site to grow their maize.<sup>39</sup> The separation was a painful one and not all Hurons joined the dissenting group; some of them remained among the Iroquois Christians. At the new site at the Sault, there were twenty-two longhouses, some of them inhabited by Iroquois and some by Hurons. There was still one Huron chief at Sault Saint-Louis as well. The old community attempted to mend fences and invited the splinter group's chief to a feast in his honor.<sup>40</sup>

The Indians now at Sault Saint-Louis were having their

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<sup>38</sup>Bruce G. Trigger, The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660 2 vols. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976) pp. 806-814.

<sup>39</sup>Béchar, Original Caughnawaga Indians, p. 51. He cites Discours Des Hurons qui demandent des terres dans l'Isle de Montréal où ils Demandent que l'on ne leur traite point De Boissons, 1676. Photostat of an early copy of the original document in Huron and French. Archives du Séminaire de Québec. The title of this document indicates that the old problem of the liquor traffic was a sore point among the Hurons as well.

<sup>40</sup>JR 60:277, 287.

own problems at the new location. They had difficulties getting title to their new site from their old adversary, Governor Frontenac. The intendant, Duchesneau, finally went over Frontenac's head and appealed to the king for the grant of land, but not before the governor threatened the Jesuits and Indians at the Sault with imprisonment for occupying lands illegally.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the Jesuits' accommodations in the first few years at the Sault were meagre. The superior of the mission had to sleep in a corner of the small bark hut which served as a makeshift chapel. Yet Frontenac tried to prevent them from building a substantial church of stone. Although he did not succeed, his constant hounding, combined with the attacks of Five Nations people on their corn stores to try to starve them out, must have given a sense of siege to the community of Indians.<sup>42</sup> An outbreak of smallpox in 1678 and a severe storm two years later in which lightning struck the chapel did little to dispel this feeling.<sup>43</sup> However, the pens of the Jesuit Relations continued to report in glowing terms the piety of the converts at the Mission of Saint-

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<sup>41</sup>C11A 5:214v; Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série F5A (Missions Religieuses, 1639-1782, 3 vols.) 2:12; JR 63:195; Charlevoix, History 3:192; Delanglez, Frontenac and the Jesuits, p. 32. See also William J. Eccles, Frontenac, The Courtier Governor, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959), p. 57. Frontenac may not have been wrong here; the Jesuits had retained title to La Prairie de la Madeleine, despite the rule that when Indians abandoned a mission site the title to the land should revert to the Crown.

<sup>42</sup>JR 63:191-195.

<sup>43</sup>JR 63:205, 219.

François-Xavier-du-Sault. People were instructed daily by their own dogiques, or lay spiritual leaders, instead of always by Jesuits. The latter claimed this as an enlightened policy of cultural relativism; dogiques could be trusted to teach each other.

A Mohawk woman later noted as being particularly devout and capable of miracles, Kateri Tekakwitha, had emigrated to the mission in 1677. Well-known among Indians and whites alike, she took a pledge of lifelong chastity setting an example which many young women at the Sault followed. Kateri also practiced extreme forms of penance, including the wearing of sharp iron bands around her body, fasting for long periods, and flagellating herself with leather rods. Although the Black Robes at the réserve frowned on these excessive penitential practices, they were encouraged by her piety and used her example to spur on the religious devotion of her neighbors.<sup>44</sup> When Kateri died in 1680, her death spurred on a religious revival among the mission Iroquois. Father Chaumonot reported in the following year that "the fair mirror

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<sup>44</sup>JR 62:175-179. (Kateri Tekakwitha has recently been beatified and her canonization is being petitioned. See Claude Chauchetière, La vie de la b. Catherine Tegakouita... (New York: 1887); Nicolas-Victor Burtin, Vie de Catherine Tekakwitha, vierge iroquoise décédée en odeur de sainteté à l'ancien village... (Québec: 1894); Ellen Hardin Walworth, The life and times of Kateri Tekakwitha, the Lily of the Mohawks, 1656-1680 (Albany, N.Y.: 1929); F.X. Weiser, Kateri Tekakwitha (Montreal: 1971); Beatifications et canonizations servae Dei Catharine Tekakwitha virginis Indianae (1680) (Publication of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, Historical Section, No. 38, Vatican City, 1938.).)

of chastity is so clean at the Sault that people there cannot endure the least spot on it."<sup>45</sup> A few years later, Bishop St. Vallier visited the Indians of the Sault and remarked that "the lives of all the Christians of this mission are very extraordinary, and the whole village would be taken for a monastery."<sup>46</sup> But by "all the Christians," St. Vallier may not have meant all of the inhabitants; this may have been a way to avoid mentioning that not all Sault Indians were model Christians. The early historian of New France, Pierre Charlevoix, himself a Jesuit, indicated that there was cause to doubt the piety and good behavior of at least some of the mission Iroquois.<sup>47</sup>

In the first few years of every mission there is a "honeymoon" period, and certainly La Prairie had one; the true belief of the first few pilgrims such as Gandeaktena is unquestionable. Jesuit analogies to the early Christians and the primitive church were undoubtedly apt in 1669.<sup>48</sup> This pattern mirrored Father Paul Le Jeune's glowing reports of the

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<sup>45</sup>JR 63:227.

<sup>46</sup>Charlevoix, Journal 1:272.

<sup>47</sup>Charlevoix, History 4:198. (He implied that the behavior of some at the mission differed little from that of non-Christians in Iroquoia.)

<sup>48</sup>JR 58:77, 87-89. Even the stories of later "martyrs" (of the 1680s and 1690s) among the Sault Iroquois are not questioned, only that these people were representative, or that all Sault Indians had the same motivation for living at the mission. For some later martyr accounts see Kip, trans. and comp., The Early Jesuit Missions in North America, p. 120-131.

early years of Sillery; he could report in 1638 that that réserve was such a utopia that there had been as yet no disputes of any kind among the Indian converts. (This was taken as a sign that they were all true Christian believers.) But as James Ronda points out, Sillery's fall from grace was not far off, and by 1663, the mission had entirely fizzled out, the land occupied by French farmers.<sup>49</sup> Christian Indians were never a majority at Sillery; in 1646, the Jesuits counted 120 Christians there, but the number of non-baptized natives went discreetly unrecorded.<sup>50</sup> The same approach can be seen in reports on the Sault Indians in the Relations. Father Cholenec announced that "all the neophytes belonging to [this Mission], with the exception of two or three small bands, had assembled in the village [for a Christian festival]." <sup>51</sup> The number involved in the two or three small bands is unknown. The public relations value of this report was high, since the Relations was a serial publication in France put out by the Jesuits, one of whose purposes was to solicit financial donations for their mission work. Cholenec made the statement in such a way that it was technically true but actually misleading, giving the impression that the neophytes were the vast majority of the community when there

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<sup>49</sup>James P. Ronda, "The Sillery Experiment: A Jesuit-Indian Village in New France, 1637-1663," American Indian Culture and Research Journal III (1979), p. 5.

<sup>50</sup>Ronda, "The Sillery Experiment," pp. 8-11.

<sup>51</sup>JR 61:63.

is no evidence for such a claim.<sup>52</sup> A report in the same volume of the Relations of a Sault Indian delegation which went to proselytize in the Mohawk Valley was similarly sly; the effort was judged to be highly successful in that the preachers "changed the aspect of our little church" in Mohawk country. Nothing was said of numbers converted.<sup>53</sup>

Daniel Richter has studied the Jesuit missions to the Iroquois and found that there was an unmistakable link between peace negotiations following an Iroquois defeat at French hands and the desire of longhouse people for Jesuits to come to their communities. One party's missionary could be another's hostage; the Five Nations may have wanted Black Robes in their villages as a safeguard against any ill treatment of Iroquois people in New France.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, success in warfare bred confidence in one's own cultural values; the Iroquois may have shunned European religion as long as they were winning battles but wondered if the gods were really with them, or if theirs were the right gods, when defeated. It may be no coincidence that it was the Mohawk tribe alone which was humiliated by the Carignan-Salières

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<sup>52</sup>See Richter's calculations (in "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," pp. 165-167). He concludes that only twenty percent of the League Iroquois could have been sincere converts to Christianity.

<sup>53</sup>JR 61:65.

<sup>54</sup>Daniel K. Richter, "Iroquois versus Iroquois: Jesuit Missions and Christianity in Village Politics, 1642-1686," Ethnohistory XXXII (1985), p. 4.

regiment in 1666-67, and also had a much greater proportion of its people swayed by the Jesuits than any other of the Five Nations.<sup>55</sup> In the early to mid-1670s, the Black Robes in Iroquoia were encouraging tribesmen and women who had converted to leave their homeland for the réserve because of violence from the traditionalist faction among their people. The more people the Jesuits sent north, the more encouraging the success of their missions appeared.

The Jesuits had retreated from the optimism of earlier days; they were worried that the fragile conversion of many Indians would easily be eroded in the face of traditional and non-Christian influences in Mohawk villages, whereas at the mission by the St. Lawrence the prevailing influence would be Christian and the temptation to backslide into "sin" and "heathenism" would be minimized. Gone were the days when the Jesuits believed that their converts could in turn save the rest of their kinsmen and neighbors from evil; they now considered their new Catholics as likely to regress themselves. The Jesuit order was weary from their heroic battles of the first half of the seventeenth century; they

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<sup>55</sup>Richter, "Iroquois versus Iroquois," pp. 6-11, and Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," pp. 158-160. The proportion of Mohawks among the mission Iroquois became so great that the Sault St.-Louis Indians were often referred to as the "praying Mohawks," or the "French Mohawks," (see for example, NYCD 3:437) and Mohawk quickly became the dominant language of the community.

lowered their expectations accordingly.<sup>56</sup>

The most disheartening aspect of the Black Robes' battle was their struggle against alcohol. Despite Bishop St. Vallier's glowing praise of the Sault mission in 1688, other evidence suggests cracks in the armor of piety and sobriety. A letter to the government of New France on the negative effects of alcohol indicated a need to "end the disorder which is going on among the Coch[nawagas], other people of \_\_\_\_\_ [illegible] at the door of the churches during divine services, which scandalize foreigners."<sup>57</sup> Alexandre Berthier and Pierre de Sorel, two seigneurs, made dishonorable mention of the mission Iroquois in the consultative assembly of notables on the question of brandy trafficking of 1678.<sup>58</sup> Some time in the 1680s an Indian from the Sault named Tegaraoueron became drunk at Lachine (the small town directly across the St. Lawrence from Sault St.-Louis), raped a small

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<sup>56</sup>Charlevoix Journal 1:269-270; Richter, "Iroquois versus Iroquois," p. 11.

<sup>57</sup>Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série F3 (Collection Moreau de Saint-Méry, 1540-1806, 270 vols.) 2:274v Letter on the subject of the negative effects of alcohol. (Anonymous) "Cochnawagas" referred to the Sault St.-Louis Indians; the Mohawk name by which these people called themselves (originally, the name they gave to the place by the rapids to which they moved in 1676) was Kahnawake, Caughnawaga, and a host of other spellings of the same. This name was taken from the name of a Mohawk village site built after the 1667 demolition of the Mohawk towns by Tracy and the French troops.

<sup>58</sup>W.B. Munro, "The Brandy Parliament of 1678," Canadian Historical Review II (1921), pp. 174-175. The liquor traffic to Indians had become such a social problem by the 1670s that a special assembly was held in Quebec to discuss the problem and possible legislative solutions.



girl and murdered her to prevent her from testifying. When the girl's father wanted the Indian prosecuted, the authorities told him this would be unwise; the danger of a revolt of the Sault Indians was too great to risk stirring up resentment among them.<sup>59</sup> In 1685, Father Jacques Bigot reluctantly reported that "9 or 10 Cabins [longhouses] left the Sault mission last year, because they said that they had withdrawn there solely to live in peace, far from the disorders caused by intemperance; but that they found themselves as greatly annoyed by drunkards as they were in their own country."<sup>60</sup>

Governor Denonville's mémoire to the king in 1685 smacked of public relations gloss, as he claimed that the Indian village at the Sault, among other missions, "are a pleasure to behold. There are not, most assuredly, any towns or cities in France so well ruled, than in all these places."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Joseph P. Donnelly, ed., "[François Vachon de] Belmont's History of Brandy," Mid-America XXXIV (1952), p. 54. William J. Eccles also found instances of the authorities ignoring major crimes such as murder, committed by Sault Indians, out of fear of revolt or exodus; therefore they were free to act however they wished. Not a few French cadavers were found, with hints of Indian involvement, in Montreal and environs in the late seventeenth century. (Eccles, "Sovereignty Association, 1500-1783" in Essays on New France (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 214, ns. 52, 58. See also C11A 5:344v-345; Louise Dechêne, Habitants et Marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle (Montreal and Paris, 1974), pp. 38-39.)

<sup>60</sup>UR 63:131. (Note again the mention of an advantage for moving to the mission community from Iroquoia other than a desire to live a Christian life.)

<sup>61</sup>C11A 7:90v.

Denonville may have toured these towns only on a sparkling Sunday afternoon after mass; soldiers who saw the Sault people in the heat of a night following the arrival of a cask found "drunken [Indians] howling...and doing all the damage they can on the road. Some kill the stock which they find. Others break into the houses on the road to the Sault,...still others violate French women."<sup>62</sup> By 1721, Charlevoix reported that Indians from the nearby missions made horrible spectacles of themselves in the streets of Montreal, a far cry from the "veritable monastery" of which Bishop St. Vallier spoke.<sup>63</sup>

Much of the fall of the Sault Iroquois from at least the appearance of grace took place because of a single event in 1689. The town of Lachine and surrounding area was attacked by the League Iroquois in that year; the Sault St.-Louis Indians were moved to a compound inside the city of Montreal for their own protection against the invaders during this year of siege. Living in close proximity to the French of Montreal and all the attendant vices (not the least of which was openly available brandy), the Kahnawakes altered their behavior in unappealing ways. "In the seven or eight months that the Iroquois of the Sault...spent at Montreal, after the massacre of Lachine, they became unrecognizable, both as regards moral piety, and there is no one who does not admit that if their

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<sup>62</sup>Donnelly, ed., "Belmont's History of Brandy," p. 52.

<sup>63</sup>Charlevoix, Journal 1:219. Even the Jesuits admitted in 1710 that alcohol had ruined the Sault St.-Louis Indians. (JR 66:171-173.)

fervour is no more than it was for so long, the edification and admiration of New France, it is because they have had too many relations with us."<sup>64</sup> Small wonder it was that the Jesuits preferred to keep their Indian charges away from their own Christian countrymen.<sup>65</sup>

After returning from their stay in Montreal, the Kahnawakes moved their village site again, but only a short distance, less than half a league to the west. They were to move again six years later, again to the west and only a short distance, and finally in 1716, they moved again no more than half a league, where they have stayed to the present day. Various reasons were cited in the written records as to why these sites were in turn abandoned, and the modern historian Louise Dechêne suspects Jesuit development of their holdings for habitant seigneuries had much to do with it.<sup>66</sup> But through all these moves, traditional village layout and housing materials and styles were maintained. The bark longhouses of the 1716 site resembled those of the Mohawk

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<sup>64</sup>Charlevoix, History 4:198; Nicolas Perrot, Mémoire sur les moeurs coutumes et religion... (Leipzig and Paris, 1864), pp. 311-313.

<sup>65</sup>See Axtell, Invasion Within, Ch. 4-6 on Jesuit strategy. For opposition opinion in this debate, see NYCD 9:55; C11A 5:13, 8:44v; Charlevoix, History 4:197-198. See also Delanglez, Frontenac and the Jesuits, Ch. 2. Lachine itself, directly across the river from the Sault, was perhaps a worse influence than the town of Montreal. (See Robert-Lionel Séguin, "Le Comportement de certains habitants de Lachine aux environs de 1689," Bulletin des Recherches Historiques LX (1954), pp. 187-193.)

<sup>66</sup>Dechêne, Habitants et Marchands, p. 33.

Valley, and traditional agriculture was still practiced, with women sowing, planting, and harvesting crops of maize, beans and squash grown in hills, instead of rows tilled European-style with farm animals. There was some livestock at Sault St.-Louis, but horses were apparently more of a nuisance than anything else to the Indians and were used only by the Jesuits in the 1600s, although they were in widespread use by the 1750s. When Father Joseph François Lafitau wrote of conditions at the Sault mission in the 1710s, the Kahnawakes were still using pre-Columbian methods of clearing fields; having been shown the European method, they preferred their own. Stone axes were still in use in 1710.<sup>67</sup> A few had decided to try the French method of ploughing at Father Chauchetière's suggestion in 1682; they harvested French wheat although it was foreign to the native palate and enjoyed it. But despite the high yield which it produced, they decided to return to maize cultivation because the amount of labor required for wheat was too great.<sup>68</sup>

The sexual division of labor was still traditional at Kahnawake, despite the presiding Black Robes whose cultural baggage included the habits of patriarchalism and male supremacy. An obvious reason for Jesuit success in making their mission community a popular place to live was that they

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<sup>67</sup>Lafitau, Customs 2:70, 71; Dechêne, Habitants et Marchands, pp. 33-35.

<sup>68</sup>JR 62:169.

did not force complete cultural change on the newcomers. Women tended the fields and collected firewood in the nearly forests, while men cleared fields, built longhouses, and continued their pattern of seasonal habitation at the home base, with fall and winter hunting trips. The rhythm of the seasons remained as it had been in Iroquoia.<sup>69</sup>

Extended family longhouses persisted, a good gauge of adherence to the old ways. Father Chauchetière counted sixty longhouses in 1682, with a population of 120 to 150 families.<sup>70</sup> The popularity of the place was evident in its growing population; by the late 1680s, its numbers had grown to almost 700.<sup>71</sup> There was little contact with the surrounding community, except for some unfortunate incidents involving violence. Occasionally, Sault Indians went to Montreal, a town "more like a hell than an orderly town" and once in 1683, a group of them reported to have been drinking for the past ten days committed "extraordinary disorders." The intendant took this incident seriously, ordering that any

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<sup>69</sup>JR 63:235; Dechêne, p. 36.

<sup>70</sup>JR 62:173.

<sup>71</sup>This was an increase from around 200 fifteen years earlier. (NYCD 3:394; Delanglez, Frontenac and the Jesuits, p. 195 fn.) Frontenac reported to the King in 1679 that the population of the mission was great, and Duchesneau had words to the same effect for the minister in the same year. (Rapport de L'Archiviste de la Province de Québec 1926-27, p. 108; C11A 5:49v.)

repetition would be cause for jailing the Indians involved.<sup>72</sup>

Although mission Iroquois occasionally went to Montreal, they did not learn to speak much French. The Jesuits did not encourage them to do so, learning their languages instead, and any schooling which Christian Indians had was conducted in their own village in their own languages. Even the liturgy of the Mass was in a native language, Huron. (Ever since the Jesuit mission to the Huron people in the 1630s and 1640s, Huron had de facto become the language of the liturgy in eastern woodland Catholic missions.) The Sault St.-Louis Indians communicated with French officials on a few occasions, in a pidgin common to the northeastern fur trade, a combination of Algonquian and French expressions and some gestures. Indians who used it believed it was the French language (and vice versa); when Father Lafitau first arrived from France, Kahnawake Indians spoke this hybrid dialect to him thinking he would understand it.<sup>73</sup> The Sault Iroquois maintained ties with their kin and clan relatives in Iroquoia, and the Mohawk language, which became the dominant language at the Sault because of Mohawk predominance in the population, was retained and strengthened by this contact with the

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<sup>72</sup>But the fact that he kept repeating this demand suggests that it was not enforced by the local police. (Archives de Québec, Ordonnances des Gouverneurs et Intendants, 1639-1706 2:39, 77-78. Quoted in Adair, "Evolution" p. 37.)

<sup>73</sup>Lafitau, Customs 2:261.

homeland.<sup>74</sup>

Dress style at the Sault followed a pattern common among tribes in fairly frequent contact with Europeans; the materials for clothing were borrowed from European sources and incorporated into everyday use, but the styles remained traditional, as did functions. Iroquois Indians wore European shirts over their traditional garb instead of underneath -- they used them to shield their bodies from snow and rain, a different function from that of Europeans. Similarly, they used shirrtails as breechclouts.<sup>75</sup>

A nun noticed a distinctive dress style among Mission Indians who came to Montreal in 1730; as opposed to other Indians who walked the town virtually naked, they were vain of dress: "the Iroquois [Christian Indians] put the shirt over their wearing apparel, and over the shirt another raiment which encloses a portion of the head."<sup>76</sup> Lafitau noticed the Kahnawake adoption of new materials as an elaboration of a traditional style: "in place of their fur robes, they use blankets of wool, doghair, or fine red and blue cloth," confirming that they "have changed only the material of their clothing, keeping their former style of dressing."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>There are still some Mohawk speakers today at Kahnawake.

<sup>75</sup>Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," pp. 68-69.

<sup>76</sup>From a manuscript letter of Soeur Ste. Helène quoted in Atherton, Montréal 1:350.

<sup>77</sup>Lafitau, Customs 2:30.

Clearly, Kahnawake material culture had been only minimally altered as a result of Jesuit oversight of the community.

Questions of moral code, ceremonialism, and religious adherence were another matter. The missionaries did forbid certain practices which had been taken for granted among the Iroquois from time immemorial. Even some converts themselves questioned traditional practices and rituals, and probably many of them were forbidden at Sault St.-Louis. In Iroquoia, Garakontié, the Onondaga zealot, refused to participate in condolence councils, healing rituals, and the Midwinter Ceremony at his Onondaga village which were an integral part of the Iroquois identity. He stated plainly that this was because of his newfound beliefs; his old habits he now considered idolatrous and sinful.<sup>78</sup> If such a bold stand was taken within Iroquoia, the status quo at the mission community along the St. Lawrence must have been one in which most traditional ceremonies were officially banned. The only real source, the Relations, reveals little on this subject, although one Black Robe claimed that traditional burial customs (burying bodies sideways instead of upright in the grave, and placing grave goods and prized possessions with the corpse) had been eliminated at Kahnawake.<sup>79</sup>

Some Christians in the Five Nations homeland lost their political status because of their beliefs; one woman was

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<sup>78</sup>JR 50:61-63, 60:193.

<sup>79</sup>JR 63:183.



stripped of her agoiander status because she converted.<sup>80</sup> From this, it is difficult to say how politics operated among the Christian Iroquois community; the ceremonial side of politics seems to have been called into question, but no Jesuits suggested that the Indians at Sault St.-Louis had to find new ways of conceptualizing their political offices and means of appointing chiefs, matrons, agoianders, and others. Lafitau's comments on political structure and function in the 1710s suggests nothing markedly different from what is known of League Iroquois politics at the time.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, aside from the (predictable) outlawing of shamanism and any form of ritual with a religious connotation, it is difficult to guess the extent of cosmological/cultural change. Traditional reciprocity seems to have survived the conversion intact; in fact the mission Iroquois were famous for this, to the point that the Jesuits in the community were distressed at the amount of food and other commodities which were freely offered to any comers to the village, even to groups as large as eight hundred, which seemed to pauperize the inhabitants.<sup>82</sup> Kin relations seem also to have remained intact, despite the lack of traditional ceremonies to reinforce these. (They may have been modified in conformity with Christianity.) Longhouses

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<sup>80</sup>Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," p. 177. (An agoiander was a political office in Iroquois society.)

<sup>81</sup>See Lafitau, Customs 1:69-70, 285-300.

<sup>82</sup>JR 58:81.

were still the standard form of housing, indicating that traditional ways of viewing kin relationships persisted.<sup>83</sup>

Many longhouse people were accustomed to going back and forth between the Sault village and their homeland, and families were often only physically divided between the two areas, although at times they were also separated by the Christianity issue.<sup>84</sup> But secular political changes in the early 1680s did not bode well for the Iroquois as a united people. Relations between the Five Nations and the French were becoming strained, and the Jesuits were less welcome in Iroquoia. They were literally driven out of some Five Nations villages. The French had been flexing their muscles in the Ohio and upper Mississippi valleys; the Iroquois League saw this as an encroachment on their sphere of influence, where they too had recently been active. Rumors of war between the two powers swirled in Kahnawake ears - what would they do? Mission Indians were considered by the French (including the Jesuits), to be subjects of the French king, as any inhabitant of New France would be.<sup>85</sup> But they had built up their community along the St. Lawrence during a period of peace. A war footing between their own people and those among whom they

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<sup>83</sup>On Sault St.-Louis generosity, see also JR 55:35, 61:201, 63:195; Kip, trans. and comp, The Early Jesuit Missions, pp. 92-93.

<sup>84</sup>Kip, trans. and comp, The Early Jesuit Missions, pp. 120-129.

<sup>85</sup>Dechêne, Habitants et Marchands, p. 28.

now lived was a new and cruel twist in their lives. The Relations reported that their fidelity to the French cause was beyond doubt, and that a palisade around their village was erected in 1684-85 to protect them against possible Iroquois attack. (It was unclear, however, whether the fortification was a Jesuit undertaking or one originated and pursued by the Indians themselves.)<sup>86</sup> The League Iroquois made their mission counterparts' status clear at a war council held by both groups at La Famine (on the southeastern shore of Lake Ontario) in 1684. According to the Jesuits, they denounced the Catholic Iroquois and jeered them. Chauchetière indicated that it was after this meeting that construction of the palisade was begun.<sup>87</sup>

The Black Robes reported that an open meeting was held at Sault St.-Louis to decide a policy on the growing hostilities. They were given three choices, Chauchetière said. They could all return to Iroquoia, or remain at their new village by the rapids but maintain a state of isolation from the surrounding French colony -- a sort of neutral zone, or they could join the French-Catholic cause. According to the Jesuit source, they rejected the first option because they felt they would jeopardize their new religion, and likewise rejected the second out of fear, not unfounded, that the French would

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<sup>86</sup>JR 63:241, 245.

<sup>87</sup>JR 63:245; William N. Fenton's introduction to Lafitau, Customs (1:xxxii).

become suspicious of them.<sup>88</sup> Chauchetière proudly interpreted the decision to join the French cause as being made because "having but one and the same faith with the french, they wished also to run the same risks together."<sup>89</sup> No matter how the decision was made, or even if there was a group decision as Chauchetière suggests, the Sault St.-Louis community took on a new dimension after 1683. Hostilities were brewing and the inhabitants of the mission village were caught in the middle.

The Jesuit missions in the Iroquois country effectively ended four years later and the only remaining Black Robe after that time in the territory adjacent to New York Province was Father Pierre Millet, taken prisoner and held for years as a hostage among the Oneidas.<sup>90</sup> Relations continued on a personal level between the Sault and the League Iroquois but, at the same time, the mission village was becoming a bulwark of the French defense against the Five Nations. Some Kahnawakes started to serve the French, giving advice and important information about the geography of Iroquoia and

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<sup>88</sup>Governor Frontenac had long regarded them as a fifth column threat to New France.

<sup>89</sup>JR 63:241-243. His is the only record available on these events, so without confirmation, it must be viewed sceptically. There may have been pressure from the priests and/or colonial officials to choose the pro-French option, although some Sault Indians freely chose it.

<sup>90</sup>Shea, "The Jesuits, Recollects, and the Indians," in Winsor, ed., Narrative and Critical History, p. 285; Lucien Campeau, "Pierre Millet," Dictionary of Canadian Biography 2:473-474.

environs.<sup>91</sup> To gain Sault Indian cooperation, it helped that Count Frontenac was no longer the governor of New France; La Barre took over in 1683 and was much more positively disposed towards the Jesuits and their réserves than his predecessor had been.

Ogenheratarihens, or Hot Powder (Cendre Chaude) as he was known to Europeans, was a prominent Kahnawake who symbolized French allegiance among his people. Baptized in 1676 at the Sault along with his wife and other family members, this talented politician soon became "fourth chief" at the Sault, and within a couple of years had worked his way up to the position of "first chief." He was active in proselytizing trips to the homeland in the late 1670s and set the convert's example in 1683 of declaring, in his role as chief, his allegiance to the French in the impending war with the Iroquois.<sup>92</sup> An indication that the Indian political mind is inscrutable to whites lies in the fact that after this time, the Oneidas in the homeland invited Ogenheratarihens to become their chief, and offered very conciliatory terms - he would not have to renounce Christianity in order to take up the offer. But he chose to stay at the réserve when his condition that all the League Oneidas embrace the Catholic

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<sup>91</sup>Charlevoix, History 4:197; JR 63:243.

<sup>92</sup>Christianity was beginning to have these other complicated connections; missionaries did not consider an Indian to be truly Christian if the convert in question did not actively support the French military-imperial cause, an issue which was to come up often in the future.

faith was turned down.

But this Christian Oneida politician did not blindly support the French cause once he embraced it. Unlike other Christian chiefs from the Sault, in 1684 he refused to join Governor Josephe-Antoine Le Febvre de La Barre's (aborted) expedition against the Onondagas at La Famine. Discriminating in his support, he shared the sentiments of many in New France that La Barre was an inept leader; when the latter was replaced by Governor Denonville the following year, Ogenheratarihiens was among the first to declare his allegiance to the new leader of New France.<sup>93</sup> In Denonville's 1687 campaign against the Senecas, the Oneida headman served willingly and, along with two other Christian Iroquois, was killed in action in July of that year.<sup>94</sup>

Ogenheratarihiens' life serves as a reminder that the Jesuits' claims of mission Iroquois allegiance to the French was not just wishful thinking and good copy for the readers back in France. There were individuals who transferred their allegiances. Bruce Katzer suggests that many did so because they perceived that the hey-day of the Ho-de-no-sau-née was past, and that to side with a power on the rise was a smart, self-preserving thing to do. Furthermore, Thomas Norton

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<sup>93</sup>Regarding La Barre's ineptitude and loss of favor, see Perrot, Mémoire sur les Moeurs, p. 138.

<sup>94</sup>Béchar, The Original Caughnawaga Indians, pp. 123-124, and Béchar, "Ogenheratarihiens," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography 1:522-523.

suggests that as early as the 1670s, Five Nations people perceived that they could profit from the unofficial and illegal trade which was developing along the Lake Champlain corridor if they moved to the Jesuit mission community along the St. Lawrence.<sup>95</sup>

The significance of Ogenheratarihiens is that an alternative Iroquois culture was shaped in the community on the St. Lawrence River across from Montreal. It had shed some parts of its old cosmology and view of the world, and replaced them with a central component of the European world view: Catholic Christianity. Even if all inhabitants of Kahnawake were not truly converted, they had accepted a certain moral and behavioral code which differed from their traditional one, significantly in some aspects while only minimally in others. Something in the Iroquois experience of the first half of the seventeenth century -- political, economic, military, social/cultural, or a combination of all these -- caused a significant number of the proud Five Nations people to emigrate and to join a vibrant new community in which bark longhouses sat next to a stone chapel adorned with a bell tower and crucifixes. By all appearances, the Kahnawake

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<sup>95</sup>Bruce Katzer, "The Caughnawaga Mohawks: Occupations, Residence, and the Maintenance of Community Membership" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1972), pp. 37-38. David Blanchard echoes this argument in his dissertation "Patterns of tradition and change: the re-creation of Iroquois culture at Kahnawake" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1982), pp. 119-154. (Norton, Fur Trade in Colonial New York, p. 122; Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," p. 200.)

community was a successful synthesis of two cultures and a new element in the geopolitics of the colonial Northeast.



Remnants: South St. Louis Village  
 or Caughnawagay  
 (Kahnawake)

- a Riv. St. Lawrence
- b " de Québec
- c " de Sagoy
- d " de St. Michel
- e " de Sagoy
- f St. Hubert's Is.

- g Côte St. Lambert
- h Capriole Is.
- i St. Paul's Is.
- j St. Louis Is.

Map 4

1 M. Sagoy

Montreal

St. Louis

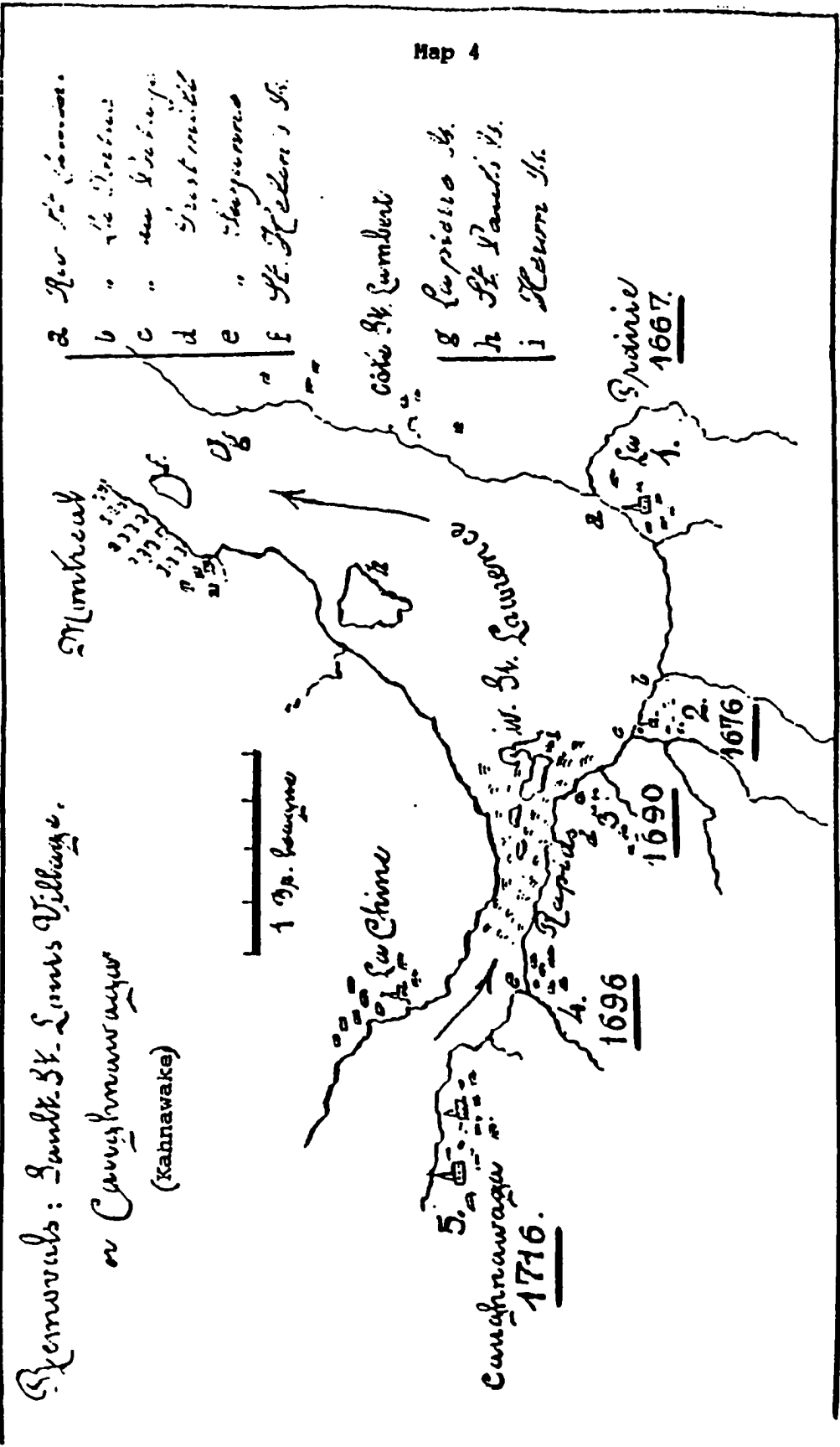
5. Caughnawagay  
 1716.

1696

1690

1676

1667



From Henri Bécharé, The Original Caughnawaga Indians

Table 1

**NATIVE POPULATION TRENDS, 1630-1800**

These data vary considerably in quality and are sometimes contradictory. Overall, total native population declined. Indians were repeatedly decimated by European diseases and by wars, in which they participated, between French and English and later between English and Americans.

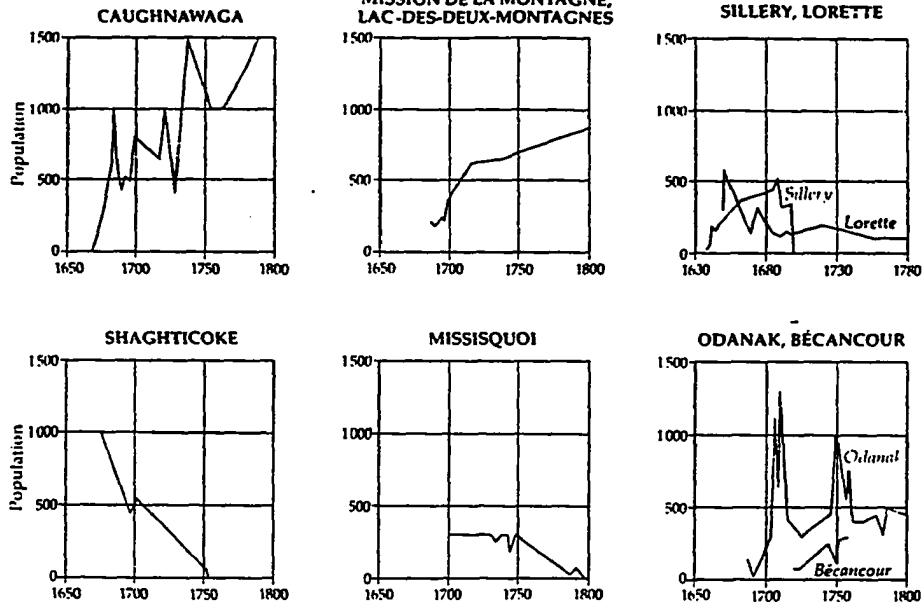
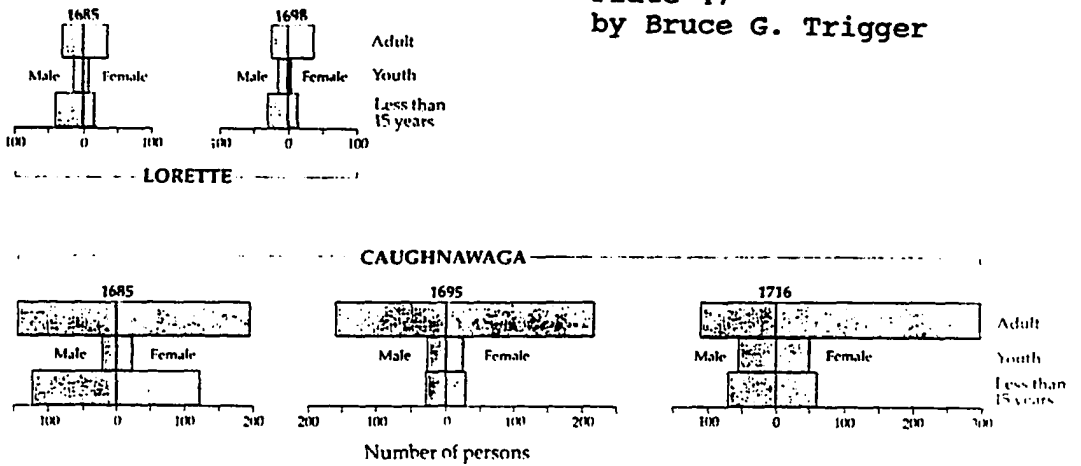


Table 2

**NATIVE AGE AND SEX PROFILES**

From R. Cole Harris, ed., Historical Atlas of Canada, Vol. 1, Plate 47 by Bruce G. Trigger



## CHAPTER THREE

### KAHNAWAKE-FIVE NATIONS RELATIONS IN THE 1680S

"When [Iroquois] Christians divorced themselves from ceremonies that had previously ratified their bonds to fellow villagers, they began to define themselves as a distinct people ... Christians were no longer the traditionalists' kinsmen. They were, in some respects, their enemies."<sup>1</sup> By 1684, when the League Iroquois disowned their Sault brethren at a diplomatic meeting and the two groups exchanged threatening words and insults, the cold war which set the Five Nations in turmoil since the first Jesuit arrived in their land began to take on serious national political dimensions; the Sault Iroquois were now a distinct national group which would have separate diplomatic relations with various powers.<sup>2</sup> The feeling of separate communities had been growing for years, but this was the first overtly institutional evidence of it, brought on by growing hostilities between the League Iroquois and the French.

The Sault Indians could not help having close ties to the French administration in Quebec and Montreal, not only because they were inside French territory, but also because of their resident Jesuit missionaries who were looked upon by French

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel K. Richter, "Iroquois versus Iroquois: Jesuit Missions and Christianity in Village Politics, 1642-1686," Ethnohistory XXXII (1985), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows, 1896-1901), 63:245 (hereafter cited as JR).

civic officials as the governing authority in the mission community. From a European perspective, it would seem a logical development for the Sault Iroquois to view their political, diplomatic, and military interests as being aligned with those of the French administration, because their village was potentially a target of hostilities by the enemies of the French, namely, the League Iroquois. French military protection, in the form of construction of a stone fort, was probably seen by at least some Sault inhabitants as desirable, but some may have seen it and its accompanying soldiers as an occupying force.

The Christian faction among the Iroquois proper atrophied when it lost its prominent leader, Garakontié, to the grave in 1678. Opposition in Iroquoia to raids on western tribes in the Illinois country faded without Garakontié's strong voice, and the 1680 attack by some Iroquois on Fort St. Louis among the Illinois Indians drew the sharp reproach of the French. Large Iroquois armies of a thousand men (mostly Senecas) attacked Miami as well as Illinois hunters several times from 1680 to 1683.<sup>3</sup> In the summer of 1683, an extremely aggressive governor was appointed to New York. Colonel Thomas Dongan, although Catholic, was determined to erase the French Jesuit influence among the Iroquois and to bring a stridently anti-French tone to New York and her allied Indians. He worked

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<sup>3</sup>Louis Armand de Lom D'Arce de Lahontan, New Voyages to North America (2nd ed.) 2 vols. (London: Bonwicke, 1735), 2:63-65.

among the Five Nations to heighten their hostility toward the French, openly encouraging them to conduct raids against the colony to the north and its allied Indians, attempting to break the French-Five Nations peace of 1665-1667. Previous New York governors had not done this.<sup>4</sup>

Indian-on-Indian attacks had always involved individuals only, and had been seen in the context of religious factionalism. Christian zealots were martyred at the hands of their traditionalist counterparts for their refusal to give up the new religion, not simply because they were from the community within New France's borders. (A League Iroquois could not assume that by merely residing at the Sault, an Indian was a convert to Christianity.) In another step toward all-out hostility between the two communities, small groups of League Iroquois had occasionally raided Kahnawake stores of grain in the late 1670s.

But an open state of war between the Sault Iroquois and the Five Nations was not yet a reality. Even in 1683, people still doubted that such a scenario would develop. The Jesuit superior in New France believed that the Iroquois had not yet gone to war against the French because they would not want to be entangled in a situation of antagonism against their Sault brethren. Father Thierry Beschefer wrote to his seniors that the French "are under great obligations to those who compose

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<sup>4</sup>Allen W. Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), p. 253-255.

this mission. [The League Iroquois] have often resolved to wage war against the french; but they have always been checked by those whose kindred were at the Sault."<sup>5</sup> Beschefer noted that the League Mohawks had stated they could not consent to such a war, that their brethren at the Sault would have to be withdrawn first. These Iroquois may have been shocked to find, then, that their Catholic kinsmen offered Governor La Barre of New France a fighting force of 150 men when he asked for some in 1683, "to go to war, even against their own nation, if the latter undertook to break the peace with the french."<sup>6</sup>

The Five Nations may not have realized the subtle pressure that Jesuits and French officials could bring to bear upon Sault inhabitants; sanctions could easily be made, threats of punitive measures issued, doubts about a Christian's ability to enjoy eternal life introduced, or privileges within the community or the church taken away, if men were not promised for military support. These tactics are difficult to trace in historical sources, but bribery was one form of persuasion which was documented; Governor La Barre openly told the minister of marine that he "resolved to select four of the principal chiefs of [the Kahnawakes] to accompany

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<sup>5</sup>JR 62:255.

<sup>6</sup>JR 62:255-257; Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York 15 vols. (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1853-1887), 9:234 (hereafter cited as NYCD).

Sieur Le Moyne, to whom I entrusted a number of private presents, to gain over the most influential, having made, at the same time, some reasonable ones to those Christian Chiefs."<sup>7</sup> He also asked the minister for extra funds to help pay for the repair of the church at the Sault which had been damaged in a storm, prefacing his request with the timely news that the Jesuits at that mission had been able to raise two hundred troops for the French.<sup>8</sup> Gifts and funding were tied to military support.

If the Kahnawake Iroquois felt pressure from their position within New France, they also found positive channels to develop from their position. They opened up a new role for themselves as a quasi-independent middle group between the French and the Five Nations, defying a dependent status. They no doubt felt themselves to be an independent nation however much the Jesuit fathers and the French governor's officials might press them. They became emissaries between the French and the League Iroquois by relaying belts of wampum (meaning

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<sup>7</sup>NYCD 9:202; Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série C11A (Canada: Correspondance Générale, 1540-1784, 122 vols.) 6:134 (hereafter cited as C11A).

<sup>8</sup>NYCD 9:209; C11A 6:244v. The New France government took an increasingly active role in financially supporting the mission community. Imperial as well as religious motives for this are obvious from correspondence. (C11A 5:290v-291v; NYCD 9:149-158.) There were numerous occasions on which missionaries or government officials asked for money for the mission from the court at Versailles. Father Frémin travelled to France in 1679 for that purpose. (C11A 5:12-17.)

official diplomatic correspondence on belts made of shell strung together<sup>9</sup>) back and forth between the two groups. La Barre reported in 1684 that Father Jacques Bruyas, the superior at Sault Saint Louis, "furnished seven Christian Iroquois, friendly to the French and pretty shrewd" to relay wampum belts to the Mohawks and Oneidas expressing the French desire for the latter not to get involved in the French-Seneca conflict which was brewing.<sup>10</sup> (The governor's assurance that these seven Indians were "friendly to the French" indicates that one could not be at all sure that every Sault Indian was; factionalism existed even in these early decades at Kahnawake.)

Since La Barre worded his communiqué in terms of Indians being "furnished" to him for the role of messenger, he must have seen these Indians as French subjects who could be called upon at will. The Kahnawakes, however, probably saw themselves as an independent third party uniquely qualified to run interference between two sets of belligerents because of their geographical proximity to the French, and because of their knowledge of terrain, village locations, personalities, and customs of the Five Nations.<sup>11</sup> They were also present at

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<sup>9</sup>See Claude Bacqueville de la Potherie, Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale 4 vols. (Paris: 1722), 1:333-334 for a description of wampum.

<sup>10</sup>NYCD 9:239-240; C11A 6:308-308v.

<sup>11</sup>Since Indians did not express themselves in a written medium, there is no direct evidence on their feelings at the time about such matters. However, evidence which does



talks held between La Barre and representatives of all five Iroquois nations the preceeding year, as La Barre made a point of noting when he described the event to the minister of marine.<sup>12</sup> Sault Indians probably approached these talks as independent observers, regardless of French perceptions of their status at such meetings.

League Iroquois perceptions of their strayed kinsmen seem to have been that they were under the direct influence of the French. At the 1683 meeting, instead of addressing their Sault brethren directly, the League Iroquois asked Governor La Barre to "prevent the Christians of the Sault-Saint Louis ... from coming more to our territory to attract our people to Montreal, that they stop depopulating our land, as they have been doing."<sup>13</sup> The sense is unmistakably one of 'those foreign Indians invading our land.' League Iroquois speakers would not always put their relations with their Catholic counterparts in these terms; at times they claimed them to be just as Iroquois as someone in a Mohawk Valley longhouse. Their approach depended on the circumstances. Here, the frustration with the draining of vital human resources from the homeland put them in an adversarial frame of mind. La Barre responded with this retort: "They are not my children -

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infiltrate the European documents generally indicates that all Indians saw themselves as autonomous peoples, regardless of the European legal viewpoint of their status.

<sup>12</sup>C11A 6:134-135.

<sup>13</sup>C11A 6:300-300v.

those Indians...who depopulate your land, it is you who depopulate your land by your drunkenness and superstitions; there is complete freedom to come live among us, we do not stop anyone by force [from returning back to New York]."<sup>14</sup> This was a war of words between enemies over the Sault Iroquois, whether they were perceived as refugees or pilgrims or traitors or immigrants.

Nor did the New York government see the Kahnawake Iroquois as a neutral third party. They were a thorn in the side of this province which was becoming so dependent for its diplomatic stability on strong relations with the Five Nations. The Mission Iroquois were a constant reminder that few Indians were attracted to the religion or the national identity of the English, and would, if anything, shed their own people's blood to fight these men rather than defend an English colony against the possible encroachments of a foreign power.<sup>15</sup> The new governor of New York, more empire-minded than any of his predecessors, exerted unrelenting pressure on the New France government, the Jesuit missionaries, and on the Sault Iroquois themselves as far as he could, to persuade, cajole, or force them into returning to their homeland. In the summer of 1686, a Mohawk named Jannetie was sent by Governor Dongan and the Mohawk sachems to the Sault to tell the strayed kinsmen that Dongan could give them as much land

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<sup>14</sup>C11A 6:300v.

<sup>15</sup>C11A 11:186.

as they needed at Saratoga. At this hamlet slightly northeast of the Mohawk homeland and about forty miles north of Albany, Dongan would provide land "to make their homes here" and pledged that they "would also have a priest there to instruct them in religion."<sup>16</sup>

Enjoying their popularity, the Sault Iroquois graciously replied that they would be "very willing" to come and live at Saratoga, and added that the Governor of New France "does not want to prevent their coming here, but says first he wants to see a letter from Corlaer [the New York Governor] and then will let them go freely." This is suspicious; La Barre had just said he held no Indians against their will, but with this statement he made their leaving New France conditional upon a letter from Governor Dongan. Jannitie's wording, that the Sault Iroquois were anxious for the letter of permission to be written "so they can be fully assured of his [La Barre's] ready inclination to let them come here" indicates their status as less than free. There was some coercion involved at the mission community.<sup>17</sup>

The issue of furnishing priests for the Kahnawakes was

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<sup>16</sup>Lawrence H. Leder, ed., The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1723 (Gettysburg: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956) (hereafter cited as LIR), p. 104; NYCD 3:394-395 (Governor Dongan's report on the State of the Province, 1686.) In this report, Dongan also stated that part of the plan was to get rid of the French Jesuits in the Iroquois villages, because they were impeding English trade with the Five Nations by promoting their own. Religion and commerce were closely related in the seventeenth century.

<sup>17</sup>LIR p. 104.

one which Dongan as a Catholic was uniquely qualified to handle. New York officials knew that Catholic priests would attract the Iroquois in greater numbers than would Protestant ministers, and a Catholic governor would have a better chance of finding some. Before 1664, the Dutch in New Netherland had only feebly attempted to proselytize the Mohawks, bringing in a Dutch Reformed domine, Johannes Megapolensis, in 1642 to convert the Iroquois nearest Fort Orange (Albany). Megapolensis experienced almost unqualified failure; his converts could be counted on one hand. New York was to make more efforts in 1693 with Domine Dellius, and in the eighteenth century with some Anglican missionaries, but these efforts were never as successful as the Jesuits'. Dellius severely tarnished his image among the Ho-de-no-sau-née when he became embroiled in a shady land deal which involved a swindle of Iroquois land. The Black Robes were morally clean, visibly devout, and highly dedicated to Indian missions; therefore they enjoyed the most success of any Christian clergy among the Five Nations.<sup>18</sup>

Dongan knew that in order to attract Christian Iroquois

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<sup>18</sup>On Dutch missionary efforts see Trelease, Indian Affairs, pp. 169-172, 327-331, John Webster Grant, Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 65-66. NYCD 3:771-772. On the Dellius land scandal see John Rainbolt, "A 'great and usefull designe'..." New York Historical Society Quarterly, LIII (1969), p. 338. On Dellius: Hugh Hastings, ed., Ecclesiastical Records, State of New York 7 vols. (Albany: James B. Lyon, 1901-1916), passim.

from the Sault back to New York, he would have to provide English Black Robes for them. He promised them he would do this, and attempted to find some in England who would be willing to come over as missionaries. But Dongan may have been overly optimistic about any Catholic priest's desire to advance the cause of the English empire only a few years after the English Civil War and Oliver Cromwell's vicious persecution of Catholics in Ireland, England, and Scotland. Most Jesuits in England were in hiding in the mid-to-late seventeenth century, afraid of being hunted down; that there were any who came to North America in that century is amazing (although some came to Maryland initially because it was a haven for English-speaking Catholics in the New World, away from the persecution of the mother country).<sup>19</sup> The Duke's province, as New York was known, governed by an Irish Catholic no less, may have seemed an attractive destination to a Jesuit who had found life in England a hardship even after the restoration of the Catholic Stuart monarchy. Dongan sent out a request for Anglophone Jesuits, but none came.<sup>20</sup> However,

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<sup>19</sup>On the Maryland Jesuit missions, see James L. Axtell, After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), Ch. 5.

<sup>20</sup>LIR p. 98. John M. Shea uncovered evidence that three English-speaking Jesuits came to North America in the late 1680s, but although they spent some time in the province of New York as well as in Maryland, they never came to Saratoga or even to the Albany area to minister to Indians. (Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documentary History of the State of New York 4 vols. (quarto ed.) (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1850-1851) (hereafter cited as DHNY) 3:73. Robert Livingston, the prominent Albany Indian Commissioner and future mayor of that

the governor had his French counterparts worried; they reported Dongan's plan to the minister of marine in France under the heading "regarding the dangers that threaten Canada."<sup>21</sup> It is impossible to tell if the Kahnawake Iroquois were bluffing when they agreed to return to the upper Hudson Valley, and there may have been some who would stay at Sault Saint-Louis even if others would leave upon the arrival in Saratoga of an English Jesuit. But since no priest arrived, the word of the Sault Iroquois (and of LaBarre) was never tested on this point.

Meanwhile, the war of words heated up between the New Yorkers and League Iroquois on one side, and the French, the Jesuits, and their allied Indians on the other. The Iroquois attacks on trading parties of Indians and coureurs de bois in the upper Great Lakes region, as well as down near the mouth of the Ottawa River at the St. Lawrence, continued and escalated. Governor Dongan and the Albany Indian commissioners<sup>22</sup> heard of Seneca-instigated Iroquois attacks

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city, lamented in 1700 that the reason the French were able to attract and keep so many Mohawks in New France was the neglect of the New Yorkers to send missionaries among these Indians. NYCD 4:648.)

<sup>21</sup>C11A 9:249v.

<sup>22</sup>This group was a sort of Chamber of Commerce for the fur trade, for which Albany had been granted a province-wide monopoly in 1686. See David A. Armour, "The Merchants of Albany, New York: 1686-1760" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1965), and Thomas E. Norton, The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974).

on Illinois and Miami Indians. For appearance's sake, they reproached them for these exploits but in fact contributed a steady supply of weapons and told the Senecas, with a wink, to use them for hunting instead of warring.<sup>23</sup> Even while promoting Five Nations attacks on Indians tied to the French trade, Dongan warned Father Lamberville in Onondaga (one of the few Jesuits left in Iroquoia in 1686 - the Cayugas had recently driven Father Carheil out of their villages) that the French had better not invade Iroquoia and make war upon the longhouse people. (He also carried on an argument as to whose Indians the Iroquois were - Dongan claimed that all of Iroquois territory was English and that its inhabitants were subject to the King of England, to which the Iroquois did not bother to object, since the natives were, de facto, still sovereign.)<sup>24</sup>

The French were happily escalating hostilities as well. When Jacques-René de Brisay, Marquis de Denonville arrived in the French colony in 1685 to replace the inept La Barre as governor, he started down the road to war with the Iroquois by reminding the Sault Iroquois of the danger which their recalcitrant kinsmen posed. "I sent to remind the Christian Iroquois...that it is necessary to destroy the Iroquois in

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<sup>23</sup>Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1984), p. 242.

<sup>24</sup>Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série C11E (Des Limites et des Postes, 1651-1818, 38 vols.) 10:2-3.

order to establish religion...to destroy the Iroquois, it is necessary to attack them..."<sup>25</sup> Denonville also embarked immediately on a project of fortifications for the entire Montreal area, including a large fort at Chambly a few miles southeast of the Sault, and made sure that Kahnawake was protected; the village was fortified in 1685 with a pentagonal structure having bastions at each corner. One bastion was equipped with a huge iron cannon which would serve as a deterrent to attacks on the village.<sup>26</sup>

There had been fear in New France of Five Nations forays against the Sault village after La Barre's failed expedition of 1684 against the Onondagas, because the Kahnawake Indians had sent one hundred men to fight.<sup>27</sup> This was probably not all the Sault people could spare, since at least one prominent headman, Ogenheratihens, refused to support the effort, but a pro-French war faction at the Sault had sent its complement to the cause. (Again, the amount of persuasion and/or pressure involved is unknown.) That La Barre had to give up the idea of attacking when the Onondaga chief Outreouti (la Grande Gueule) saw the sickened condition of the French troops at La Famine may have been a relief even to the most

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<sup>25</sup>C11A 7:124v.

<sup>26</sup>JR 63:245; C11A 8:121v.

<sup>27</sup>C11A 6:267; DHNY 1:75.



enthusiastic Sault fighters.<sup>28</sup> In any case, it postponed the outbreak of gunfire between traditionalist and Catholic Iroquois. But the cannon installed at Kahnawake in 1685 was a reminder that time was running out for peaceful relations between the two groups, at least as far as the French were concerned.

It is not clear how Denonville's message of the need to attack and destroy the League Iroquois was received by the brethren at the Sault. Nevertheless, Denonville was determined to humiliate the Five Nations. To court mission Indian military support for this purpose, in 1686, he succeeded in requisitioning 1500 livres from the king as a "show of gratitude" for the Jesuit communities at the Sault and Sillery. He also mentioned that these Indians were of "such great help to us for war as well as for the trapping that they do."<sup>29</sup> Just as La Barre had recognized that "the maintenance of this Mission (Sault Saint-Louis) is of very great importance," undoubtedly with fresh soldiers in mind, Denonville also greased their palms to prepare for his war against the Senecas in 1687.<sup>30</sup> Aware of colonial politics

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<sup>28</sup>Regarding the meeting between Outreouti and La Barre at La Famine (near Oswego, N.Y.) see Lahontan, New Voyages 1:38-43.

<sup>29</sup>C11A 8:132, 176; Joseph P. Donnelly, ed., "[François Vachon de] Belmont's History of Canada," Mid-America, XXXIV (1952), p. 132.

<sup>30</sup>The king granted a large sum of money to the Jesuits at Sault Saint-Louis for construction of a church building in 1684, the year of La Barre's call for troops. (Rapport de

too, Denonville shrewdly invited several Jesuit priests to serve as his advisors. He learned from the mistakes of previous governors (namely Frontenac) who had alienated the Black Robes, and therefore had not had much cooperation from them when it came time to rally fighters for an expedition.<sup>31</sup>

Indians from all the missions within Laurentian New France had rallied for battle under La Barre; a 1684 list specifies that of almost 400 Indians who allied themselves with the French to go to Onondaga country, at the top of the list were 100 "good men" from the "Christian Iroquois of Sault Saint-Louis." The Christian Iroquois of the Mountain (the Sulpician mission near Montreal) provided sixty, the Christian Abenakis of Sillery provided sixty-five "good men," the Christian Hurons of Lorette sent "40 mediocre men," the Algonquins seventy-two, and the Nipissings and Temiskamings, forty.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, the Sault Indians were the most prominent among these groups. They may have appeared to be providing more to the cause only because their population was the

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l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec (hereafter cited as RAPQ), 1939-1940, p. 255; NYCD 9:209. At a high point in hostilities during the Franco-Iroquois war of 1689-1701, a French official lamented that their Indian allies, among them Kahnawakes, were "influenced only by presents...in the vigorous prosecution of the war." NYCD 9:526.)

<sup>31</sup>Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce de Lahontan, The Oakes Collection: new documents by Lahontan, Gustave Lanctot, ed. (Ottawa: Patenaude, 1940), p. 27.

<sup>32</sup>C11A 6:267.

largest.<sup>33</sup> Comprising at least one quarter of the total numbers, and being the largest single group, they continued to be the dominant presence among the mission Indian warriors in the 1687 engagement. Of 353 allied Indians from the St. Lawrence communities in that effort, fully half of them (170) were from the Sault, fifty were from the Mountain mission, seventy-six from Sillery and fifty-seven from Arhetil (Lorette).<sup>34</sup> Whether they would fight was not something of which the officers in charge were at all confident. And the circumstances surrounding the beginning of the trip to the Seneca country made many Indians wary of their French contemporaries.

Denonville had planned to attack the Senecas because they were the Iroquois nation which had instigated most of the attacks on western Indians trading with the French. He feared, however, that other Iroquois groups further east,

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<sup>33</sup>Lucien Campeau, "St. Lawrence Missions," Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 4, ed. Wilcomb E. Washburn (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), pp. 468-469.

<sup>34</sup>Louis-Henri Baugy, Journal d'une expédition contre les Iroquois en 1687, rédigé par le chevalier de Baugy, aide de camp de M. le marquis de Denonville (Paris: Ernest Serrigny, 1883), p. 86. (hereafter cited as Baugy.) There were roughly 1600 Frenchmen along, both regular troops and militia, making a total of about 2000 who left from Fort Frontenac. They were met by more Indians ("pagan" Indians as distinguished from these Christian ones) from the upper Great Lakes once they reached the southern shore of Lake Ontario.

especially the "Iroquois du nord,"<sup>35</sup> would see the movement of troops at Fort Frontenac nearby and warn the League Iroquois of a French attack. Setting a trap, the French governor called for a meeting with the eastern Iroquois at Fort Frontenac, extending an invitation to the Onondagas as well as the Oneidas, Mohawks, the Iroquois du nord, and some Iroquois from the short-lived Sulpician mission near Cataragui.<sup>36</sup> Dongan was suspicious of this invitation and warned that his French adversary had better not be planning anything other than diplomatic talks; he threatened to capture any Kahnawake Iroquois who might come to Iroquoia seeking more converts for the St. Lawrence community.<sup>37</sup> Little did he know that he would have more to fear from Sault guns than from their rosaries or crucifixes.

Denonville used Father Jean de Lamberville for his plan; he arranged for the Jesuit residing at Onondaga to invite the Iroquois tribesmen to Fort Frontenac, since they would trust him. Lamberville had no idea of Denonville's plans and believed himself to be promoting peace between the two groups. However, when the delegation from Iroquoia arrived at the French compound on the north shore of Lake Ontario, Denonville

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<sup>35</sup>These were Cayugas who had moved to the northeastern side of Lake Ontario in the 1660s out of fear of Susquehanna attacks in their homeland.

<sup>36</sup>On this mission see James S. Pritchard, "For the Glory of God: The Quinté Mission, 1668-1680," Ontario History LXV (1973), pp. 133-148.

<sup>37</sup>LIR p. 117.

promptly had them seized and imprisoned, along with the "Iroquois du nord."<sup>38</sup> He now had captives to send to the French king. Louis XIV had requested Iroquois prisoners as oarsmen for his galleys, but had meant prisoners taken in a war situation, not unwitting victims of a snare. Nevertheless, the governor solved both the king's and his own problems at the same time with this move, and ended up with more than a hundred Iroquois prisoners to be sent to Quebec to await shipment to France, and a clear path to surprising the western Iroquois with his troops.<sup>39</sup>

When the Sault Iroquois realized what had happened, having recently come to Cataragui with the French troops and militia from the St. Lawrence on the way to the Seneca villages, they were outraged that Denonville had tricked the Indians into irons.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, some of the prisoners were close relatives of the Sault and Mountain Mission Iroquois.<sup>41</sup> On learning of Denonville's treachery, one hundred of the Christian Iroquois refused to continue with the expedition.

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<sup>38</sup>LIR pp. 109-117, 119-123.

<sup>39</sup>See William J. Eccles, Canada Under Louis XIV, 1663-1701 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), pp. 149-151. Also Le Clerc, Eccles exchange in Revue d'Histoire de L'Amérique Française (Hereafter cited as RHAF): William J. Eccles, "Denonville et les Galériens Iroquois," RHAF 14-1 (1960), pp. 408-429; Jean Leclerc, "Denonville et ses Captifs Iroquois," RHAF 14-4 (1961), pp. 545-558.

<sup>40</sup>Baugy, Journal, p. 90.

<sup>41</sup>NYCD 9:338; Leclerc, "Denonville et ses captifs..." RHAF p. 551.

Puncturing Denonville's careful leak-prevention plan, two of these protesters decided to run through the woods to warn the Senecas of the impending attack. The Chevalier de Baugy, the governor's aide-de-camp, haughtily dismissed this, claiming not to be worried about it, or about the possibility of the protesters harassing the returning French party. In his journal, perhaps to reassure himself, Baugy insisted, "I do not think they have the guts."<sup>42</sup> Aside from these two Indians, the rest of the dissidents planned to return home to Sault Saint-Louis. Thus the Sault fighting force was down to only seventy men but was still one of the largest groups of French-allied Indian fighters. Since pressure may have been applied in getting these Indians to join the expedition, it is no wonder that so many of them took the opportunity presented by Denonville's morally questionable actions to bail out. Baugy had stated that the reason for bringing them along in the first place was to test their fidelity. Unwavering commitment was a bit much to expect, since some were strong-armed into going along.<sup>43</sup>

Two Kahnawake Indians taken prisoner by the English testified that they were given a choice of participating in the campaign or being imprisoned until the war was over.<sup>44</sup> Although they may have had ulterior motives for claiming this

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<sup>42</sup>Baugy, Journal, p. 91.

<sup>43</sup>Leclerc, "Denonville..." pp. 554-555.

<sup>44</sup>NYCD 3:431, 433.

when testifying to the English officials who captured them,<sup>45</sup> other parts of their testimony about the expedition match the official version, and the detailed account of Adandidaghko (one of the captives) seems plausible. He chronicled his difficult situation; he had wanted to leave his home at the mission village to hunt, but his relatives reasoned with him that if he did so, he could expect eventually to be caught and imprisoned. So he agreed to stay and accept the inevitable, despite his wish not to fight, and a few days later, the French came to the village, gave each Indian thirty bullets, two handfuls of powder, and told them to be ready at the designated time to leave on the expedition.<sup>46</sup>

Given this scenario of strong-arming recruits, Baugy should not have been surprised that such a large group defected. He kept a close watch on the behavior of the Christian Indians who remained on the expedition. For instance, the French entourage reached an island on the way to Seneca country, and found that some Iroquois had been at the spot earlier to fish but had since left. The Christian Iroquois were visibly relieved that they were gone, Baugy noticed. Having found tracks on another island, he had expected the allied Indians to follow these and chase down

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<sup>45</sup>Adandidaghko's earlier claim that he did not want to fight was in response to the opening question of the interrogation by the English: "Asked if he was not ashamed that he left his country, to the French, and to fight against his own brothers..." NYCD 3:433.

<sup>46</sup>NYCD 3:433.

some Iroquois, but noted in his journal that they did not try very hard, implying that they wanted to lose track of the prey.<sup>47</sup>

Denonville himself doubted the fidelity of the Christian Indians, especially the Christian Iroquois, "on whom we dared not rely having to fight against their relatives."<sup>48</sup> But the governor also recognized the tactical need for such Indians in battle. He explained to his superiors that although Indians generally were not skilled at military formation, he would need to tolerate the Christian Indians, "some of whom we want with us; for if we had none of them...the enemy's Indians would continually harass us on our flank and rear."<sup>49</sup> He was willing to put up with some discipline problems for this advantage. But they were useful not only as fodder. Denonville claimed that the order in which they were to march was not prescribed, as it was for militia and regular troops, so "they might serve as scouts or in detachments which we should send out, or to facilitate the passages" over rapids, at which the Kahnawakes were highly skilled.<sup>50</sup> But Adandidaghko and Kakariall both told a different story - that the governor ordered the Christian Iroquois and some other Indians to be positioned in the middle of the entourage of

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<sup>47</sup>Baugy, Journal, p. 91; Leclerc, "Denonville...", p. 555.

<sup>48</sup>NYCD 9:338.

<sup>49</sup>NYCD 9:342.

<sup>50</sup>NYCD 9:359.



boats and canoes, with Frenchmen before and behind them, so that they could not escape.<sup>51</sup> These Indians may have felt as much under siege as those they were assigned to attack.

But somehow those who stayed with the expedition lost their reluctance to fight. While the French and allied Indians were building a makeshift fort and boat shelter upon landing at Irondequoit,<sup>52</sup> a few Senecas appeared to taunt them. The Kahnawakes, being the most adept at the Seneca language, were called upon to translate the exchange of words which followed. They did not hesitate to tell the Senecas that they had come to their country to kill them, either relaying the sentiments of others who could not communicate with the Senecas or expressing their own feelings towards them.<sup>53</sup> This must have set the mood, despite both Kakariall's and Adandidaghko's claims that up to the last day before the battle the allied Indians wanted rather "to boil their pots" than to continue marching, the governor bidding them to walk on.<sup>54</sup>

When the battle finally started, the Kahnawakes fought exceptionally bravely whereas the "pagan" Indians (Ottawas and

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<sup>51</sup>NYCD 3:431, 434.

<sup>52</sup>On the southwest shore of Lake Ontario, at the edge of Seneca territory, near present-day Rochester, N.Y.

<sup>53</sup>Baugy, Journal, p. 97; NYCD 3:434, 446. It is unclear from this account whether they were merely relaying French sentiments or declaring their own.

<sup>54</sup>NYCD 3:431, 434.

Hurons from Michilimackinac) fled in the thick of the action. The courage of the former was notable since the Kahnawakes were positioned way out on the right and left flanks, in front of more than beside the French troops and militia.<sup>55</sup> Kakariall recounted that "the Governor put all the Indians in the Front, because he mistrusted them for feare they would join with the Senecas."<sup>56</sup> They were exposed mercilessly to the enemy, and must have steeled their nerves to the situation. The Sault Iroquois received honorable mention later for their conduct in the battle; Denonville said they "surpassed themselves, and performed deeds of valour."<sup>57</sup> They even sacrificed one of their headmen; when the smoke lifted, Ogenheratarihiens lay dead on the field.

Perhaps they steeled themselves in the heat of the battle because their only other choice was to defect to the Senecas, to whom they were often very close during the fighting. But this would have been suicidal; the French would probably try to shoot them down rather than allow them to defect, and there was certainly no guarantee that the Senecas would look kindly on those who had travelled all these miles to accompany the enemy army. They might expect to be killed as traitors. Therefore, they made the best of their situation and at least

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<sup>55</sup>DHNY 1:152; NYCD 3: 434; Baugy, Journal, pp. 99-100; NYCD 3:446.

<sup>56</sup>NYCD 3:431.

<sup>57</sup>Baugy, Journal, pp. 99-100; C11A 9:65.

had the goodwill and even admiration of the French army after the last shot had been fired.<sup>58</sup>

Clearly, there were some who genuinely wanted to fight with the French. Of the three captains of the Kahnawakes who went with their men (an Onondaga, an Oneida, and a Mohawk), the Mohawk captain Kryn was known to be pro-French, and may even have contributed to the arm-twisting efforts of the French in recruiting men for the occasion.<sup>59</sup>

Suspicion that some of the Sault Iroquois fought bravely only to cut their losses is fueled by the testimony of the two Kahnawake prisoners detained by the New Yorkers; Kakariall indicated that his people refused to participate in the phase of Denonville's campaign which followed the battle -- destroying corn stores at the Senecas' abandoned villages. Adandandidghko said the same, adding that some of these Indians found hidden corn stores but kept them secret from the French in order to minimize Seneca famine.<sup>60</sup> Denonville must have sensed that allegiance was fragile; the governor wanted to send some Indians and Frenchmen out to chase enemy stragglers left in the area after the routing by the French (most Senecas had fled to the Cayugas) but did not because he

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<sup>58</sup>Baugy, the former sceptic, commented after the battle that "we could be proud of them." (In Journal, p. 101.)

<sup>59</sup>NYCD 3:431; Henri Béchard, "Togouiroui," Dictionary of Canadian Biography 1:650-651. He was on good terms with the Jesuits at Sault Saint-Louis, and probably joined their efforts to convince Indians to sign up for military service.

<sup>60</sup>NYCD 3:432, 435.

feared that if they were attacked by hostile forces, the French-allied Indians would allow the Frenchmen to be hacked to pieces and would join the enemy.<sup>61</sup> In the days following the defeat of the Senecas, the French-allied Indians refused to provide an escort for a party of French bringing wounded back to the main station near the shore.<sup>62</sup> The spirit of cooperation was short-lived.

Four Kahnawakes served the Seneca cause through espionage, at some point fleeing the French camp undetected to tell the tribesmen of the French attack. For their troubles, however, they had their heads broken by those they informed, as one escapee from the Senecas told the French. Other Sault Iroquois, obviously of the pro-French faction, followed an example set by the Huron Indians on the campaign in Seneca country and went out looking for scalps.<sup>63</sup> But the neutral faction prevailed on the retreat from Seneca country. Kakariall, Adandidaghko, Denonville, and his aide de camp, Baugy, all recounted that the Christian Indians refused to go with the rest of the entourage to Niagara after the Seneca campaign. Denonville wanted them to help build some fortifications at that outpost on the western end of Lake Ontario. The French tried "all the arguments which could be brought to bear upon them" but the Indians insisted on

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<sup>61</sup>Baugy, Journal, p. 106.

<sup>62</sup>Baugy, Journal, p. 107.

<sup>63</sup>Baugy, Journal, pp. 110, 111.

leaving. Denonville sent ten or twelve canoes after them to attempt to bring them back by force if necessary.<sup>64</sup> While the two groups were negotiating in their boats, one Indian stood up and suggested capitulation, reasoning with the rest of the Christian Indians that they should minimize their losses; they had heard the governor's threats, they might as well go along with him voluntarily rather than be forced to do so. Most of the dissidents capitulated, but later, when no Frenchmen were looking, a couple of canoes managed to escape.<sup>65</sup>

Although the events surrounding this first open hostility between Kahnawakes and one of the Five Nations are confusing, and actions sometimes contradictory, it is clear that the Sault Iroquois harbored divided loyalties. There were at least two factions: those who wished to please the Jesuits and the French officials and felt that Kahnawake interests were inextricably tied to those of the French, and those who felt more allegiance to their ancestry and their fellow brothers of the longhouse. The latter were present at the 1687 campaign but probably against their wishes. A broad range of persuasions could have been and no doubt were employed to involve them in the fighting. Their own kinsmen at the Sault may have been agents in convincing them to join the war effort. As in most wars, some volunteered, but many were

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<sup>64</sup>Baugy, Journal, p. 115; NYCD 3:432, 435, 9:367.

<sup>65</sup>NYCD 3:435, 9:367.

drafted.

After discovering that the Kahnawake Iroquois had joined the French army in trying to bring the Seneca people to their knees, New York's Governor Dongan asked the League Iroquois to send a message to their cold-hearted brethren pleading with them once again to leave their community and return to the Iroquois homeland, promising them protection if they agreed. "If they will not be advised," Dongan darkly hinted in his instructions to Five Nations representatives, "then you know what to do with them."<sup>66</sup> Representatives of the Five Nations replied that they wanted very much to have their relatives return from Canada, and did not know why the latter had fought against their brethren, but could conceive of no way to get them to return except by sending in a messenger (a Sault Indian held prisoner among the Iroquois) to give them a signal to escape.<sup>67</sup> There was a widely held belief in New York and Iroquoia that the Sault Indians were held against their will in their village.

The recent hostilities between Sault and League Iroquois

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<sup>66</sup>LIR p. 132; NYCD 3:439.

<sup>67</sup>NYCD 3:444. After the attack on the Senecas, the Five Nations harangued the Huron Indians for not warning them of the attack; if they expected the Hurons, who had formerly been their mortal enemies, to do so, then they must have been even more shocked that only two Sault Iroquois warned them, and only at the last minute, and that so many others participated in the assault. (Nicolas Perrot, Memoire sur les Moeurs et Coutumes des Sauvages... (Leipzig: 1824) p. 138-143.)

was a cause for remorse on all sides. Alarmed at the implications of recent events, Kryn and a few other Kahnawakes set out in August 1687, shortly after returning from Denonville's campaign, for Lake Champlain and points south. Eyewitnesses differ on exactly what was Kryn's purpose. Kakariall asserted that he came to ask if the Mohawks, Onondagas, and Oneidas were united with the Senecas against the French, hoping to dissuade them from such a stance. (He also said that Kryn had been sent on the mission by the Jesuit resident at the Sault, possibly on orders from the governor.) Adandidaghko, however, testified that Kryn and a few other Sault Indians came to see if they could still be reunited with the Mohawks and other Iroquois since this [French] war with the Senecas had started. (The Jesuit had sent them to ask about eastern Iroquois neutrality in the French-Seneca war, in exchange for a return of prisoners, but they added their own agenda.) He claimed that many of the Catholic Iroquois wanted very much to be reunited in their native land. Both testimonies indicate that even the pro-French among the Kahnawakes were as worried as the League tribesmen and the New Yorkers about the new situation and the possibility that it was irrevocable.<sup>68</sup>

A band of Dutch New Yorkers on their way back to New York from Montreal who met Kryn's group said that Kryn told them he had been down in Mohawk country to dissuade the eastern

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<sup>68</sup>NYCD 3:432, 435.

Iroquois from going to war against the French and to try to convince all of them to come and live in Canada. If this did not work, Kryn apparently told the Dutchmen, then all the Sault Iroquois would return to the Albany area to live with their relatives once more, pending the arrival of English Jesuits.<sup>69</sup> Despite concern about the possibility of fratricide, the French Jesuits and their faction among the Sault, of which Kryn was the apparent spokesman, believed that the French war against the Senecas was warranted and was no cause for the other four nations to come to the aid of their fellow Iroquois. A Frenchman who deserted to the English and served henceforth as an information pipeline for the New Yorkers claimed that Kryn was "very true to the French and would immediately join with the French in the warr against the Sniekes and Maquaes," and was "in great esteem with the French Governour."<sup>70</sup> Kryn was committed to the French cause; although he was doing anything possible to dissuade the eastern Iroquois from moving to a war footing, this goal was defined by the French point of view.<sup>71</sup> He would be working for a French peace.

Kryn did prove himself at peace-keeping, for Kakariall and Adandidaghko both recounted a meeting which took place

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<sup>69</sup>NYCD 3:437-438.

<sup>70</sup>NYCD 3:487-88. This was confirmed by Denonville's praise of Kryn to the minister of marine on October 27, 1687 (C11A 9:130).

<sup>71</sup>NYCD 3:478.



between Kryn's group and a band of sixty League Mohawks in early August 1687. Meeting somewhere around Lake Champlain, the two groups could easily have come to blows, since the sixty were headed to New France to attack villages (possibly Sault Saint-Louis) in retaliation for the French action against the Senecas and for Denonville's capture of Iroquois prisoners at Fort Frontenac. Kryn seems to have persuaded the warriors, some of whom were his own relatives, to return home, and even convinced a few to come and live at Kahnawake and consider Christian conversion.<sup>72</sup>

The war party's mere approach to Canada, nevertheless, was a cause for anger from Denonville, even though their plan to pillage New France communities ready for harvest was derailed. Denonville angrily wrote to Dongan reproaching the latter for sending these Indians to attack his people. Dongan replied that he had not commissioned them to go, that they decided for their own reasons to take revenge on the French.<sup>73</sup> But in September, the Onondagas told Peter Schuyler, the mayor of Albany, that Dongan "desired us...to take as many French prisoners as wee could," and that he had indeed (justifying Denonville's accusation on this point) provided the Iroquois involved with powder and ammunition for the job. The New York government then wanted the Indians to hand over to the mayor and aldermen of Albany any prisoners

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<sup>72</sup>NYCD 3:433, 435-436; C11A 9:141-141v.

<sup>73</sup>NYCD 3:512, 514.

they might take.<sup>74</sup> In fact, Kryn's diplomatic skill seems all the more impressive given the fact that the sixty Mohawks had been assigned specifically to take Kryn and his group of seven or eight hostage. When they apologized to Schuyler for not accomplishing their mission, he reproached them by reminding them that they had been "often charged" with bringing Kryn to Albany as a prisoner and had failed repeatedly.<sup>75</sup>

Not all Kahnawake Indians were valuable prey because not all were French partisans. Denonville realized that only some at the Sault supported Kryn. Some Kahnawakes even informed New York partisans whom they met in the woods and waterways between New York and New France of French intentions to make war on the Iroquois and New Yorkers, thereby undermining the French side.<sup>76</sup> A few attempted to escape from the Sault mission village; four Sault women and one Sault man did so in October 1687, and men were sent out to hunt them down and bring them back. The four women were returned to Kahnawake but as for the man, his "brains were knocked out as a traitor" as soon as he was caught. Denonville coldly commented that "this proof of fidelity afforded me great pleasure."<sup>77</sup> The

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<sup>74</sup>New York Council Minutes Old Vol. 6, p. 5; NYCD 3:485.

<sup>75</sup>NYCD 3:483, 434.

<sup>76</sup>LIR p. 142. Denonville praised Kryn and "some of his warriors of our village of Sault St. Louis Iroquois." (Emphasis mine.) (C11A 9:130.)

<sup>77</sup>NYCD 9:353.

accusations by Governor Dongan that the Sault Iroquois were "kept upp in a fort there [in Canada] with guards upon them" and not "att free liberty to returne to their country if they thinke fitt" seem not to be merely the wild-eyed accusations of this hawkish governor.<sup>78</sup>

The French agent, Jesuit Francis Valliant, who was corresponding with Dongan on this matter, tried to turn the accusation around, claiming that the two hundred soldiers stationed at the village of Sault Saint-Louis were there to protect the Indians from enemy attack. Valliant referred to the testimony of a Sault Indian named Cakare who denied that his people were kept against their will. But Cakare was pro-French and had been on a journey to discuss peace with the League Mohawks when he was captured and held in irons in Manhattan for his troubles. He was less likely than a neutral Indian to admit the truth of such an embarrassing and politically damaging allegation. When asked "whether in Canada the Christian Mohox were att libertie," he answered every time that "he knew none that was detained," implying something different from what the question asked.<sup>79</sup> Spokesmen of the League Iroquois told the New York governor that they wanted their relatives, "the praying Indians at Canida," to be free from constraint. This is telling; if the League Iroquois were claiming this situation existed, there

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<sup>78</sup>NYCD 3:526.

<sup>79</sup>NYCD 3:530.

can be no doubt that they had it first-hand from their fellow Iroquois.<sup>80</sup> A group of Sault Indians journeyed to Mohawk country in the summer of 1688 claiming that they came "with consent of ye Jesuite and say that ye Governor of Cannada gave them liberty to come heither [sic] in the midle of summer."<sup>81</sup> That they had to specify this speaks to the usual restriction of free movement.

Dongan also accused the French of gaining the support of the Kahnawake Indians through bribery.<sup>82</sup> He was not wrong here either. Coincidences of time between donations made to the community and military manpower needed for an upcoming expedition occurred in 1684 and 1687. It happened again in 1688.<sup>83</sup> Denonville used presents to retain their favor, to appease them, or to convince them that Dongan's offers for a new life in Saratoga could not possibly be as generous as those made by the French. The Marquis suggested in the autumn following the Seneca campaign that clothing be given to the Kahnawakes because they had been unable to hunt while marching with the French army. Other supplies for their subsistence were offered as well, "as an encouragement to act well, and as

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<sup>80</sup>NYCD 3:534. The tribal grapevine was alive and well, even in the late 1680s.

<sup>81</sup>NYCD 3:565. A Dutchman held in New France reported in 1691 that although some Kahnawakes were inclined to emigrate to New York, there were "strict guards kept by the French to prevent their departure." (NYCD 3:781.)

<sup>82</sup>NYCD 3:511.

<sup>83</sup>RAPO 1939-40, p. 283.

an evidence that care is taken of them."<sup>84</sup> Part of the reason was that a smallpox epidemic had struck the village hard; three hundred of the Sault Indians (almost half) were ill at the time.<sup>85</sup> But another concern the governor expressed was New France's public image. Its administration had to appear more generous than that of its neighbor to the south, both as a sort of one-upmanship, and as an inducement to the Indians to view their colony as the one which valued them the most and treated them best.

The war for the support of Indians became a race to furnish earthly goods in the most commodious way possible. The Sault Saint-Louis Iroquois were the spoils of the war; both sides courted them vigorously. Much more than the League Iroquois, they were caught between two superpowers who viewed them as prizes. To complicate the situation, they did not themselves agree on where their allegiances lay. Pro-French and pro-League Iroquois factions were to vie for control within an increasingly constricted sphere of action. But as constricted as it was to become, the Kahnawakes managed to involve themselves in Franco-Iroquois-English relations in such a way as would keep all the belligerents guessing as to

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<sup>84</sup>NYCD 9:353-354. On at least one occasion in 1690, French officers used spirits to lure the Mission Iroquois to a battlefield. (Collection de Manuscrits, contenant lettres, mémoires et autres documents historiques relatifs à la Nouvelle-France 4 vols. (Québec: A. Côté, 1883-1885), 1:511.)

<sup>85</sup>Trelease, Indian Affairs, p. 304. In autumn 1690, smallpox claimed 400 League Iroquois lives. (NYCD 9:490; JR 64:63.)

what their next move would be and to influence events powerfully. They knew that they were the spoils of the coming war.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### KAHNAWAKE-FIVE NATIONS RELATIONS, 1689-1701

When Teganissorens, the Onondaga diplomat, lamented to his Kahnawake counterparts in 1694 that "we have mutually butchered each other," he struck at a major psychic crisis among the people of the longhouse.<sup>1</sup> In the 1690s Iroquoian hostilities were directed at each other as never before and fratricide became an increasingly likely scenario. Father Joseph François Lafitau, the Jesuit missionary to the Sault Iroquois, noticed in them by the 1710s a hardened attitude towards war which had its roots in the era of Teganissorens and Kryn: "Quite often they [enemies in battle] know each other and speak to each other. They ask each other news, harangue each other and do not beat each other up without first paying each other compliments."<sup>2</sup> These words are haunting against the chronicle of hostile encounters between Sault and Five Nations people.

Hostilities were indeed beginning to mount in the late-1680s. In the fall of 1688, for example, some Kahnawakes scalped League Iroquois travellers. League Mohawks continued to pillage French settlements during this time, and Denonville

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York 15 vols. (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1853-1887), 9:580 (hereafter cited as NYCD).

<sup>2</sup>Joseph François Lafitau, Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times 2 vols., William N. Fenton and Elizabeth Moore, ed. and trans. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974-77), 2:143.

told Dongan that he had not "ordered" his Indians to cease their hostilities against the Five Nations, and did not plan to do so. He increased the fortification of the Sault village that year, and placed troops on an island near the Sault to prevent Iroquois attacks from the river. French officials feared that the League Iroquois might attack the village of their Catholic relatives, and so Kahnawake became a heavily protected - and surveillanced - place. The expressed fear may have been a pretext for increasing fortifications at the Indian village. The French made a practice of keeping Iroquois prisoners there; some Iroquois came to Montreal in June 1688 to negotiate for the release of some ninety of their kinsmen. One wishes for information on how Iroquois prisoners were treated inside the village of Sault Saint-Louis.

Despite these escalations, however, there was evidence that some Iroquois were consciously attempting to avoid killing each other. In the summer of 1689, the Iroquois did come and surprise the northern colony, but not the Sault village. They struck the hamlet of Lachine directly across the St. Lawrence from Sault Saint-Louis. The night of August 4 brought screams from the Lachinois as they attempted to escape the wrath of the invaders. But the Iroquois avoided Kahnawakes in their attack. Even when some Sault and Mountain Mission Iroquois joined a French officer who had come out from Montreal to help repulse the raiders, the latter shot only at the Frenchmen among the defensive fighters, leaving the



Mission Iroquois reinforcements unharmed. When the French militiamen were captured, and the rest of the French in sight were fleeing, seven Sault Indians tried to reach a fortified church where another officer and some men were attempting to hold out. All of these Frenchmen were killed, yet the Sault Iroquois fought on bravely, defiant of the League Iroquois (although perhaps bravery was no longer necessary when they saw that they were being spared Iroquois bullets).<sup>3</sup> They did not, however, defect to their kinsmen. Rather, some were taken as captives to Iroquois country and forced to give information about French activities and plans.<sup>4</sup>

The greatest effect of this invasion, infamously known as the "Lachine Massacre," was to bring the Sault Iroquois to live inside Montreal temporarily in a makeshift village they had erected there. Denonville claimed that he had them moved to the city because he had heard rumors that the English and Iroquois wanted to seize the village and because their fort was in a state of disrepair. A League Mohawk, Lawrence, who was a prominent Anglophile and Protestant convert, disagreed, accusing the governor of Canada of having these Indians moved

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<sup>3</sup>Joseph P. Donnelly, ed., "[François Vachon de] Belmont's History of Canada," Mid-America XXXIV (1952), p. 142.

<sup>4</sup>Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documentary History of the State of New York 4 vols. [quarto ed.] (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1850-1851) 2:50 (hereafter cited as DHNY).

because "the French were jealous of the praying Indians."<sup>5</sup> By this he meant that the French feared Kahnawake defection, a demoralizing prospect for the French in their war against the Iroquois and English. Another account suggests that "although the Indians of Sault Saint-Louis were entirely in our interests, and we had a garrison in their fort, they were obliged to bring their families and their crop harvest to Montreal, where they put their cabins in the form of a village." French fears that these Indians may not have been entirely in their interest were strong enough to warrant this removal, at a cost of using valuable troops to transport the Indians' personal effects and food supply when the colony was on a war footing.<sup>6</sup> This removal was probably not carried out voluntarily; there is no evidence that the Kahnawakes wanted to move, but also no evidence of large-scale resistance, perhaps because of bias in French records.

When they were finally moved back to the Sault in the summer of 1690, having had a full year in which to learn all

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<sup>5</sup>Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série C11A (Canada: Correspondance Générale, 1540-1784, 122 vols.) 10:339v (hereafter cited as C11A; references are to originals); Lawrence's claim: American Antiquarian Society Notebook, s.v. 4 Jan. 1690 (cited in Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1984), p. 366).

<sup>6</sup>Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec 1927-28, p. 19 (hereafter cited as RAPQ); "Relation de ce qui s'est passé en Canada au sujet de la guerre, tant des Anglais que des Iroquois, depuis l'année 1682," Historical Documents 3d ser., no. III (Quebec: Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 1871), p. 45 (quote); NYCD 9:435.

the vices of French society from which they had previously been sheltered by the Jesuits, they were not appreciated in the city. A major reason for the move back to the Sault was that many "disorders" had arisen from this brief experiment in intercultural living. The Sault Iroquois became addicted to liquor in an urban setting where its traffic was impossible to limit, and when drunk they committed horrible acts of violence against their own and other people. It is not surprising that people taken by fiat out of their homes and into an alien environment would react in negative ways. Their discontent had become great enough that New France's top officials reported to the king their worries over Kahnawake defection to the League Iroquois. But it was thought that if they were given provisions and ammunition and returned to their former home, they would fight exceptionally well against the enemy.<sup>7</sup> Not surprisingly, the new site of the Mission of Saint-François-Xavier at Sault Saint-Louis, built in 1690 a league or two further west from the former location, was a fortified village.<sup>8</sup>

The last of the so-called "beaver wars" which the Iroquois had fought with other Indian tribes, and by extension with the French, blended into the first of the wars for empire fought between the French and the English in North America.

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<sup>7</sup>C11A 10:321.

<sup>8</sup>NYCD 9:435.

The English at Albany had become increasingly protective of their Iroquois allies against the pretensions of the French in the 1680s, but North American relations were also dictated by political and diplomatic realities across the ocean. Until the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the Stuart monarchy of England was on a friendly footing with its Catholic counterpart on the French throne, Louis XIV. The English events of 1688 changed all that, however, as the largely Protestant English upper class feared continued rule by Catholics and supported a coup of the throne by the Dutch (Protestant) William of Orange and his marriage to Mary, a Protestant in the English royal line. William was no friend of the Sun King, and proceeded, virtually on ascending the throne, to declare war on his neighbor across the Channel. News of this development did not reach North America until 1689, but it did have the effect of gearing up the war machine in both New France and the various English colonies, especially the northern ones closest to New France.

As the most vulnerable colony to the new enemy, New York had been psychologically prepared since the blustering cold war between Dongan and Denonville, but the colony was thrown into political chaos and strident anti-Catholicism with the local rebellion of Jacob Leisler and his son-in-law, Jacob Milborne. The French therefore interpreted the Lachine massacre as not just another Iroquois outrage, but one instigated by the English at Albany, who, even though not

entirely sympathetic to Leisler, had had to capitulate to the rabidly anti-Catholic German demagogue. The French were to retaliate for the attack with a raid of their own in early 1690, but Indians were involved on both sides, and in this February 1690 assault, no Indians were more prominent than the Sault Iroquois and their relatives, the League Mohawks.

In fact, the Francophile Sault chief Kryn seems to have been the unofficial leader of the expedition which resulted in a tit-for-tat "massacre" of Schenectady. Governor Denonville had intended to invade Albany, thereby striking at the heart of the province of New York (such was the perception in Québec).<sup>9</sup> Eighty Sault and Mountain Iroquois, 16 Algonquins, and 110 Frenchmen set out from Montreal in late January, and as they reached south of Lake George, the Indians asked the commanders of the operation, Ste. Hélène and de Mantet, what the exact plan was.<sup>10</sup> The officers replied that Albany was the hoped-for target, and on hearing this the tribesmen reserved no disdain for this foolhardy plan. These Indians, mostly Sault, knew the geography well, and explained the difficulties they would have in attacking the largest and most

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<sup>9</sup>C11A 11:186-188; DHNY 1:180; Guillaume Phips, who wrote the "Relation de ce qui s'est passé..." says "as it was the capital of New York and a considerable place." in Collection des Manuscrits, contenant lettres, mémoires et autres documents historiques relatifs à la Nouvelle-France 4 vols. (Québec: A. Côté, 1883-1885), 1:489.

<sup>10</sup>NYCD 9:466; Lawrence H. Leder, ed., The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1723 (Gettysburg: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956), p. 158 (hereafter cited as LIR).

heavily fortified settlement in the region. One Indian (probably Kryn) even asked the Frenchmen when they had become so desperate. The response had to do with wounded honor from the Lachine massacre, and the desire to avenge that blow, or to die in the attempt. But Indians were much more pragmatic than to go on a suicide mission and would not accept this plan. The bicultural group agreed to disagree until they reached the fork in the path leading to Albany and to the sleepy hamlet of Schenectady west of it. At that crossroads, the Indians managed to convince the Frenchmen to veer to the west, perhaps by simply refusing to participate in the attack if it was to be on the larger town. Or the French may have deferred to the natives' superior knowledge of the area; they were quick to admit in accounts of this event that these Indians knew what they were talking about.<sup>11</sup>

Having almost reached Schenectady, the group stopped and was given a pep talk by Kryn. He harangued them and exhorted them to forget their weariness and to fight hard for the cause of avenging the deaths of the previous summer at the hands of the Iroquois. Kryn spoke of the Five Nations as traitors because they had heeded the solicitation of the English -- harsh words for a fellow Iroquois.<sup>12</sup> This of course earned

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<sup>11</sup>DHNY 1:186-187.

<sup>12</sup>NYCD 9:467; Pierre F.-X. Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France 6 vols., John G. Shea, ed. and trans. (New York: Harper, 1866-1872), 4:123; Claude Bacqueville de la Potherie, Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale 4 vols. (Paris: 1722), 3:67.

him the praise of the French, who spoke in glowing terms; "this Indian was without contradiction the most considerable of his tribe, an honest man, as full of spirit, prudence and generosity as possible, and capable at the same time of the grandest undertakings."<sup>13</sup> Charlevoix later claimed that Kryn "with great eloquence, [spoke] with an authority acquired, not only over the Indians, but even over the French, by his great services to the colony, actions of admirable conception and heroic valour, eminent virtue, and untiring zeal for religion."<sup>14</sup> In French eyes, Kryn was the most prominent and admired Kahnawake Indian because he was the most pro-French.

The Schenectadians did not expect to be attacked in the middle of winter when the snow was so deep; they had a stockade fortification around their village but had left the gates wide open on the night of February 9.<sup>15</sup> They were awakened in the early morning to the cries of the invaders, who spared hardly anyone except one Scottish family and about thirty Mohawks who were in the village. According to every French account of the event, the Mohawks were spared because the French and Mission Indians wanted to make a point that they believed the English had been the force behind the

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<sup>13</sup>NYCD 9:467.

<sup>14</sup>Charlevoix, History 4:123.

<sup>15</sup>W.H. Whitmore, ed., The Andros Tracts 8 vols. (New York: Franklin, 1971, reprinted from the 1874 ed.), 3:114.

Lachine massacre which they were avenging.<sup>16</sup> However, it seems a bit far-fetched to absolve the Iroquois of blame for attacking Lachine, even if the English encouraged them. They still carried out the raid and did the killing, looting, and burning. Since the mission Iroquois were so prominent in the decision-making on this occasion, they may have insisted on clemency for the Mohawks because they were kinsmen. There had been no problems with keeping the Sault Iroquois from changing their minds about participating in the expedition on the way down to Schenectady as there had been three years earlier en route to Seneca country; they felt much more at ease about military operations against Europeans with whom they had no blood ties. Members of their own tribe were a different matter. Still in 1690 as at Lachine the preceding year, the invading force had strong reservations about inflicting harm on others of Iroquois ancestry and spared fellow Indians while shooting at whites.

The officials at Albany managed to persuade some League Mohawks to pursue the French and mission Indian forces as the latter were returning home with their thirty prisoners. Mohawks from the first two castles, led by the Anglophile Mohawk Lawrence, joined some militiamen from Albany and

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<sup>16</sup>Collection des Maunscrits 1:491; NYCD 9:468; Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows, 1896-1901), 64:61 (hereafter cited as JR); Nellis M. Crouse, LeMoyne d'Iberville, Soldier of New France (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954), pp. 57-58.



marched toward Lake Champlain. Lieutenant-Governor Leisler praised the eastern Iroquois for their "fidelity and courage" in chasing the enemy, but other accounts indicated that there had been difficulty in rousing the Mohawks and that the third castle had declined to send any men.<sup>17</sup> Factionalism reigned among the League Mohawks as well as among the Sault Iroquois; the third castle was evidently the pro-French or neutral group, holding out against the pro-English castles led by Lawrence because the Mohawks at Schenectady had been spared or because they were more positively disposed toward their Sault brethren (or for both reasons). Lawrence's band captured fifteen and killed three of the French-allied Indian group, but whether the three unfortunate ones were white or Indian is not known.<sup>18</sup>

The neutral or Francophile faction among the League Mohawks became more forceful in the following months. Kahnawake Indians had joined an assault against English settlements in northern New England near Salmon Falls. The governor of Connecticut expected to count on the support of the League Mohawks to avenge these attacks by French-allied Indians, but Robert Livingston complained of the Mohawks' reluctance on this occasion to chase the "French praying Indians."<sup>19</sup> Sault and League Iroquois with loaded guns were

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<sup>17</sup>DHNY 1:191, 2:87-88; NYCD 3:700, 708, 717.

<sup>18</sup>NYCD 3:708.

<sup>19</sup>NYCD 3:728-729. (RAPO 1927-28, p. 45 re: expedition).

still keeping their distance from each other.

On the Sault Iroquois expedition in New England in the spring of 1690, Kryn was accidentally killed by a French-allied Abenaki who mistook him for an enemy.<sup>20</sup> One might guess that Kryn's death would result in a withering of pro-French (anti-League) sentiment at the Sault village, but Kryn's nephew, La Plaque, picked up the torch where his uncle had left it, and this younger Francophile headman made himself prominent as a trigger-happy reconnaissance man. (But it is unclear how much support he had among the Sault people.) He frequently ventured south of Montreal toward Lake Champlain to check for invading English and Iroquois, and at times seemed to be crying wolf.<sup>21</sup>

However, in July 1690, Major-General John Winthrop of Massachusetts attempted to bring a force from several colonies to invade Montreal, coinciding with a naval attack from New England on Quebec. The naval attempt led by Sir William Phips failed, as did Winthrop's land expedition. Winthrop had trouble getting the Iroquois to join the force in sufficient

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<sup>20</sup>Collection des Manuscrits 1:500-501; "Relation de ce qui s'est passé..." Historical Documents, pp. 47-48; Potherie 1:347-348.

<sup>21</sup>See for instance, Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série F3 (Collection Moreau de Saint-Méry, 1540-1806, 270 vols.), 2:249; Louis Armand de Lom D'Arce de Lahontan, New Voyages to North America (2nd.ed.) 2 vols. (London: Bonwicke, 1735), 1:158; NYCD 9:479-480; Louis Armand de Lom D'Arce de Lahontan, The Oakes Collection: new documents by Lahontan, Gustave Lanctot, ed. (Ottawa: Patenaude, 1940), p. 33. (La Plaque was a true French zealot; he went to France to meet the king. Potherie, Histoire 1:166.)

numbers. He attempted to heighten the fervor of at least those Mohawks who had arrived, by feigning interest in the Mohawk chiefs' advice on strategy. They gave him outrageous answers to his questions, a display of contempt for his patronizing attitude. But when the assembled men got as far as Wood Creek and had to turn back because of delays caused by sickness among the troops and a lack of canoes, Winthrop sent John Schuyler, the Albanian, on to conduct as much border raiding as possible, accompanied by whoever would continue.<sup>22</sup> Forty militia and one hundred Indians, most of them Mohawks, continued on to New France. The Mohawk headmen may have viewed Winthrop with a contemptuous eye, but John Schuyler was popular among them, and what had originally looked like a feeble effort from Iroquois forces turned out to be a strong showing.<sup>23</sup>

French forces had known of the approach of the English and Iroquois because of La Plaque's reconnaissance efforts. Throughout late August, the French assembled as many able male bodies as possible at the fort of La Prairie. They took the threat seriously; even Governor Frontenac was on hand at the fort. He called on his Indian allies from the northern Great

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<sup>22</sup>The Senecas had previously indicated they would provide some fighters for this cause, but a smallpox epidemic took its toll in the Seneca villages, and none arrived. (NYCD 9:461, 3:717; Allen W. Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 304.

<sup>23</sup>NYCD 4:193-196; Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," pp. 294-295.

Lakes as well as from the St. Lawrence valley to join them. All sorts of bribery were used to encourage natives, including liquor.<sup>24</sup>

Many Sault Indians were on hand and called a meeting of all the chiefs of the various tribes represented, inviting them to visit with Frontenac and to hear an important announcement. The speaker was Louis Ateriata, a controversial and enigmatic figure.<sup>25</sup> Ateriata offered wampum belts along with his words, a sign that he meant seriously what he was saying. He exhorted each of the assembled headmen to "open his heart to Frontenac" as promised, and not to hide from him any transaction or communication, no matter how secret. Everyone knew that he implied communication with the Iroquois. Some French-allied tribes had been opening their own diplomatic relations with the Five Nations, since the war between the League and the French seemed as though it would continue indefinitely and these Indians were desperate to stop the carnage of their own people.

Louis Ateriata was proving to be resolutely pro-French,

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<sup>24</sup>NYCD 9:480.

<sup>25</sup>The biography of him in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography confuses him with another Indian. He was controversial because despite being extremely pro-French, the Jesuits had him banished from Kahnawake for some unknown reason. He correctly predicted an Iroquois invasion but the Jesuits at the Sault told Callière not to listen to anything that Louis Ateriata said. (Collection des Manuscrits 1:568; "Relation de ce qui s'est passe..." Historical Documents, p. 25; Henri Béchar, "Tareha," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. 1, pp. 633-634.

an ardent successor to Kryn (La Plaque was also strongly pro-French, but did not seem to be the speechmaker). He announced to the assembled Ottawa chiefs that he (Louis) was aware of their secret negotiations with the Iroquois and warned that they had some explaining to do as to why they carried on these talks while still considering themselves allies of Frontenac.<sup>26</sup> The Ottawa orator answered that they had indeed exchanged some prisoners and negotiated, but reminded the assembly that they had been forced by the French to declare war on the Five Nations, "to cease and renew hostilities without having been advised of the reason," that such a situation made no sense to them, and that the French did not come to their defense when they needed help in fighting the enemy of the French. They had decided to look out for themselves in order to survive.<sup>27</sup>

Other French allies at this meeting (which Louis Ateriata was using to rally support for the fleur-de-lys) heard these words and started to question French integrity. A Huron speaker later asked why the French, on one hand, insisted that their Indian allies fight the Iroquois at every chance, and, on the other, spared thirty of them at Schenectady.<sup>28</sup> The

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<sup>26</sup>Potherie, Histoire 3:99.

<sup>27</sup>NYCD 9:480.

<sup>28</sup>NYCD 9:481. The League Mohawks explicitly stated they did not kill those they captured on the French/Indian retreat from Schenectady in February 1690 and at La Prairie in the summer of 1690 because the French-allied Iroquois had spared the lives of 30 Mohawks at Schenectady. (NYCD 9:499.)

Sault Iroquois were not the only ones who had ever become disillusioned with the French; these other allies also became jaded with a European power which made a policy of double standards and of getting Indians to do most of their dirty work for them. While the Hurons were complaining that the French had spared Mohawks while they were out in the woods losing their young men to Iroquois bullets, they may not have known that it was probably done as a concession to the Kahnawake allies. Frontenac did not let on in his reply that this was the case, lest he suffer a revolt of his allied Indians who did not appreciate special treatment for certain native groups.

The events which followed indicated that most Indian allies were not eager to fight French battles. A scouting party had been sent out toward Chambly a few days before the meeting of allied representatives and Frontenac called by Sault Indians. The scouting party consisted of two Frenchmen and eight Indians (two from each major tribe represented). The ten men had not gone as far as they were instructed to, stopping at Chambly, they said, because they had not seen any trails. From this report, the alarm which had gathered so many habitants and troops as well as Indians at La Prairie seemed to have been false, and since many were impatient to be back home for the harvest, Frontenac released everyone and returned to Montreal.

No record exists to explain the decision made by the

scouting party, but the official French account blamed the failure of the ten scouts to detect the enemy so close to La Prairie on the eight Indians. Eight could easily have outnumbered two in deciding to report no danger and to disband the forces. The official account spoke of the "negligence" of the Indians and reasoned that the latter were also eager to return home, thereby underestimating the possibility that enemy forces were on their way through the woods.<sup>29</sup> In any case, two days after most of the men at La Prairie returned home, the Iroquois and English led by John Schuyler raided the outpost, catching the inhabitants off guard, killing twelve men and taking nineteen prisoners. By their "negligence," the scouting party had managed to avoid a direct confrontation with Five Nations fighters.

The La Prairie incident may have caused people on both sides of Lake Champlain to think about the status of League-Sault relations; some Kahnawakes who had remained in the area may have been among those wounded or killed by the Mohawks allied with Schuyler.<sup>30</sup> The Catholic Iroquois and their brothers who remained in the Iroquois League were one step closer to fratricide.

Conversely, the summer of 1690 also brought a return to normal life of sorts for the Kahnawakes; they left their makeshift tents in Montreal and built longhouses at their new

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<sup>29</sup>NYCD 9:481.

<sup>30</sup>Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," pp. 294-295.

village site at Sault Saint-Louis. The French helped them resettle by transporting their supplies and giving them "every assistance necessary both for their subsistence and for the security of their families, and to induce them to wage a vigorous war on the enemy."<sup>31</sup> Security considerations were never far from French minds, and as their aid to the Sault Iroquois indicates, they expected the latter to fight the League Iroquois and the English for them.<sup>32</sup>

Sixteen ninety-one was the year of decision in Kahnawake-Five Nations relations. But it started with a strange and unpredictable turn of events. In March, a group of 140 Mohawks and Albanians attacked a group of Sault and Mountain Iroquois who were on a hunting trip near Chambly. Taking prisoners as they did was standard procedure, but the next action of the League Mohawks was unorthodox. They sent three of their men as envoys with some of the Sault prisoners to the gates of Fort Sault Saint-Louis unarmed, and asked for peace with the Mission Iroquois and with Frontenac. There were a few minutes of great tension, after which the Sault people decided that they meant no harm and indeed came in peace. The envoys (and prisoners) were admitted inside and, according to Jesuit Father Bruyas, "were well received by our Indians, who

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<sup>31</sup>NYCD 9:453.

<sup>32</sup>Daniel Richter says the Sault Indians bore the brunt of the war for the French. (Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse," p. 367.)



were greatly rejoiced at seeing them so well inclined."<sup>33</sup> Gifts were exchanged, and an impromptu peace conference was underway. The League Mohawks ingratiated themselves with their Sault counterparts by warning them of an imminent Five Nations attack of eight hundred men.<sup>34</sup> With belts of wampum to reinforce their words, the Kahnawakes thanked them for the warning and for sparing their captives, but admonished them that if they truly meant to live at peace with Onontio (the Iroquois name for the Governor of New France), which according to Father Bruyas, they equated with "living under his authority, as true children should do," they must not go back on their word, as some Onondagas had done.

The pro-French Kahnawakes were the ascendant faction at this meeting under the noses of the Jesuits, evident from their assumption that peace with Onontio meant living under his authority. The Sault orator explained to the League delegates that making peace with the Sault Indians meant being at peace with all of their "brethren," among whom were "the Christians of La Montagne, of Lorette, and of Sillery."<sup>35</sup> The pro-French faction among the Kahnawakes identified more closely with other mission Indians than with their traditionalist relatives in Iroquoia. Or possibly this was

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<sup>33</sup>JR 64:57; Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série C11E (Des Limites et des Postes, 1651-1818, 38 vols.), 10:22 (hereafter cited as C11E).

<sup>34</sup>NYCD 9:503; JR 64:57.

<sup>35</sup>JR 64:59.

said in the presence of the Jesuits to appease them. In any case, belts of wampum accompanied these words so they were binding, and League Iroquois were given the impression that the Sault Iroquois identified more with other "mission Indians" than with the Iroquois proper.

As for official words from the League Mohawks, they used no wampum in their speech, according to Bruyas' account. Therefore, these Mohawks did not represent a general consensus among their people; they were a renegade peace faction (neutral or pro-French). They admitted that only the warriors among their people asked for peace "and have concluded it on their own account, and not through the Elders - whom they would not consult, because they [Elders] are not always very sincere." These men went on to explain that "moreover, all those among the Agniers [Mohawks] who had sense are dead."<sup>36</sup>

The depopulation of the Five Nations by disease and war had taken its toll on the political culture of the Mohawks; they faced a leadership crisis because so many of their people had died, and perhaps some of the more sagacious and cautious elders had fallen victim to smallpox or extreme factionalism. The peace delegation to the Sault in the spring of 1691 was a group which represented only one faction among the tribe; since politics relied on consensus, the only solution to an impasse was to break off into a splinter group and attempt to form policy independently.

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<sup>36</sup>JR 64:59-61.

Meanwhile the war (pro-English) faction among the League Mohawks was preparing for the invasion of which the Sault Iroquois had been warned. The League Mohawk peace faction warned the Kahnawakes not to stray from their fort lest they be captured by Iroquois or Mahican war parties prowling the area. This peace faction was out on a limb with its warnings and promises to settle for peace and to exchange prisoners. One wishes for names of individuals and for knowledge of their fates at the hands of their own people because of these treasonous actions.

At the Sault these mysterious pacifists left behind two of their own as a gesture of faith.<sup>37</sup> Father Bruyas pondered their sincerity and judged it true. He admitted that others (probably Father Lamberville, who was at Sault Saint-Louis) doubted them, but Bruyas was hopeful. He reported to Frontenac the Sault Iroquois' elation at the outcome of the visit, and that they ardently wished for peace as well, being weary of war as well as of disease, which had struck the Sault as well as League Iroquois communities. Bruyas was so optimistic about entente between the League and Mission Iroquois that he predicted that two-thirds of the Mohawks would be living at the Sault eventually.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>And according to another account, 25 League Mohawks stayed behind to visit with their relatives. (NYCD 9:499.)

<sup>38</sup>JR 64:63. Robert Livingston reported in 1700 that two-thirds of that nation had emigrated to the two mission villages (the Sault and the Mountain). (NYCD 4:648.)

However, another French account of the Mohawk peace delegation visit indicated that the envoys' message was to entreat the Sault Iroquois to return to their homeland before the onslaught of the Five Nations/English force. This force of 800 soldiers meant to capture as many Sault Indians as possible, Intendant Champigny claimed in his letter to the minister of marine, and to resettle them forcibly in Iroquoia, as well as to inflict damage on as many French settlements as possible. Champigny proudly reported that "our Indians encouraged by their missionaries, and aided by a reinforcement M. de Callières had sent them, remained faithful."<sup>39</sup> With such "encouragement," however, these Indians could hardly have made a free decision.

According to the Intendant, the Sault Iroquois told the League Mohawk diplomats that if they wanted peace with the Sault people, they would have to talk to Frontenac. It seems difficult to believe that these people would voluntarily relinquish their sovereignty and defer their own fate to the French government. There must have been encouragement to say these words, and all but the pro-French faction must have shaken their heads in dismay. Furthermore, the condition placed on the negotiations by the Sault speaker -- that the League Mohawks had to consider themselves brothers of all the Mission Indians, not just the Sault people -- may have been a device by which to ensure great difficulty in reaching an

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<sup>39</sup>NYCD 9:499.

agreement. The French had just started their war with the English and wanted their Indian allies to do most of the fighting. It may have been in French interests to avoid a peace with any group of the League Iroquois. Bruyas' wishes for peace could not have been appreciated in government circles. (Sometimes Jesuits were at odds with policy instead of aiding it.<sup>40</sup>) Champigny expressed grave doubts about the sincerity of the peace group and predicted an escalation of hostilities instead of a cease-fire.<sup>41</sup>

In Albany the meeting at Kahnawake was interpreted differently from both Bruyas' and Champigny's accounts. For instance, the New York Council was told that the "praying Indians" desired to return to New York.<sup>42</sup> Jurrian and Onnooka, Anglophile Mohawks, reported to the Albany authorities that Lawrence the Mohawk had gone inside the fort at Kahnawake not to make peace, but to make war, and failed to do so only upon seeing that his life was in danger. Jurrian and Onnooka failed to mention that the Mohawks warned the Sault Iroquois of the coming Iroquois attack, relaying only that the French government and the Sault people had thanked their Mohawk counterparts for returned prisoners, and that the Mission Iroquois expressed interest in emigrating to New York

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<sup>40</sup>See William J. Eccles, Canada Under Louis XIV, 1663-1701 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), p. 133.

<sup>41</sup>NYCD 9:500.

<sup>42</sup>New York Council Minutes, 1668-1783, New York State Library, Old Vol. 6 p. 17 (Calendar p. 64).

if a priest would be provided there. According to these two messengers, the governor of New France declared that he would leave most points of diplomacy to his "Children the praying Indians att Caguinago [Kahnawake]." <sup>43</sup> The discrepancy between this interpretation and the Kahnawakes' own apparent resignation of their affairs to the French in the other accounts is glaring. It is no wonder that years of hostilities went on between the French and their allied Indians and the English and theirs, given the wildly different reports each side got of the same events.

Frontenac seems to have doubted League Iroquois intentions for peace, but decided to play the game which had been started. He advised Callière, the governor of Montreal, to continue the peace talks started by the Mohawks, "by the mediation of our Indians of the Sault."<sup>44</sup> He did not want to appear too eager for peace, so he used the Sault Iroquois as a go-between to cover his intentions, as he explained to the minister, "in order that it may not appear that I made any advances on my side."<sup>45</sup> This policy, intended or not, had the effect of scuttling chances of its success with the governor of New York, who claimed the right to be involved in

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<sup>43</sup>New York Colonial Manuscripts, 1638-1800 (83 vols.), New York State Library, 37:56. (Interestingly, this version indicates that the Sault Iroquois included, in their negotiation offer, six points of religion on which they would not compromise.)

<sup>44</sup>RAPO 1927-28, p. 62.

<sup>45</sup>NYCD 9:496.

any negotiation the Five Nations entertained with another power. Some League Mohawks told Governor Fletcher of the meeting at Kahnawake and the desire for peace, asking him how they should respond. He answered that they should not consider any proposals from the Mission Iroquois, probably because he jealously eyed the budding role of the Kahnawakes as intermediaries between the French and the League Iroquois, wanting that role for his own government. He prohibited the Five Nations from communicating with the Sault Iroquois.<sup>46</sup>

Nor did most of the Five Nations want peace with the Sault Iroquois on the terms of the spring 1691 talks. In June of that year, a group of League Mohawks addressed Governor Fletcher's replacement, Governor Henry Sloughter. They represented the wishes of the Sault Iroquois for peace and for the return of some Sault prisoners taken by the Senecas, and bid the other four nations to agree to this proposal. Sloughter asked representatives of the others for their opinion of the offer. An Oneida speaker representing the four upper nations spoke of the treachery and deceit of the French, thereby refusing to consider the Mohawk proposal. Sloughter agreed, and a majority of the Iroquois along with the New York government scuttled the Mohawk-Sault peace offer.<sup>47</sup>

Not all Mohawks advocated the peace policy in the spring

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<sup>46</sup>Peter Wraxall, An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs in the Colony of New York, 1678-1751, Charles Howard McIlwain, ed. (New York: Blom, 1968, reprint), pp. 16-17.

<sup>47</sup>NYCD 3:777-780.

of 1691. Some accompanied Oneidas and other Iroquois in raiding along the St. Lawrence at the Long Sault. They were met by some mission Indians and Frenchmen led by François Le Moyne de Bienville.<sup>48</sup> The French and mission Indian group deliberated for a long time whether to attack the invaders or allow them to pass, because of the peace negotiations pending. Finally, the Sault Iroquois, the majority among the French/Indian group, convinced the Frenchmen not to harm them, and some were allowed to go with the mission Indians to Montreal.<sup>49</sup> Later they were allowed to return to New York unharmed, which upset some of the French. They viewed the role of the Sault Iroquois in this incident not as peace makers, but as a fifth column among the French working to further the intrigues of the Five Nations and the English. The Kahnawakes had aided in the escape of Iroquois bandits from French justice, as Frontenac saw it. He had always mistrusted them, occasionally relenting in this opinion for individual cases such as Kryn and Paul.<sup>50</sup> On this occasion, however, he told the minister, "there has been much outcry against the Indians of the Sault, and their conduct has been suspected of insincerity, I have long since perceived a great indulgence that does not please me, any more than certain

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<sup>48</sup>On Bienville, see "François Le Moyne de Bienville," by Jean Blain, in Dictionary of Canadian Biography 1:463.

<sup>49</sup>NYCD 9:517.

<sup>50</sup>On Paul's fidelity, see Potherie, Histoire 1:349-350.



secret intercourse and connexion which they maintain with the Mohawks, among whom they have many kindred."<sup>51</sup>

Frontenac also suspected that the Jesuits at the Sault winked at the secret dealings between the Sault and League Mohawks. At the very time when bloodshed broke out between the two groups of Mohawks, the Christian ones were suspected of working for the other side. But those who avoided the battle may have only been attempting to avoid the nightmare of seeing a relative fall from one's own bullet or arrow.

When Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, commander of the troops in Canada, met a party of forty-to-fifty Oneidas, however, he showed no mercy but attacked them vigorously, burning down a building in which they took shelter. He apparently had no Kahnawake fighters in his party.<sup>52</sup> The presence or absence of Sault Iroquois men in a guerilla party seems to have made a difference as to whether or not the party would attack the invaders. While at the Sault under the watchful eye of Jesuits and garrisoned French troops, Kahnawakes may have had a policy dictated to them, but when out in the woods in a small group, especially when they outnumbered Frenchmen, they usually got their way. Perhaps this is why they were so heavily involved in these small-scale forays; it was an opportunity to have a great deal of control over foreign policy.

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<sup>51</sup>Charlevoix, History 4:197; C11A 11:233v.

<sup>52</sup>NYCD 9:517-518.

Many Kahnawakes still wanted peace in late spring; so did some Iroquois. While some Five Nations fighters were raiding French and even allied Indian targets (such as the Mountain Mission), others sent a secret wampum belt of reconciliation to Louis Ateriata at the Sault. It offered a chance for the Kahnawakes to escape to New York before hostilities worsened and pitted League and Sault Iroquois directly against each other.<sup>53</sup> But the Iroquois who sent this belt made a serious mistake because Louis Ateriata was firmly entrenched in the pro-French camp at the Sault, and he demonstrated his loyalty to the French government above other allegiances by promptly showing the secret belt to Callières instead of conspiring for an escape to New York. Because of this, the scheme was aborted, but it indicated an active pro-peace faction among the Five Nations.

People were still travelling back and forth between the Sault and Iroquoia. A Mohawk named Taonnochrío who was sent to Kahnawake reported that although he had returned, ten others had stayed at the mission village.<sup>54</sup> Simon Groot, a Dutchman who had been a prisoner at the Sault and was recently released, informed the Albany authorities that the Sault village was strongly stockaded and that some of those Indians were "inclined to come hither, but strict guards [were] kept

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<sup>53</sup>NYCD 9:518.

<sup>54</sup>NYCD 3:782.

by the French to prevent their departure."<sup>55</sup> Taonnochrío told Robert Livingston (the Albany Indian commissioner) of his trip to the Sault, reporting that while there he heard a rumor that the French were making canoes to go to war. He asked his aunt, a Sault Iroquois, why the French were making so many of them, imploring her to "tell me plainly and do not hide it from me, for I will not stay here, & suffer my people to be cut off." The woman admitted to her nephew that indeed, the very next day, thirty "praying Indians" would be going out to "annoy" the Onondagas. Another Sault Indian confirmed the story for Taonnochrío and implored the latter or any of the Mohawks not to go to where the skirmish would take place.<sup>56</sup> Sault Iroquois were going to war against some Five Nations people, while warning others of the danger they themselves posed.

In June 1691, Major Peter Schuyler assembled his forces of New Yorkers and Indians for a combined assault on the French near Montreal. He had trouble getting all of the Mohawks to come with him, no doubt because of the peace faction among them. The first two Mohawk villages sent their full forces, but the third could not yet decide. The expedition lost track of some Mohawks along the way north through the Lake George-Lake Champlain corridor. These Mohawks had said they were going hunting and would meet the

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<sup>55</sup>NYCD 3:781.

<sup>56</sup>NYCD 3:782.

army further north, but did not reappear. Some Schaghticoke Indians also ducked out along the way.<sup>57</sup> This behavior calls to mind the Sault Iroquois reluctance to join the 1687 Seneca campaign. There is no doubt that these Mohawk and other Indians knew that the French army they would meet on the southern shore of the St. Lawrence would include Indians, perhaps their own clansmen.

Whereas John Schuyler's raid in the summer of 1690 was a close call in terms of open fighting between Sault and League Mohawks, his brother's attack the following summer was not a false alarm. It was the real thing. Even before the two armies met, Sault and League Iroquois fighters were pointing guns at each other. Schuyler sent out four Mohawk spies near Chambly, who met eight French "praying Indians." The eight demanded to know where the four were from and were answered. The eight then asked their names, and the League Mohawks said they need not give this information. The "praying Indians" replied to this with bullets, wounding three.<sup>58</sup>

A few days later, a battle took place at La Prairie between Schuyler's forces and a French army which had assembled at the fort there on the advice received from some Mohawks. The English attacked furiously, but the French soon rallied and fought back with surprising strength, forcing the

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<sup>57</sup>NYCD 3:800-803.

<sup>58</sup>NYCD 3:803.

English and Mohawks to a running retreat.<sup>59</sup> This was the first real battle which pitted Sault against League Mohawks, but there were very few Sault Iroquois present. Some may have pleaded respect for the peace proposal. Probably only the most loyal to the French were there; those who fought did so commendably and were praised by the French.

One Kahnawake warrior named Paul, a fervent Christian, fought courageously and lost his life on the battlefield, exhorting his compatriots to fight on even as he fell.<sup>60</sup> But others from the Sault waited until the fighting was over, at which time they approached the battlefield and counted and pillaged the bodies. The French were not impressed with this, especially since they expected these fresh, well-rested Indians to pursue the enemy back down toward Lake Champlain, as those who had fought in the battle were too tired to do so. But the Sault Iroquois soon found an excuse to leave; claiming to hear gunfire and running toward it, they left the battle site. The gunshots were merely part of a burial ceremony for the officers who had died, but they had served as an excuse for the Sault Iroquois fighters who were not as pro-French as their neighbor Paul.<sup>61</sup> And even his death did not motivate

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<sup>59</sup>Lahontan, New Voyages 1:174.

<sup>60</sup>RAPO 1927-28, p. 65; C11A 11:301v; NYCD 9:521-522; Edward James Devine, Historic Caughnawaga (Montreal: Messenger Press, 1922), p. 102.

<sup>61</sup>NYCD 9:523; RAPO 1927-28, p. 68-70. (The Lorette Huron Indians were cited as "the most loyal Indians that we have" during the summer of 1691. The Sault Iroquois did not receive

them to take revenge on the League Mohawks. Perhaps the anti-French Kahnawakes even welcomed his death.

The French authorities did not look kindly on the conduct of the neutral Sault Iroquois in the hostilities of the summer. By fall, they began to suspect Kahnawake sincerity and that of the Mohawks who had come to the Sault the preceding spring. One official claimed that the peace delegation was just an excuse for the Mohawks to take shelter among their relatives so as to avoid retaliatory action for being so far into New France territory.<sup>62</sup> Frontenac also said as much to the minister, and blamed the Kahnawakes for going along with it, "suspect[ing] that the conduct of the Sault Indians was not completely right and sincere."<sup>63</sup>

Frontenac suspected Jesuit complicity. He had always been at odds with this religious order, but had to tolerate their presence. In 1691, indeed, he needed to be grateful to them for continuing to attract more League Iroquois (especially Mohawk) immigrants to Sault Saint-Louis. In August, the New York governor and his Council had to admit to the English king that Mohawks were still emigrating to the French mission, to the point that the remaining Mohawks could

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such praise, in contrast to the 1687 battle. Potherie, Histoire 3:139.)

<sup>62</sup>C11A 11:300.

<sup>63</sup>RAPO 1927-28, p. 68.

no longer provide an effective fighting force.<sup>64</sup> Frontenac saw treachery among the mission Iroquois on one hand, but on the other, a valuable attraction which was draining the enemy's fighting strength. Fortunately, Iroquois military activity fell off greatly after the summer skirmish and Frontenac kept his complaints to a minimum.

When it came time to prepare for the next French military plan -- to take Iroquois prisoners at Michilimackinac, where the Five Nations and some Albany allies had been horning in on the French fur trade, "it was retarded by various secret intrigues such as are commonly resorted to here." The complaining French official was referring to the Sault Indians' efforts to stop the war. The latter postulated, with belts of wampum to add weight to their words, that the colony would lose its best men if the war was further escalated by carrying out the Michilimackinac expedition. But "these new Councillors of State," as the Kahnawakes involved were called on this occasion, were ignored because Frontenac was suspicious about their motives for pacifism.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the peace faction at the Sault was alive and well in late 1691, not having given in to the pro-French pressure from zealots such as La Plaque.

But this was the last hope for any cessation of hostilities. A direct Five Nations attack on Kahnawake people

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<sup>64</sup>NYCD 3:799.

<sup>65</sup>NYCD 9:526.

would discredit the peace faction at the Sault (which relied on the notion that the Five Nations did not want war) and in December, an attack finally erupted. League Iroquois warriors were ready by that time to join New York soldiers against targets to the north. A group fell on some Kahnawakes out hunting near Chambly and killed several of them outright (a change from the earlier practice of merely taking them prisoner). But the Sault and Mountain Iroquois and the French got word of the attack and pursued the enemy south to Lake Champlain. The two sides fought each other, no holds barred, and all of the "principall Captains" of the League Mohawks and Oneidas were killed.<sup>66</sup> The Mohawks particularly were devastated by this loss; they had no leading men and only 130 warriors left in their villages. They refused to fight any more after this routing.<sup>67</sup>

But the Kahnawakes had their hands full with the central and western Iroquois tribes in the next couple of years. Various skirmishes erupted in 1692 between Sault and League fighters, with deaths on both sides.<sup>68</sup> Both sides had

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<sup>66</sup>C11A 12:97; NYCD 9:534.

<sup>67</sup>NYCD 3:815, 817.

<sup>68</sup>NYCD 9:534, 3:836. In August 1692, a war party of Five Nations men assured Peter Schuyler (Mayor of Albany) that they would shortly bring the "praying Indians" to their knees. This may have been only to appease Schuyler, as any Indian group would have done (the Sault Indians did this in front of Jesuits and other French authorities), but may also have been a signal that as far as the League was concerned, the time for full-scale hostilities between the Sault and League brethren was at hand. (LIR 162.)



suffered great losses in warfare before this phase of the war began, so both were limited to small-scale raids for most of the year. The French had to abandon a plan to attack Iroquoia for lack of troops.<sup>69</sup> By November, however, 400 western Iroquois approached the palisade at the fort of Sault Saint-Louis. They did not launch an open attack, but initiated sporadic exchanges of fire. An equally large group of eastern Iroquois had planned to join them, but on learning of their lack of success, retreated and hit outpost settlements along the south shore of the St. Lawrence instead.

Large numbers of troops were called in from other Montreal area forts to help defend Kahnawake.<sup>70</sup> Whether some Sault people liked it or not, they were now unmistakably at war with the Iroquois proper, but some did not mind this at all.<sup>71</sup> The Oneida Sault chief Tataconicere took relish in dragging a prisoner, the wife of a League Iroquois chief, outside the palisade at the Sault and striking her on the head until she died. He did this because he had heard a rumor that she was considering an attempt to escape. After killing her, he flung his hatchet into the gate by the palisade as a sign that he would show mercy to no one, and invited his fellow Sault inhabitants to do likewise.<sup>72</sup> This zealous display of

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<sup>69</sup>C11A 12:182.

<sup>70</sup>Charlevoix, History 4:232-233; C11A 12:183.

<sup>71</sup>C11A 12:87v; NYCD 9:538.

<sup>72</sup>NYCD 9:556.

loyalty to the French cause elicited words of praise from Intendant Champigny: "one cannot see more faithfulness and bravery than our Indians are showing on all occasions." He added that his administration had "a very great interest in treating them well."<sup>73</sup>

There were mixed signals on both sides of the Kahnawake-French relationship in 1692. While some Kahnawake "councillors of state" had made a last-ditch effort at peace with the enemy, Tataconicere showed no mercy, and La Plaque had returned from his visit to France geared up to fight the Iroquois at full capacity. He actively recruited Sault and other mission men to field a war party for that purpose.<sup>74</sup> Depending on which individuals at the Sault one looked at, one might see the Sault Indians as "doves" trying to subvert the French war effort or as "hawks" doing their best to support the war. Governor Frontenac perceived only the pacifist (in his terms, negative) side, whereas Intendant Champigny could see nothing but great efforts for the French and allied Indian cause.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>C11A 12:87v.

<sup>74</sup>C11A 12:95v; NYCD 9:564.

<sup>75</sup>Cadwallader Colden, in his History of the Five Indian Nations... discussed this issue; he explained that the French wanted the Sault Iroquois to lure more Mohawks and other Iroquois people to live in New France, but when this did not happen on a scale large enough to satisfy the Jesuits, the French became suspicious of Sault communication with the Five Nations, and viewed it, volte-face, as a source of spy information for the Iroquois and New Yorkers. They were viewed alternately as pillars of the French cause in North

The issue came to a head during 1692, when some Jesuits (anonymously) issued a memoir "on behalf of the Christian Iroquois in Canada" to Minister of Marine Pontchartrain. They were pleading for funds to support members of the Sault community who had become impoverished over the years during which they had fought with the French.<sup>76</sup> The crowning argument was that were it not for these Indians, the Iroquois would now inhabit the southern shore of the St. Lawrence, and that the mission Iroquois had even killed some of their own relatives to prevent this from happening. The Jesuits who wrote this petition were truly concerned with the plight of their "charges"<sup>77</sup> and argued that the Kahnawakes had given up their usual subsistence patterns and means of livelihood for much of each year since 1684 in order to provide military support.<sup>78</sup> They also pointed out that these people were

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America, and as fifth-column traitors. (Cadwallader Colden, History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada... 2 vols. (New York: Allerton, 1922, reprinted from the 1747 edition), 1:179; also NYCD 9:557.)

<sup>76</sup>JR 64:109-113; C11A 12:136v-137.

<sup>77</sup>The term "charges" is used advisably here; it seems appropriate in the sense that the Jesuits viewed these Indians as their charges, but we cannot assume from this that the Indians saw themselves as charges of the missionaries. More likely, they saw the Black Robes as diplomats or mediators between the Indian community and the French government and saw themselves as independent.

<sup>78</sup>Sault fighters were starting to demand daily pay when they went on expeditions with the French, just as French regular soldiers were entitled to. (C11A 12:193. Another example of such a demand occurred a few years later (in Charlevoix, History 5:76-77) (1697) ).

fighting a war for the French, not a war of their own making. Despite Frontenac's wariness, Champigny also promoted their cause at the French court. And the Jesuit petition on their behalf made them seem to be a bulwark of the French military machine.

A few months later, "the concurrence in sentiment of the oldest and the best heads of the Sault and of the Mountain, obliged the Count [Frontenac] to direct his attention" to planning an invasion of eastern Iroquoia.<sup>79</sup> The 1693 onslaught took place in February, when the French and Mission Indians would have the advantage of surprising the League Mohawks in the off-season. Six hundred habitants, regular soldiers, Christian Iroquois, Algonquins from Trois Rivières, Hurons, and Abenakis descended upon the Mohawk country in the dead of winter, destroying the first two Mohawk villages easily. Almost all the men were away on hunting trips and the two villages were barely fortified because of their proximity to the English settlements.<sup>80</sup> The villages were burned and the women, children, and elderly people taken prisoner.

The English in Albany and Schenectady knew of the invading army but did not tell their Mohawk allies, which later infuriated the Five Nations. The latter had been continually enlisted to fight with the English against their

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<sup>79</sup>NYCD 9:557.

<sup>80</sup>New York Council Minutes Calendar, p. 81; NYCD 4:2, 6, 19, 39, 9: 550; Potherie, Histoire 1:320-321; Colden, History 1:181-182.

enemies, and the English constantly spoke to the Iroquois of their obligations to the English as part of the Covenant Chain alliance between them, but when the turn came for the English to assist their Indian allies, they turned a blind eye.<sup>81</sup>

The third Mohawk village was inhabited by armed men able to repulse the invaders; they put up a fight, killing thirty or more of the French and allied Indian forces. But finally the attackers gained control and the Mohawks surrendered. Callière, the French commander, and Frontenac had ordered that only women and children were to be spared from death. According to Pierre Charlevoix, the eighteenth-century historian of New France, the Christian Iroquois agreed to this policy when they set out from La Prairie. But at the Mohawk village, they changed their minds and would not allow the French to kill any of the prisoners they had just taken.<sup>82</sup>

One account describes an exchange which took place between La Plaque and his father, a League Mohawk. They came across each other during the fighting at the third village and the son said, "You have given me life, I give it to you today; but do not return again under my hand, because I won't save you [the next time]."<sup>83</sup> La Plaque may have issued the threat for the benefit of his French allies who were watching warily

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<sup>81</sup>NYCD 4:2, 9:551; Colden, History 1:181-182.

<sup>82</sup>Charlevoix, History 4:235; NYCD 9:551, 561.

<sup>83</sup>Potherie, Histoire 1:322. (Bacqueville de la Potherie mistakenly identifies La Plaque as a war chief of the Iroquois of the Mountain, instead of the Sault.)

for Sault fidelity. But the important fact was that even in this most heated battle, quarter was given. The Mohawks apparently asked for clemency, when they surrendered, by volunteering to emigrate to the missions. They claimed they had been intending to do so for some time, a clever way to have their captors regard them as new converts rather than as enemies who should be killed.<sup>84</sup> This helped confirm the worst suspicions of the French about their Indian allies by inclining the latter to show mercy.

The Sault and Mountain Iroquois were responsible for scuttling any gains made in the military victory over the Mohawks; not only did they refuse to allow any of the male prisoners to be killed, but on the return home, with hundreds of Mohawk prisoners in their entourage, they found ways to sabotage French efforts to take the Mohawks all the way to New France. They delayed the return march home in order to allow Iroquois and/or English troops to catch up with them along the Lake Champlain corridor and released some of the prisoners when they were able. Charlevoix claimed that the French should have foreseen that the Kahnawakes would have done this because of their "lingering love of country."<sup>85</sup> Faced with the test of taking relatives' lives in order to destroy the Mohawks as a people, the Sault Iroquois showed themselves

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<sup>84</sup>NYCD 9:551.

<sup>85</sup>Charlevoix, History 4:235; C11A 13:109; Potherie, Histoire 1:322-323; NYCD 9:573.

unwilling to commit outright fratricide.<sup>86</sup>

Eventually the Mohawks were able to rebuild, and since many prisoners escaped or were released, they repopulated their homeland to some extent. But the easternmost tribe of the Iroquois confederacy was no longer the potent force after 1693 that it had been earlier in the seventeenth century. The February invasion was the last straw which broke them as a formidable power. Bacqueville de la Potherie, a French chronicler of the events of the 1690s, wrote that since the 1693 defeat, "this ... nation has become the smallest of the Five Nations, and now they are the ones who cause us the least trouble, although they are neighbours of the English."<sup>87</sup>

Many Mohawks voluntarily emigrated to the Sault and Mountain mission villages in the summer of 1693.<sup>88</sup> Perhaps, as in the 1666 defeat, they saw a military devastation of their homes and their very nation as a sign from spiritual forces that the Frenchmen's god was the true one and that they had better capitulate to that deity in order to avoid further wrath. Their homes had been destroyed anyway and many had relatives at the Sault and Mountain villages, so the 1693

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<sup>86</sup>The King wrote a year later to Frontenac and Champigny that they should stop offering the Christian Indians bounties for Iroquois scalps, since not even that inducement kept them from "conniving at the escape of the Mohawks, and rendering that expedition ... useless." (NYCD 9:573.)

<sup>87</sup>Potherie, Histoire 1:323.

<sup>88</sup>LIR, p. 171; New York Colonial Manuscripts 39:82v-82/2; NYCD 4:59.

invasion was the final push convincing many to emigrate. There was talk of peace between the Five Nations and the French, and if this had come about (the New York government and the Albany commissioners did their best to prevent it) it would have seemed logical for people to once again move back and forth across the border.

The exodus of not just Mohawks but many other Five Nations people continued during the war years until the 1701 peace settlement as well as after. Many of those who came had relatives at Kahnawake.<sup>89</sup> The governor of New York and others having correspondence with New York officials in 1693 referred to the Five Nations as "the Staggering Indians" or as people "who seem to stagger."<sup>90</sup> Clearly, they were at a low point in their strength, and many of them decided that they had a better chance of surviving as a people in the new society along the St. Lawrence.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>In JR 65:31 (1696), Father Lamberville stated that many adults came "from the country of our enemies to live here (at the Sault) with their kindred." (Also see NYCD 9:665, 687, 4:648.) The Skachkook Indians testified to Albany officials that some of their Indians had gone to Canada "because they kill'd no Beaver, and were much indebted here, and so were ashamed to come hither, chusing rather to go to Canada." (Bellomont's Conference with the Five Nations, July 1698 (New York: 1698), p. 15.) The demographic trend of the 1690s was overwhelmingly a northward shift.

<sup>90</sup>NYCD 4:37, 54.

<sup>91</sup>The Five Nations went from a fighting force of 2650 before the war of 1689-1701 to 1230. The Sault Iroquois did not fare as badly, losing barely half of theirs. (NYCD 4:337) On the scuttling of peace efforts, see New York Council Minutes Old Vol. 7, p. 11 (Calendar p. 90) and p. 36 (Calendar p. 93).



The Sault Iroquois avoided military confrontation with their League counterparts after the February event, raiding only whites further east in the western Massachusetts town of Deerfield.<sup>92</sup> But some League Iroquois still held a grudge for the attack, as a Sault woman found out in the summer of 1693. She was out in the fields about one league from Kahnawake nursing her newborn child and was captured by some League men and taken to Iroquoia where they tortured her. A number of similar incidents were reported during this time by French eyewitnesses held prisoner among the Five Nations who later reported them to Jesuits.<sup>93</sup>

The Sault stance of avoiding mass confrontations but taking revenge on their brethren on a small scale was a strategy which satisfied at the same time their anger at their southern relatives, French expectations of their support, and their own desire to minimize the escalation of hostilities. This was the sum effect of Sault attitudes and actions, as viewed from the outside, but to see a single Sault "policy" which brought this about is probably inaccurate. Opinions differed at Kahnawake on whether the villagers were obligated or even inclined to follow French policy. Much may have depended on how much individual leaders -- be they League

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<sup>92</sup>New York Colonial Manuscripts 39:73; New York Council Minutes Old Vol. 6, p. 211 (Calendar p. 86); NYCD 9:553.

<sup>93</sup>JR 64:145, 65:33-35; William Ingraham Kip, trans. and comp., The Early Jesuit Missions in North America (New York: 1847), pp. 124-131. (These violent incidents were interpreted by the Jesuits as religiously motivated.)

sachems, war chiefs, or independent, ad hoc leaders -- were able to convince others, and for those who were taking on European traits, on how far they were able to assert their will over those who disagreed with them. Kryn and La Plaque were leaders who, although not representing everyone at the Sault, were able to affect events significantly (judged by their appearance in written documents). These are some of the few individual Sault Indians about which we can guess; the others are all but invisible in the historical record, probably because their opinions were unpopular with people who chronicled New France's history. If Indians had a written culture, instead of or in addition to an oral one, we might have an entirely different view of these events and developments.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>In the following chapter, some others will be mentioned who appear in the written records and were not pro-French.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### KAHNAWAKE-FRENCH RELATIONS IN THE 1690S

After the 1693 invasion, the Kahnawakes seem to have become virtual puppets of Frontenac. In 1694 negotiations between the governor and the Five Nations, the French count spoke on behalf of the Sault Iroquois, stating that they were submissive to him. The Sault people present allegedly "uttered a cry of approval of this."<sup>1</sup> When a mission Iroquois speaker (representing both those of the Sault and the Mountain) finally had a chance to speak, he reiterated this claim, adding that his people would have nothing to do with either the governor of New York or other officials at Albany. He added, speaking to Five Nations representatives, that "we ... have even less thought of going to your village to convey proposals of our movement ... If Onontio [the governor of New France] hangs up his hatchet, we hang ours up, if he sharpen it in order to strike the better, so do we."<sup>2</sup> It was likely that only Francophile Indians accompanied Frontenac to this session, explaining why the only opinion expressed was one of complete subordination to the French. Or perhaps the speaker of the mission Iroquois believed that conditions would be better for them if they claimed to be Frontenac's unfailing

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York 15 vols. (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1853-1887), 9:578 (hereafter cited as NYCD).

<sup>2</sup>NYCD 9:579; New York Colonial Manuscripts, 1638-1800 (83 vols.) New York State Library, 39:156.

supporters in public, regardless of their true feelings. The individual involved may have been encouraged with money or privileges to say these words. Jesuits, French officials, even Frontenac himself may have bribed the mission Iroquois speaker into giving the League Iroquois the impression that they had no friends at the Sault or the Mountain.

On this occasion, even when Teganissorens had queries for the Sault Iroquois, Frontenac answered him on their behalf. The Five Nations would be more inclined to make peace on French terms if they thought that their own Christian cousins were prepared to fight them in the event of hostilities. Therefore, Frontenac was using the Sault Indians as a "big stick" to make the League capitulate to French demands rather than risk another fratricidal bloodbath.

But these mission Iroquois protestations of loyalty to the French did not always translate into unified support in battle. In the 1687, 1690, 1691, and 1693 military engagements in which Sault Iroquois were present against Five Nations people, the Sault men more often than not attempted to minimize their own involvement, or even to sabotage the French goal. Therefore, the words spoken at these meetings may have been mere posturing.

Tatachuiserax was one who seemed not to be merely posturing; he appeared sincere in his pro-French stance. Early in 1694 he expressed French allegiance to an Iroquois woman who visited the Sault in telling her that if the Five

Nations did not make peace with the French, they and their allied Indians would come in the spring to destroy the Iroquois.<sup>3</sup> Frontenac even sent Sault and Mountain Indian emissaries to Onondaga later that year to ask the League to consider a peace settlement, so confident had he become of their fidelity to his cause. The Onondagas responded with disdain, chastising the emissaries for their people's attacks on New York frontier settlements. They also asked for Onondaga prisoners held at the mission villages to be given to Frontenac so that they could negotiate directly with him for their return. Kahnawake relations with the outside world had become significantly determined by the French government if control over prisoners was any gauge. The Kahnawakes seemed not to have control over prisoners they held at their own village.<sup>4</sup>

But the blustering words of Tatachquiserax and other French mouthpieces at the Sault did not reflect what happened when it came to war. Through 1695, rumors of a French campaign rippled throughout Iroquoia and the upper Hudson Valley, but even when an eyewitness reported Sault warriors headed for Cataraqui on their way across Lake Ontario to an Onondaga invasion, not all Iroquois people took the threat

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<sup>3</sup>NYCD 4:87.

<sup>4</sup>NYCD 4:120. See also Claude Bacqueville de la Potherie, Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale 4 vols. (Paris: 1722), 4:76 regarding lack of control over prisoners that they had taken. (They had to hand them over to French military officers.)

seriously. Some travelled back and forth from the Mohawk Valley to Kahnawake to visit relatives.<sup>5</sup>

Not only did people defy the danger of a military confrontation, but when Frontenac wanted to send war parties of mission Iroquois out to take prisoners in order to find out what was going on in Albany and Onondaga, he found no volunteers at the Sault. He had to enlist the help of the Jesuits to persuade them, and the Black Robes found only a few who would agree to go. Soon after that, when Frontenac wanted to assemble an expedition to meet the enemy (with explicit orders not to spare any lives), he sent "no French Maquas [Mohawk] Indians."<sup>6</sup> It was rare for accounts to state who did not participate in an expedition.

Later that year, Frontenac wrote to the minister of marine that the Indians allied with the French did not think the French sufficiently heeded their allies' wishes, adding, however, that gifts would probably induce them to continue fighting the war.<sup>7</sup> The bounty for scalps helped as well, although the king wanted to eliminate this method "of exciting the Christian Indians to make war on the Iroquois; the former ought to be induced by the subsistence it appears they

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<sup>5</sup>New York Council Minutes, 1668-1783, New York State Library, Old Vol. 7, p. 127 (Calendar p. 104); NYCD 4:123, 124.

<sup>6</sup>NYCD 4:125.

<sup>7</sup>Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec 1928-29, p. 284 (hereafter cited as RAPQ).

receive, when they go to war, and by the other favours and the protection of his Majesty."<sup>8</sup> This issue became timely in the coming year. For in June 1696, when the French attempted to mobilize their Indian allies against the Onondagas, the warriors refused to go unless liquor was provided. There being none available in French stores, the officers permitted the Indians with them to steal what they found from French farmhouses along the way.<sup>9</sup> There was a price to pay for having a not-so-willing Indian fighting force, as in the 1693 Mohawk campaign. At that time a French official complained that "though the Indian disposition be naturally prone to war, and though an attempt was made to persuade them that they are carrying on hostilities as much for their own, as for our interest, yet they fail not to demand, every time they set out, a quantity of provisions and ammunition which costs a considerable sum, and to refuse, would be to utterly disgust, them."<sup>10</sup> The Indians who lived in mission villages may have been dominated by the French authorities in some ways, but having something that Frontenac and other officials wanted, they made the Frenchmen appease them in order to get it.

In 1696, as in earlier campaigns, Sault Indians could

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<sup>8</sup>NYCD 9:591. Sault raiding parties often brought English scalps back [i.e. NYCD 9:642; Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série C11A (Canada: Correspondance Générale, 1540-1784, 122 vols.), 14:217v (hereafter cited as C11A; references are to originals) ] but seldom brought those of Iroquois extraction.

<sup>9</sup>NYCD 9:646.

<sup>10</sup>NYCD 9:563.

sabotage French efforts even if they appeared to be fighting with the French. It was so well known that they leaked news of French war plans to the enemy that Callières deliberately fed them incorrect information in the summer of 1696. He told them that the plan was to attack the Senecas, so that both the latter and the real victims, the Onondagas, would be thrown off by Sault intelligence.<sup>11</sup> In addition, on the way to battle, the Indians in the French entourage were separated and placed between regular troops and militia so that no mutiny would take place.<sup>12</sup>

No real military engagement took place during the Onondaga campaign; the sole village of that tribe was already burned and abandoned when the French and their Indian allies arrived at it. Therefore, they ventured eastward to surprise the Oneidas and found this tribe ready to surrender without a fight. Significantly, the Oneidas surrendered to the mission Iroquois, not directly to the French.<sup>13</sup> When a lame elderly

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<sup>11</sup>Pierre F.-X. de Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France 6 vols., John G. Shea, ed. and trans. (New York: Harper, 1866-1872), 5:16. (A Mountain Indian did inform some League Iroquois of this invasion. Charlevoix, History 5:15.)

<sup>12</sup>Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documentary History of the State of New York 4 vols. [quarto ed.] (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1851-1851) 1:209 (hereafter cited as DHNY). One is reminded of the 1687 expedition to the Senecas when this proved to be necessary for preventing Sault Indians from deserting.

<sup>13</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows, 1896-1901), 65:27 (hereafter cited as JR); Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série B (Lettres Envoyées, 1663-1774, 189 vols.), 19:236-238



man who had been abandoned in one of the villages was discovered, the Sault Indians asked the French officers to spare his life. But the French "peremptorily demanded" that he be burned at the stake, a French Jesuit missionary reported.<sup>14</sup> The experience was a sobering one for the Sault Iroquois because this man was a relative of some of them. They were also distressed when a former Sault resident who had gone back to Iroquoia was found near the Onondaga village. The French authorities showed him no more mercy; they burned him to death as well, for the benefit of Sault eyes.<sup>15</sup>

Examples such as this were not the only way in which the French attempted to assert control over the Sault people. Claude Bacqueville de la Potherie observed the community of Kahnawake in the 1690s and reported how political decisions were made. Although he noted the theoretical participation of the elders, the chiefs, the agoianders, the women, and the warriors, he observed that these Indians "allow themselves to be directed entirely by the Governor who makes them [the elders] come to Montreal. When the matter at hand has to do with peace, they execute the orders [from the governor] with docility." In another context, Potherie stated that the Kahnawakes "don't decide anything without the agreement of the Governor." Even the Prayer Chief (dogique) "doesn't do

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(hereafter cited as Série B).

<sup>14</sup>JR 65:27.

<sup>15</sup>NYCD 9:655-656.

anything without consulting with the missionary Father." Potherie asserted that this method of governing "facilitates the conversion of the elders whom we want to make Christians."<sup>16</sup>

Potherie claimed that the Christian faith alone made these Indians stay in New France, ignoring the fact that his statement directly contradicted his earlier descriptions of how decisions were made at the Sault, that these people stayed partly because of pressure exerted on them, not just out of religious adherence.<sup>17</sup> The fortifications no doubt helped to keep people there; by 1692 there were 200 French soldiers stationed at Fort Sault Saint-Louis, and two years later, Callières was enlarging the fort "so that they may be more efficiently and readily assisted in case of attack."<sup>18</sup> When in 1700 Robert Livingston spoke of the Kahnawakes being "secured in a Fort guarded with souldiers," it was unclear whether the Indians were being protected from enemies or prevented from escaping.<sup>19</sup> Thioratorion, a Sault speaker, told some League Iroquois representatives in 1695 that he came

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<sup>16</sup>Potherie, Histoire 1:363, 3:39-40. (It seems that elders were religious traditionalists who resisted Christianity even at the mission village.)

<sup>17</sup>Potherie, Histoire 1:363.

<sup>18</sup>C11A 13:118v, 400; NYCD 9:599; Nicholas Bayard and Charles Lodowick, A Narrative of an Attempt made by the French of Canada upon the Mohagues Country Being Indians under the Protection of their Majesties Government of New York (New York: 1693), p. 8.

<sup>19</sup>NYCD 4:648.

to visit them "with Onontio's consent," indicating that such consent was considered necessary.<sup>20</sup> The French colonial government attempted to have as much control over these Indians as possible. The same thing was happening to the Five Nations people with the English at Albany.<sup>21</sup>

Sometimes, however, when Kahnawake politicians were allowed to travel for diplomatic purposes (often initiated by Frontenac or the current governor), they were able to assert their own agenda into negotiations. Odatsigtha was an Oneida Sault sachem who travelled to Onondaga on behalf of the French-Five Nations peace attempts in 1697. He was in a strong position to influence events because both Frontenac and the League Oneidas trusted him.<sup>22</sup> He turned the job of messenger into a chance to promote understanding and détente between League and Sault Iroquois. Wanting to demonstrate that not all Mission Indians did the French bidding, he relayed a conversation he had had with Frontenac to Teganissorens. Frontenac said: "I would have your arm tyed to mine that hereafter we might live peaceable together," to which Odatsigtha answered: "No Father, I will not have my arm

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<sup>20</sup>NYCD 9:597.

<sup>21</sup>Peter Wraxall, An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs in the Colony of New York, 1678-1751, Charles Howard McIlwain, ed. (New York: Blom, 1968, reprint), p. 22; New York Colonial Manuscripts 39:134; NYCD 4:91.

<sup>22</sup>Richard L. Haan, "The Covenant Chain: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Niagara Frontier, 1697-1730" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Santa Barbara, 1976), p. 69.

tyed to yours, because you might lift up your arm against my own people & then my arm would hang to yours."<sup>23</sup> This exchange also revealed Sault skepticism about French force -- that it might easily be turned against the colony's own allies. No wonder there may have been some ambivalent feelings about the fortification of the Kahnawake village.

Odatsigtha's speech was not the only opportunity taken by Sault people to interject their own opinions into the diplomatic process. A year later, the Sault Iroquois upbraided the governor of New France for rejecting what they (or at least some of them) argued was a perfectly good peace offer from the Five Nations. They chided him, saying "it is as if [you are] bereav'd of Your Sences or Drunk; you have seen how courteous and friendly those Gentlemen sent by the Government of New-York have been, and also the Mohagues..."<sup>24</sup> These speakers and Odatsigtha were seldom mentioned in French records because they were not solid supporters of French policy. Despite how little we know of them, it is clear that there were significant forces at the Sault countering the pro-French initiatives of Sault notables such as La Plaque, Kryn, and Tatachquiserax.

In the 1694-95 attempts at peace talks, a neutral Sault sachem tried to steer his people away from Frontenac's course

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<sup>23</sup>NYCD 4:280.

<sup>24</sup>Bellomont's Conference with the Five Nations, July, 1698 (New York: 1698), pp. 20-21.

and toward an independent path. Frontenac allowed Thioratarion to go to Onondaga to listen to Iroquois council meetings, and in return the sachem was instructed "only to listen, and not to enter into any negotiation whatsoever." This admonition included receiving belts of wampum from the Five Nations people. But Thioratarion was in fact negotiating his own agenda with the League councillors, dissuading them from dealing with Frontenac, and targeting French voyageurs to attack. The self-styled broker also misrepresented the events of his trip to the governor on returning to New France. But Thioratarion was exposed by his political enemies at home, including Tataconicere and seven other Sault chiefs, all of whom were pro-French and opposed to a rapprochement between League and Sault Iroquois. Tataconicere told French officials of Thioratorion's treacherous diplomacy and Callière ordered the renegade diplomat kept under constant surveillance at the Sault and arrested if he attempted to return to Onondaga.<sup>25</sup>

Similar developments occurred in Iroquoia. The League Iroquois were pressured to wait for a European peace settlement as New York officials in Albany tried to prevent them from initiating their own rapprochement with the Sault Iroquois and Frontenac. Teganissorens, the veteran Onondaga diplomat, had to await the approval of military and civic leaders at Albany's City Hall before being allowed to send a messenger to Kahnawake. Peter Schuyler and the others

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<sup>25</sup>NYCD 9:596-599.

approved only when Teganissorens promised that the League's message would be a refusal to meet with the French for peace talks. (Albany wanted to wait until such talks were conducted on their terms, not wanting a separate peace of the Five Nations with the French.) Teganissorens even found himself acquiescing to the English "have[ing] now shut up the way from hence to Canada." He admitted that he had made a mistake in sending men to the Sault after the English had "shut up the way," and agreeing with Schuyler's expressed disdain of Five Nations contacts with the French.<sup>26</sup> Like the Kahnawakes, the League Iroquois had lost significant authority to their European counterparts.

But while Albany leaders were trying to prevent communication between the League and the Sault, they were trying to cultivate their own relationship with the Kahnawakes. The report which documented Schuyler's reprimand of Teganissorens also included Schuyler's invitation to the Sault Iroquois to come and meet with him.<sup>27</sup> Similarly in 1700, six years later, the commissioners for Indian Affairs at Albany simultaneously tried to prevent communication between Sault Iroquois and the Five Nations and tried to court the Kahnawakes, promising them aid in various forms if they would settle near Albany. The Sault Indians had come to Albany to

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<sup>26</sup>NYCD 4:90; New York Colonial Manuscripts 39:134; Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 22.

<sup>27</sup>NYCD 4:91.

trade northern pelts for English trade goods such as blankets. But Schuyler, Livingston, and the other commissioners also seemed interested in them as immigrants; consequently they "caressed" the Sault envoys, and took "fitting care that the Indians may be plentifully entertained that they may see the difference between a fertile country and a poor rocky swampy Canada."<sup>28</sup> The commissioners also promised "stores of plenty to make [them] live for ever happy," and distributed a hog, some venison, a barrel of strong beer, and great quantities of powder and lead to their guests. But they retreated from their former policy of promising to bring an English Jesuit to the colony for the Sault Indians; instead they promised them some Protestant ministers "to instruct Indians in the true Christian religion."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>NYCD 4:690.

<sup>29</sup>NYCD 4:692-693. The English appeared to be losing the ideological battle of Christianity in converting the Iroquois. In 1697, a group of Oneidas had demanded from the French government their own village in New France, with Father Pierre Millet there to minister to their spiritual needs. (NYCD 9:665.) In 1700, while New York was promising Protestant ministers for Sault Indians, a Montreal businessman was explaining to David Schuyler why Catholicism was so much more attractive to Indians. He said that the spirit of forgiveness in the Roman church made the fundamental difference, that it caused Indians to flock to the priests asking for instruction and the sacrament of confession. Schuyler told this to Governor Bellomont, adding that this was the reason why the Five Nations were "every day going over more and more to the French." Schuyler tied this to the fate of the English imperial cause, warning that the situation would be worse in the next war (i.e. the Roman Catholic Church would get even more Indian converts), and would be the reason for France's ability to take New York, then other English colonies, and then finally the whole continent. (NYCD 4:747-748.)

The Albanians made large promises and generous gestures to the Kahnawakes but the wary Indians did not commit themselves to emigrating. In 1698 when Governor Bellomont had made overtures to the Kahnawakes, they replied that they appreciated the offer but would have to consult with elders back home at the Sault, a stalling tactic. No doubt they feared that once they moved to New York they might not be treated well and that the Albanians might try to force them in line with English policy.<sup>30</sup>

While the New Yorkers were courting and "caressing" Sault Indians, it was obvious to all Indians that Albany officials were trying to discourage communication between Sault and League Iroquois. In the summer of 1700, the Sault Iroquois had wanted to exchange a secret peace belt with their League brethren -- secret from New York's governor. Robert Livingston found out about this contact, and had the Five Nations send back the belt saying that they would never again enter into negotiations with the Kahnawakes without New York officials being involved. The League Iroquois were sufficiently intimidated that they agreed to Livingston's demands and publicly rejected this type of communication with their brethren, explaining to the latter that their allegiance was to New York (and not to their Iroquois brethren in New

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<sup>30</sup>Bellomont's Conference with the Five Nations, July, 1698, p. 3.



France).<sup>31</sup>

In the fall of 1700, the Sault Iroquois requested closer relations with their League brethren, but the Onondaga sachems who responded rebuffed them (perhaps because New York interpreter Lawrence Claessen was present).<sup>32</sup> This sign of strained relations between the two Iroquois groups was just what both New York and New France wanted. The French officials tried to prevent Sault diplomats from communicating with the League, and New York also intervened to prevent close ties between the two. Just as the English wanted Sault envoys to deal directly with Albany, by-passing Iroquoia, the French wanted the Five Nations to negotiate directly with Montreal officials, by-passing the Sault.<sup>33</sup> The only message which French officials allowed the Sault Iroquois to send to the Mohawks was one inviting the latter to settle immediately in New France, to which the Mohawks coyly avoided answering.<sup>34</sup>

Neither Indian group appreciated these attempts by the French and the English to straitjacket them. The League and Sault Iroquois were being used for European ends, losing control over their own diplomatic policy, and being forced to

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<sup>31</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 38; NYCD 4:696, 745-46.

<sup>32</sup>NYCD 4:803.

<sup>33</sup>Charlevoix, History 5:94; Bellomont's Conference with the Five Nations, July, 1698, p. 3; Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 28; NYCD 9:600, 713, 4:895.

<sup>34</sup>NYCD 9:671, 676. (Even though this was the only message "allowed" by the French, it may not have been the only one sent.)

watch while their European neighbors entertained the opposing tribal group and promised these guests things which the "home" group were never promised. Some League Iroquois demonstrated that they did not appreciate New Yorkers interfering with their guests from Kahnawake in 1695, when Albany officials wanted two Sault envoys visiting the Onondaga council fire to make a stop at Albany on their way home; the Oneidas at the council fire would not allow this diversion from the itinerary.<sup>35</sup> In 1699, Five Nations representatives at Albany complained that while they had obeyed the rule set by New York that there was to be no travel between them and Canada, the Albany officials had both sent envoys to Canada and received visitors from that colony, including Indians.<sup>36</sup> The League Iroquois were jealous of English preferential treatment of the Sault Indians. They might have been even more so if they had heard Albany officials declare that "the Maquase praying Indians...are ye spring that move all ye rest."<sup>37</sup>

No doubt Kahnawakes were also miffed when Frontenac regaled visiting League Mohawks.<sup>38</sup> But while Frontenac saw the advantages of driving a wedge between the Five Nations and New York by treating the League Iroquois royally, he also came around in 1698, his last year as governor of New France (and

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<sup>35</sup>NYCD 9:600.

<sup>36</sup>NYCD 4:567-572.

<sup>37</sup>NYCD 4:690.

<sup>38</sup>Charlevoix, History 5:84-85; NYCD 4:803.

the last year of his life), to see a positive role the Sault Iroquois could play in his foreign policy. In that year he encouraged League Indians to visit Kahnawake (and to come over to Montreal as long as they were in the area). He was convinced that this was a sure way to get more of the League Iroquois to emigrate to the mission village, thereby depopulating Iroquoia and weakening the adjacent English colony.<sup>39</sup>

As a result of Frontenac's détente policy on Five Nations visits to Kahnawake, many League Iroquois families came to the south shore of the St. Lawrence to visit, some with an intention of staying.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile (if English accounts can be believed regarding what their allied Indians wanted in terms of Christian missionaries), the Five Nations apparently finally agreed on a policy regarding Jesuit missionaries in Iroquoia -- they did not want them there again.<sup>41</sup> But emigrants flocked once again from Iroquoia to the Sault mission village (all accounts agree), desiring baptism from the Jesuits (if the Jesuit Relations can be believed).<sup>42</sup> At least it seemed that all those inclined toward Catholicism had moved north to the Catholic Iroquois communities at the Sault and the Mountain, and opinion was consolidated on the once

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<sup>39</sup>Charlevoix, History 5:84-85.

<sup>40</sup>Potherie, Histoire 4:106.

<sup>41</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 41.

<sup>42</sup>JR 65:31.

explosive issue in the homeland.

Tensions were now relaxed between the Sault and League Iroquois. Indeed, by 1698, the two Iroquois groups were speaking of mutually "burying the hatchet" and of renewing their former friendships.<sup>43</sup> A year later, a mutual condolence ceremony was held at Kahnawake, attended by League and Sault warriors. They held day-long sessions in which one after another rose and confessed, often with remorse, all the war deeds he had done and mourned the death of his friends in battle. Bacqueville de la Potherie witnessed this combination of public confession and boasting, breast-beating forum, recording the words of one Sault warrior: "I killed four Iroquois five years ago at a certain place," and tearing off a piece of tobacco, "I take this as a medicine to remake my spirit;" the musicians applauded him with cries, and by a movement precipitated by their gourds, you heard the noise of two hundred to three hundred Indians from one end of the longhouse to the other...as long as the tobacco lasted, there were plenty of people who cited their exploits." The octagenarian grand chief of the Senecas remained standing in his canoe during this event, making "death cries of "Hai! Hai!," crying and mourning for those who had been killed during the war.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>NYCD 9:685-686.

<sup>44</sup>Potherie, Histoire 4:194-201.

This mutual condolence ritual among former enemies was part of the healing process for the factionalized Iroquois people. And at the ratification of the final peace agreement between the Five Nations and the French in 1701 (in which the Five Nations agreed to remain neutral in any conflict between the English and the French), the Kahnawake people announced that they were working for peace and asked their League brethren to preserve the peace as well.<sup>45</sup> The Ho-de-no-sau-née had survived the brutal decade of war despite some searing incidents of fratricide.

On very few occasions had League and Sault battle forces eagerly engaged each other. For the most part, they tried to avoid each other, while still trying to maintain good relations with their respective European allies, realizing this was necessary in an era of European expansion. Following Iroquois tradition, they merely avoided conflict whenever possible, except for a few true "hawks," notably the zealots such as Paul of the Sault, converted to the French-Catholic cause, and Lawrence, the League Mohawk who was an Anglophile and a devoted convert to Protestant Christianity. Teganissorens, the neutral League sachem, was much more the norm than these other noted French or English allies. He saw any entangling alliance with either power as a threat to his

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<sup>45</sup>Série B 20:135; NYCD 9:724-725.

people's sovereignty.<sup>46</sup>

Despite almost surrendering control of their own policies, the League and the Sault Iroquois both retained their autonomy. Neither group denounced their European ally, perhaps because this was politically or geopolitically impossible. And although factions complicated matters both in Iroquoia and at Kahnawake, the damage resulting from working at cross-purposes was minimized. These people ingeniously used their situations to their own advantage whenever possible. Their spheres of action were narrower than formerly, but not completely restricted; they used what latitude they could. Both groups realized that they had to steer their way through a complicated set of allegiances in which they may have regretted becoming entangled, and both groups survived the ordeals of the 1690s, although not all with equal success.

The Iroquois entered the eighteenth century forced by their peace treaty to remain neutral between the French and the English, but instead of letting this straitjacket them, they used the position to play the two powers off against each other. They made the best of their population losses and of a situation which was not ideal. Likewise, the Kahnawakes,

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<sup>46</sup>See Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1984), Ch. 7-10 (passim), and William J. Eccles, "Teganissorens," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. 2, pp. 619-623, regarding Teganissorens.

although arguably "vassals" or "charges" of the French, were only nominally so, and were to use their unique position once again in the eighteenth century to their own advantage, this time in the sphere of trade more than in warfare or diplomacy. Important because they had embarked on a project of creating a new cultural group which assimilated beliefs and habits from two cultures, they were to prove themselves to be important politically as well, to be "ye spring that move all ye rest."

## CHAPTER SIX

### KAHNAWAKE FOREIGN RELATIONS 1701-1760

After the 1701 settlement between the French, English, Five Nations, and mission Iroquois, the question remaining to be answered was whether the Indian groups would actually remain neutral, as had been agreed. An Onondaga sachem identified the dilemma: "for ye Indians are divided there [at Kahnawake] as well as among ye Five Nations, ye one half is for ye English & ye other half for ye french."<sup>1</sup> While Canadian officials worried about the Five Nations and hoped they would keep out of the French-English war which broke out in 1702, the Albany Commissioners and the New York governor alike expended great effort to achieve and maintain neutrality from the Kahnawakes.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, however, the Kahnawakes continued to be a thorn in their sides, and they complained often from 1701 on about the continuing flow of

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<sup>1</sup>Lawrence H. Leder, ed., The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1723 (Gettysburg: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956) (hereafter cited as LIR), p. 212. Regarding Iroquois foreign relations in this period, see Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1984), Part Four; Richard Aquila, The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier, 1701-1754 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983); Francis Jennings, The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 (New York: Norton, 1984), Part Three.

<sup>2</sup>Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York 15 vols. (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1853-1887), 4:983, 5:141, 9:737, 834 (hereafter cited as NYCD); Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec (hereafter cited as RAPQ) 1939-40, pp. 418, 441.



Iroquois emigrants to the mission town at Sault Saint-Louis.

For many reasons, not the least of which was military, New York officials were concerned about the decrease in population of the Five Nations, and viewed the flow of migrants northward as a hemorrhaging of a vital human resource.<sup>3</sup> The declining population was a major impetus toward forcing the remaining Jesuit missionaries in Iroquois villages to leave once and for all, because they were contributing to the problem by recruiting emigrants to Kahnawake.<sup>4</sup> Father Jacques Bruyas was the last remaining Black Robe, and he finally left his Onondaga mission in 1708.

At the same time, New York officials continued their efforts to repatriate the Sault Mission Iroquois in the Iroquois homeland (or rather, to move them to a spot of land north of Albany). The officials engaged the League Iroquois to send emissaries to the Sault to suggest the move back to New York and sent wampum belts themselves to plead with the Kahnawakes. The response of the governor of New France, however, indicated the importance of the Kahnawakes to the French. When he heard of the New York offer, he threatened to go to war with the English colony over these Indians. His reaction caused a disturbance in the Sault village because many in the pro-English faction had been excited about the possibility of moving south. But the possibility of a move

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<sup>3</sup>NYCD 4:899.

<sup>4</sup>NYCD 4:888, 899, 905; LIR p. 187.

"made a great noise" because it was controversial in New France and the enthusiasm was squelched by authorities, probably Jesuits as well as secular officials.<sup>5</sup>

Claude de Ramezay, the governor of Montreal, "used every exertion" to prevent a meeting between Peter Schuyler (the mayor of Albany and Commissioner of Indian Affairs who spearheaded the effort) and Sault sachems who were interested in negotiating a move to New York. Oddly enough, some Abenaki Indians, who themselves had been known to waver in their support for the French, met the sachems on the way to Albany, and reportedly "shamed them out of a course so unbecoming in Christians and so dangerous to themselves."<sup>6</sup> Schuyler took advantage of the League and Sault practice of visiting each others' villages, and invited some Sault headmen who were visiting in Iroquoia to come to Schenectady, where he made his offer of tracts of land in New York for them to settle their people. He also offered them wampum belts for the Mountain/Sault-au-Récollet Indians as well, and waited for the response from Kahnawake. Ramezay again heard of this, no doubt through a pro-French Kahnwake who informed the Jesuits at the Sault, and had the wampum belts sent back without an

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<sup>5</sup>Peter Wraxall, An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs in the Colony of New York, 1678-1751, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (New York: Blom, 1968, reprint), pp. 42-43 (quote), 44, 80; NYCD 4:978-79, 983-84, 987.

<sup>6</sup>Pierre F.-X. de Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France 6 vols., ed. John G. Shea (New York: Harper, 1866-1872), Vol. 5, p. 164.

answer.<sup>7</sup>

Even though unsuccessful, Schuyler's efforts indicated New York's desperation to attract the Kahnawakes, since the effort was made only months after a Sault and French attack on the Massachusetts town of Deerfield. Forty-seven New Englanders were killed and over a hundred taken prisoner. Many of these captives were brought to Kahnawake and remained there, some of them later choosing to remain among the Indians and convert to Catholicism even after being allowed to return to their Massachusetts homes. This was significant in that it caused much intermarriage in the ensuing years at Kahnawake. The best known of these New Englanders who became part of the Kahnawake community and clan network was Eunice Williams, a young daughter of a Puritan minister. At first she abhorred her new surroundings and captors but eventually became a devout Catholic, married a Sault Indian, and renounced any desire to return to Deerfield, a decision that fascinated and horrified New Englanders as blasphemous.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Charlevoix, History 5:166; NYCD 4:871, 918; LIR p. 190. On the "Mountain" Indians, as they are referred to by the French, see Chapter 2, footnote 36.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas Hutchinson, The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts-Bay 3 vols., ed. Lawrence Shaw May (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1936), Vol. 2, p. 102; Emma Lewis Coleman, New England Captives Carried to Canada between 1677 and 1760 during the French and Indian Wars 2 vols. (Portland, Me: 1925-26), Vol. 2, p. 40; John G. Shea, History of the Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1529-1854 (New York: P.J. Kennedy, 1854), p. 332; John Williams, The Redeemed Captive returning to Zion ed. Edward W. Clark (Amherst, Ma: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976) (first published 1707), esp. pp. 45-69; New York

The Deerfield attack could not have been looked upon kindly in Albany since New York was expected to present a united front with the New Englanders against French incursions, and since the Kahnawakes refused to give up the Reverend Williams' daughter even after much pleading from New York officials. The New Englanders resented Albany's neutrality toward Canada and her Indian allies, and condemned Albany for maintaining diplomatic ties with the Kahnawakes. But some Kahnawake messengers informed Albany officials of the impending attack on the Massachusetts town, so that they in turn could warn their eastern neighbors and avert horrible results. (These Sault informers were probably pro-English, and presumably those from the Sault who conducted the raid were pro-French.)<sup>9</sup> But the warning did not reach the Deerfielders in time and their town was devastated. Nevertheless, relations between the Kahnawakes and Albany remained as close as ever, and trade as well as talks about resettling near the Hudson River town continued.

The pro-English faction at the Sault was strong after the Deerfield raid, because although four Kahnawake warriors went

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Council Minutes, 1668-1783, New York State Library, Old Vol. 10, p. 22 (Calendar p. 210); NYCD 4:1083, 1099-1100. See also James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," in The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 168-206; Alden T. Vaughan and Daniel K. Richter, "Crossing the Cultural Divide: Indians and New Englanders, 1605-1763," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society XC (1980), pp. 23-99.

<sup>9</sup>NYCD 4:1099-1100.

out later in 1704 to conduct raids on New England outposts, at least some of the Kahnawake sachems prevented the French from planning an attack on English targets.<sup>10</sup> And three years later, a Kahnawake sachem made a telling request of the Albany commissioners: he asked them to send a secret (secret from the French) wampum belt to the Sault to ask the Kahnawakes to stop raiding New England settlements.<sup>11</sup> No doubt this sachem was pro-English and was trying to gain support within his community to stop French-inspired attacks on Massachusetts and New Hampshire towns. The effort seems to have achieved results, because later in 1707, Ramezay experienced great difficulty in convincing the Sault warriors to support his war policies. One reason for the reluctance to do so at this time may have been the issue of control over captives; after the Deerfield raid, French officials had taken into custody some prisoners whom Kahnawakes claimed as their own.

The Kahnawakes were angry about French presumption of control over captives because the captives were taken largely in order to be adopted into Kahnawake families to increase the population. In early 1708 Sault spokesmen informed Ramezay that because the French had taken many of the captives from Deerfield and exchanged them with the English, the Sault warriors would no longer join French war parties to the

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<sup>10</sup>NYCD 4:1164.

<sup>11</sup>LIR p. 201.

English colonies.<sup>12</sup> This would have a crippling effect on French military strength, even for these small-scale surprise raids. In the same year, the minister of marine Pontchartrain ordered the governor of Canada, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, to attack Albany as a way of ending the contraband trade between that town and Montreal. Jacques and Antoine-Denis Raudot, the joint intendants of the colony, declined to do so since they knew that the mission Iroquois would not participate in an expedition to end the trade from which they themselves profited, and the Raudots realized that without their support, the attack could not succeed. Mission Iroquois (Sault and Mountain) military support was crucial to French sorties in the early eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

By 1708, the Kahnawakes had worked out a private agreement with Schuyler not to join French war parties in New England; the pro-English faction at the Sault had won out at least temporarily. This deal became evident because the French were planning an attack for the summer, but when rounding up recruits among the Kahnawakes, "they seemed [sic] very tardy & unwilling to join."<sup>14</sup> The Sault elders,

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<sup>12</sup>Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série C11A (Canada: Correspondance Générale, 1540-1784, 122 vols.), 28:77-84 (hereafter cited as C11A; references are to transcripts, not originals, unless otherwise indicated); Vaughan and Richter, "Crossing the Cultural Divide," pp. 78-79.

<sup>13</sup>Dale Miquelon, New France 1701-1744, "A Supplement to Europe" (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), p. 42.

<sup>14</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 56.

evidently anti-French, had convinced the warriors to "stop their hatchets" and not to support the French on this occasion, a pro-French warrior informed Ramezay. But French authorities had "in a manner forced some Caghnawaga Indians to join" and the joint expedition moved toward its destination. However, at Wood Creek near English territory, the Kahnawake warriors, "recollecting their Engagements with us [Albany Commissioners] not to join in War against New England wch they supposed was to be Attacked, threw away all their Provisions & left the other Forces," dooming the expedition to failure. To emphasize their defiance and independence from the French, the mutinous warriors offered to pay the French governor for the guns he had given them and for the provisions that they had thrown away in disgust.<sup>15</sup>

Predictably, the French were furious at the Sault display of cheek and treachery, and when they found out about the secret deal with Albany which had precipitated the mutiny their anger deepened. Vaudreuil gave an order to local officials to find out from the Jesuit missionaries at the Sault and from the garrison commander at the Kahnawake fort who the pro-English culprits were. Perhaps fearing serious reprisals, the elders and chiefs at the Sault soon promised authorities that they would no longer prevent warriors from going to war, but not until receiving a scathing reprimand from Vaudreuil himself. The governor threatened that "the

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<sup>15</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, pp. 61-62; RAPO 1939-40, p. 429.

idleness [by which] they wanted to keep their young ones would one day be the destruction of their village." After "reconciling all these spirited opinions," he reported back to France, the Kahnawakes decided to join Abenakis and other French-allied Indians in renewed raiding forays against New England, thereby breaking their agreement with Schuyler and ending, at least temporarily, the ascendancy of the pro-English faction at the Sault.<sup>16</sup>

In working out their own internal disagreements, the Kahnawakes had been railroaded by the French when they attempted to create an independent policy. Nevertheless, the Indians still held some power in the relationship; they had managed to leave an expedition in mid-march and in doing so had succeeded in demonstrating that the French needed them in order to pursue their military objectives. In reporting the events of 1708 to his superior, Vaudreuil contrasted the unreliable Kahnawakes with their dependable, loyal cousins, the Mountain mission Indians.<sup>17</sup> Vaudreuil had nothing but praise for the latter, but the fact that they were so loyal precluded them from having much independence from the French, or at least from forcing the French to deal with them as a belligerent group. The Kahnawakes had at least carved out a

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<sup>16</sup>RAPO 1939-40, pp. 429-430, 432-433, 441-442; Charlevoix, History 5:204-205, 208-209; David A. Armour, "The Merchants of Albany, New York, 1686-1760" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1965), pp. 94-95.

<sup>17</sup>RAPO 1939-40, p. 430.



measure of autonomy with which to negotiate with the French.

In an invasion of Canada planned for 1709 the New Yorkers and New Englanders had similar trouble gaining military support from the Seneca nation. But the other four Iroquois nations supported the effort, warning their Sault brethren through wampum belt messages that an invasion of New France was imminent and that the mission Iroquois should leave their village and return to New York. The League sachems also warned the Kahnawakes that once the force had invaded New France, the mission could not be assured safety. The reply from the Sault reflected the recent shift toward pro-French policy -- the Indians answered that they would remain with the French. But the expedition failed anyway, and this was the closest the League and mission Iroquois came to fighting against each other during Queen Anne's War. Otherwise, the opening years of the eighteenth century were characterized by close and frequent relations between the two groups, including the regular exchange of intelligence.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, the Kahnawakes continued to see how far they could push the French in their psychological power struggle. Vaudreuil's wife reported that "the Iroquois of Sault St.-Louis have become so insolent that they're boasting that the French can't do without them." Her husband responded by

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<sup>18</sup>Bruce T. McCully, ed., "Catastrophe in the Wilderness: New Light on the Canada Expedition of 1709," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., XI (1954), pp. 452-453; LIR p. 212; NYCD 5:72-74, 85-86, 141, 9:834; Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 94.

plucking the strings of pride among the warrior faction; he stopped inviting the Kahnawakes on warring expeditions. This had the desired effect of wounding Indian pride, and a fair number came running to join in the next French sortie into enemy territory.<sup>19</sup>

Not all rallied around the fleur-de-lys, however. Some Sault Indians had too much of a renegade spirit to conform to life at the mission village. A Kahnawake named Paskoué lived with a "band" of like-minded people apart from the village, probably north of Lake Ontario. A description of him in 1710 indicated that he had "been some years separated from his Nation" at the Sault. In that year, Paskoué and his friends murdered two League Iroquois travellers not far from Fort Frontenac, causing a delicate diplomatic problem for Vaudreuil with the Five Nations. The Canadian governor claimed that no one in the upper country was able to persuade any Indians in the area to deliver the murderers to French authorities, an indication that Paskoué's group was a furtive and dangerous collection of individuals. No doubt the fugitives were disgruntled at life in the settled community of the Jesuit mission and were no friends of the Five Nations either, as the murders demonstrate.<sup>20</sup>

Paskoué and his fellow "renegades" were not the only ones from, or at, the Sault who chafed at authority there.

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<sup>19</sup>RAPQ 1942-43, p. 415.

<sup>20</sup>NYCD 9:848, 857.

Complaints against the insolence of the Kahnawakes continued, as did claims that they were not easy to govern and were not sufficiently docile toward the French.<sup>21</sup> When Father Pierre Cholenec decided in 1714 that the community needed to relocate further west along the south shore, various issues emerged which revealed conflicts between the Indians and the priests at Kahnawake, as well as between the priests and secular authorities in the colony. In applying to Vaudreuil for funding, Cholenec claimed that the Sault Indians had exhausted the firewood and the soil through corn cultivation since moving to the site in 1696. Cholenec claimed that the Indians insisted on moving the village site up two leagues further along the shore.

In making his case for funds to finance the move, Cholenec argued that the New Yorkers and Five Nations had been relentlessly pursuing the return of the Kahnawakes to New York, and that financing the new village site was the only way to prevent dissatisfaction among the Sault Indians which might cause them to emigrate. The missionary claimed that the Sault mission was indispensable to the defense of New France against neighbors to the south, providing a buttress against incursions which would otherwise have to be borne by Canadian habitants. The funding was needed quickly, he added, because the Kahnawakes were "becoming more and more formidable through

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<sup>21</sup>RAPO 1946-47, p. 408.

their great numbers, and ... seek occasions for a rupture."<sup>22</sup> Choleneq attempted to make it seem that the Indians were asking for a new fort and a church as well as a palisaded enclosure, although probably the Jesuits cared much more about a church than the Indians did. As for a stone fort, it soon became evident that not all the Kahnawakes wanted one. But for now, Vaudreuil wholeheartedly embraced the proposal and the funding for the move -- 2,000 livres -- was granted by the king in 1716, in which year much of the actual labor of moving the village took place.<sup>23</sup>

A conflict arose, however, when the Jesuits requested that the land concession granted to them in 1680 be renewed, with new titles to confirm Jesuit possession. This request triggered discussion of the status of the concession and suspicion that the Jesuits might have selfish motives for wanting their possession clarified. Father Joseph François Lafitau of Kahnawake was compelled to present the argument that the Jesuits had no intention of moving the Indians from the site at a later date to turn a profit from the improved land. But the Council of Marine apparently remained skeptical

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<sup>22</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows, 1896-1901), 67:25-27 (hereafter cited as JR).

<sup>23</sup>Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série F3 (Collection Moreau St.-Méry, 1540-1806, 270 vols.), Vol. 7, p. 374; RAPO, 1941-42, pp. 184-185, 1940-41, p. 454. The entire village, however, was not in place until 1719, and the church and Jesuits' residence not until 1721. (E. J. Devine, Historic Caughnawaga (Montreal: Messenger Press, 1922), p. 180.)

-- Lafitau may have protested too much -- and stipulations were attached to the grant of land. Most importantly, the new letters patent indicated that the land was to be held jointly by the Jesuits and the Indians of Sault St.-Louis, and that when and if the Indians should abandon it, it would revert directly to the king. This is a likely reason why the village did not move again.<sup>24</sup>

Another related issue had been whether the Jesuits or the Crown had control over whether to build a fort, who would

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<sup>24</sup>RAPO 1941-42, pp. 184-186; Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série C11E (Des Limites et des Postes, 1651-1818, 38 vols.) 11:26-30 (hereafter cited as C11E). (The present Kahnawake reserve is on the 1716 site.) Louis Antoine de Bougainville, a colonel serving with the French forces in the Seven Years' War, indicated in 1757 that the Jesuits desired to "profit from the lands which the Indians had cleared," and he noticed that they had done this with the Lorette Hurons in moving their village from "Ancien Lorette" to their later site. The issue emerged in 1757 because the Jesuits were proposing moving their Abenaki missions at St.-François and Bécancour. (Louis Antoine, comte de Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness; the American journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760 ed. and trans. Edward P. Hamilton (Norman, Ok: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 83.) Louis Franquet also was suspicious in 1752 that the Jesuits were encouraging Kahnawakes to make improvements on their land, only to turn a profit on parcelling it out to habitants later. (Louis Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires sur le Canada ed. J. Cohen (Montréal: Éditions Elysée, 1974), pp. 38-39.) There was a legal dispute between the Jesuits and the Kahnawakes in 1762, brought on by the question of land control after the British Conquest. In 1762, Daniel Claus, Sir William Johnson's agent in charge of Indian affairs for the British in Montreal, was attempting to settle the dispute between the Jesuits and the Kahnawakes. He found that the Jesuits had engaged in so much fraud in running the survey line, so as to add to their land grant at the expense of the Kahnawakes', that it took Claus a few extra days to determine the actual boundary. (James Sullivan et. al., eds., The Papers of Sir William Johnson 14 vols. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1921-1965), 10:376-379, 3:862 (hereafter cited as JP).)

finance its construction, and who would have jurisdiction over it once it was built. The Council seemed to give latitude to the Jesuits on whether to build it or not, but they demonstrated once again their distrust of the Black Robes by stipulating that monies earmarked for construction of the fort be held by the colonial treasurer rather than being placed in Jesuit hands.<sup>25</sup>

The issue of a fort at Kahnawake did not dissipate quickly. It had been a touchy one in the 1690s, as it symbolized a loss of self-determination to the Kahnawakes. Many of them felt trapped by a garrisoned fort and considered the soldiers stationed there to be thwarting their freedom as much as protecting them.<sup>26</sup> Officials hinted at such a purpose; one document related to the 1716 move mentioned the building of a new fort as an effort to "retain" (retenir) the Indians.<sup>27</sup> In 1719, Ramezay wanted a garrison "to keep the Indians from trading at Albany," and toward the end of the Desautiers era at the Sault, these women protested to Louis Franquet, the engineer who was charged with making preliminary arrangements for fortification of the entire village, that a

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<sup>25</sup>Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série F5A (Missions Religieuses, 1639-1782, 3 vols.) 2:32-33; RAPO 1941-42, pp. 185-186.

<sup>26</sup>In 1722 the Kahnawakes complained that the presence of garrison troops in their village indicated that the government of New France mistrusted the Indians, and they also protested that no other Indian communities were occupied by troops. (JR 67:81.)

<sup>27</sup>RAPO 1941-42, p. 185.

complete enclosure would interfere with the free flow of trade.<sup>28</sup>

Whether or not the Jesuits had wanted a garrisoned fort at the new village site when they applied for the moving funds in 1714, it is clear that by the early 1720s they were adamantly opposed to it and repeatedly lobbied the Council of Marine to stop its construction. Some troops had been stationed at the new village site but they were removed in 1719. The Jesuits' motives for not wanting them and their officer returned to the Sault were mixed. No doubt they resented having to share authority with the commandant, as they had to during King William's and Queen Anne's Wars. One Black Robe argued that "whenever the Governor wishes to obtain anything from the Indians, and the officer does not succeed, as is nearly always the case, he casts the blame upon the Missionary."<sup>29</sup>

But reasons having to do with the welfare of the native community itself were also cited by both Jesuits and Indians. The Kahnawakes claimed that "horrible discord" existed in the village because of the garrison troops stationed there; the wives and daughters of Sault warriors and hunters were not

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<sup>28</sup>Franquet, Voyages et Memoires..., p. 120; Devine, Historic Caughnawaga, p. 189.

<sup>29</sup>JR 67:73-81 (quote p. 79); RAPQ 1941-42, pp. 202, 205, 213. Another example of friction between Jesuits and garrison commanders at Kahnawake: C11A 98:36-39. Franquet noted that the Jesuits greatly desired to have complete control in running the community. (Franquet, Voyages et Memoires..., p. 120.)

safe with the French soldiers, and the Indian men themselves were sorely tempted by the vices introduced into the village by the troops. A Kahnawake orator charged that since there had been a garrison, "tranquility and good order have been banished," because of the debaucheries mentioned, and also because "the soldiers frequently seek by false reports to embroil us with the officer, and the officer with the Governors, none of which things happened when we had no garrison."<sup>30</sup> The Indians cunningly argued that they were made into slaves by the impingement on their freedom which the garrison posed, and that the funds spent on a garrison and its barracks would be better spent in relief for the widows and orphans of Kahnawake whose fathers and husbands had been killed in the war for the French cause.<sup>31</sup> And knowing the worst fears of the French authorities, they threatened to emigrate back to their homeland if the stone fort for the garrison was built.<sup>32</sup>

Jesuits argued that the Sault Indians were much more docile in the absense of garrison troops than in their presence, and that Father Pierre de Lauzon had only managed to convince them to settle at the 1716 site instead of much farther away, perhaps even in New York, when there was no longer a garrison breathing down their necks. Also important

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<sup>30</sup>JR 67:73-75.

<sup>31</sup>JR 67:75-77.

<sup>32</sup>RAPO 1941-42, p. 263.



to the Jesuits was the level of piety and Christian devotion at the Sault; they claimed it had plummeted with the coming of French troops.<sup>33</sup> Finally in 1724, Vaudreuil gave up the idea of placing a garrison there in the face of such opposition, but the outbreak of war in the 1740s again forced the issue to the forefront.<sup>34</sup> The debate aggravated some of the tensions between various interests in New France in determining how the Kahnawake mission community would be run.

The late 1710s were a time of shifting physical settings for related Iroquois groups as well. Starting in 1717 the Sulpician Sault-au-Recollet (the former "Mountain" Mission) moved to its final site at Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes (present-day Oka) northwest of Montreal. The Indians at that mission continued to be called the "Mountain" Indians. And from 1714 until about 1720, Tuscarora refugees from the war with the Carolina colonists continued to pour in to Five Nations communities, until finally a separate homeland was carved out for them adjacent to the Cayugas and they were incorporated

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<sup>33</sup>JR 67:77, 81.

<sup>34</sup>RAPO 1941-42, p. 232. Potential hostilities in King George's War were used as a pretext for installing a garrison in 1747. But the Kahnawakes "had some difficulty in receiving that little garrison of twenty soldiers," because of alleged reasons (which the French officials did not believe) concerning "secret interests." There would have been a revolt at the Sault if Charles Deschamps de Boishébert, a leading military officer, had not promised them that the garrison would be removed as soon as the war was over. Boishébert did not understand why these Indians did not want the soldiers stationed in their village, and concluded that "evil councils prevail" at Kahnawake. (NYCD 10:86-87, 96.)

into the League; hence the change in name around 1720 from the Five to the Six Nations.<sup>35</sup>

Warriors of the reincorporated Six Nations people joined Kahnawake war parties in the 1720s for forays against the Virginians and the Catawba Indians of South Carolina who had assisted the North Carolinians in driving out the Tuscaroras.<sup>36</sup> Six Nations motives for fighting these peoples seem to be in revenge for the routing of the newest member of the League as well as the renewal of long-standing rivalries. But Sault motives for warring against these groups is less clear. Sault Iroquois were the instigators who persuaded League Iroquois warriors to participate against the wishes of the New York government. Kahnawake war parties had ventured to Catawba country even before the Tuscarora War of 1711-1713. The Catawbas were a convenient enemy, far enough away so as not to be able to retaliate or upset relations with the French, with whom the Catawbas had little or nothing to do. (The French in fact smiled on these Kahnawake raids to the

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<sup>35</sup>On the Mountain mission, see C11E 11:54-55; RAPO 1940-41, p. 454; Louise Tremblay, "La Politique Missionnaire Sulpicienne au 17e et debut du 18e siècle, 1668-1735," (Unpublished M.A. thesis: Université de Montréal, 1981). On the Tuscaroras and their war, see NYCD 5:387; Christine A. Styrna, "The Winds of War and Change: The Impact of the Tuscarora War on Proprietary North Carolina, 1690-1729," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1990).

<sup>36</sup>See James H. Merrell, The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 54, regarding Catawbas fighting against the Tuscaroras for South Carolina in the Tuscarora War.

south.)<sup>37</sup>

Daniel Richter's compelling argument about the League's need for mourning wars to assuage the bereaved and to boost the population of Iroquois tribes holds true for the mission Iroquois as well.<sup>38</sup> They, too, integrated captives into their societies. For example, in a 1723 raid, a Kahnawake war party took an Indian prisoner in Virginia whose release became an urgent cause involving the New York provincial authorities and the Six Nations as well as the Sault Iroquois and Virginia. The English tried to enlist Six Nations help in convincing the Kahnawakes to give up the man, but the English declined to use force for fear of offending the Sault and League Iroquois. But the prisoner "was more Enclin'd to go to Canada then to return to his own Country." Albany officials reported that the Kahnawakes "have made a Sachim of him

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<sup>37</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, pp. 50, 52; New York Colonial Manuscripts, 1638-1800 (83 vols.) New York State Library, 60:156; NYCD 5:568, 660; Commission for Indian Affairs, Albany. Minutes of meetings at Albany [1722-1748] and schedule of propositions made by the Indians and answers given to them, 1677-1719. 5 vols. National Archives of Canada (hereafter cited as Minutes of the Indian Commissioners) 1:6-8a, 165, 167, 2:67; New York Council Minutes Old Vol. 21, p. 436 (Calendar p. 381); The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden (New-York Historical Society, Collections, L-LVI [New York, 1917-1923]), Vol. 4, p. 278 (hereafter cited as Colden Papers); JP 1:378, 386; James H. Merrell, "Their Very Bones Shall Fight: The Catawba-Iroquois Wars," in Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell, eds., Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800 (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), p. 127.

<sup>38</sup>Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," William and Mary Quarterly 3d Ser., XL (1983), 528-559.

according to Custom."<sup>39</sup> The community at the Sault continued to be a mosaic of cultural origins, with the periodic influx of native as well as European captives, integrated into the seamless web of families and clans.

Other targets of the Kahnawakes provided new family members in the form of captives. In 1716 at the invitation of the French, Sault warriors took part in the war against the Fox nation west of Lake Michigan.<sup>40</sup> Once again in 1731 they were called upon and provided more fighting men than did the Canadian militia.<sup>41</sup> Four years later, the call came again and ninety joined the French campaign against the Fox. Bad luck cursed this expedition, however. The journey to Fox territory was arduous and guides led the fighting forces astray so that hardly any of them encountered the enemy. Those who did found themselves greatly outnumbered, but as Father Luc Nau, the Kahnawake priest who accompanied the expedition, recounted, the Kahnawakes in the group proved their bravery and their reputation as "the most Warlike of all the american tribes." One of their leaders, Onorakinguiak, called out to the rest that they must fight bravely and not let themselves be captured; his words of inspiration were "Let

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<sup>39</sup>Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:8a, 11-11a.

<sup>40</sup>Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin 16:341 (hereafter cited as CSHSW); Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History (Norman, Ok: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), p. 42.

<sup>41</sup>CSHSW 17:124.

us show these renards [Foxes] that we are Iroquois and frenchmen."<sup>42</sup> The French and allied-Indian force defeated the Fox warriors soundly, forcing them back into a wooded area to take refuge. It is telling that a Sault Indian was the unofficial commander in this battle. Perhaps because of their numbers, the mission Iroquois seem to have dominated the expedition, and the French militia and their leaders feared their allies almost as much as they did the enemy.

Officially, the commander in charge of the expedition was Sieur de Noyelle, but his authority was limited. He confided to his superiors that the French soldiers in the war party feared that the Sault (and probably Mountain) Iroquois "would put them into the Kettle." De Noyelle advised that on future expeditions, "it is necessary that the French should be stronger than the savages so as to be able to dominate them; otherwise They dominate us ... notwithstanding [our] complaisance and attention to Them." He spoke from personal experience; a Kahnawake warrior during this expedition "was bold enough to beat one of our soldiers in my presence." But de Noyelle did not punish the man, rather pretending to turn his head "as if I had not seen it," explaining that "we expected every Day to be abandoned by those people [mission Iroquois] at the first word we might say to them."<sup>43</sup>

French commanders lived in fear of their allied forces in

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<sup>42</sup>JR 68:275-277.

<sup>43</sup>CSHSW 17:226-229.

these backcountry forays and the Kahnawakes knew they could behave as they wished. They realized they had the upper hand. Power relationships were different in the interior of the continent from what they were at the garrisoned fort along the St. Lawrence. The Kahnawakes may have been the most warlike of all North American bands, but they were not unswervingly loyal to the French cause. However, they were easily the largest single group of Indians on which the French called in time of war, and therefore they had to be tolerated.<sup>44</sup>

In 1739, the missionaries at the Sault played an active part in convincing Kahnawake warriors to join a French foray against the Cherokees. Father Lauzon used the confidence he enjoyed among the Kahnawakes to press them into service. The Kahnawakes made up more than half of the entire allied-Indian force for the southern offensive. Even some League Mohawks joined in this effort, notwithstanding promises they had made to the governor of New York.<sup>45</sup> No doubt the reason that Kahnawakes agreed enthusiastically to fight was the prospect of captives, potential adoptees, for their community, since Father Nau had recently commented that the Sault population was not as large as it had once been. In 1740, a Jesuit missionary at Detroit noticed that a party of "bandits" from

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<sup>44</sup>E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documentary History of the State of New York 4 vols. [quarto ed.] (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1850-1851), Vol. 1, pp. 17-18. (Hereafter cited as DHNY.)

<sup>45</sup>RAPO 1922-23, pp. 181-182, 184-185; JR 69:37; NYCD 6:148.

the Sault came back from the southern foray with some Chickasaw captives.<sup>46</sup> Whatever the Kahnawakes' reasons for fighting, they were much braver than their French counterparts; although the French had brought cannons and mortars, they did not dare engage Indians in battle, and the Iroquois of Kahnawake, along with some Canadian militia, were the only ones to encounter the enemy.<sup>47</sup>

Charles, Marquis de Beauharnois, the governor of New France, came to think of these Indians, along with the other "domiciliated" (mission) Indians, as the heart of the French fighting force; he noted that despite their "inconstancy" they were to be kept on alert in case needed for battle, whereas his French and Canadian regulars and militia seemed soft by comparison.<sup>48</sup> However, one year after stating this, he found the "inconstancy" to be overwhelming; when Beauharnois approached the village at Kahnawake to speak with the Sault Iroquois, the sachems gathered up all the people and fled the village to avoid having a confrontation with him, true to the Iroquoian trait of avoiding conflict. Despite fighting bravely, the Kahnawake reputation for "inconstancy" was monumental in the early 1740s, since they engaged in battle with Indian tribes behind Beauharnois' back and against his will, maintained close trading ties (and, Beauharnois feared,

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<sup>46</sup>JR 69:47; CSHSW 17:328.

<sup>47</sup>JR 69:47-48.

<sup>48</sup>NYCD 9:1068.

information networks) with New York, and at times even incited other mission Indians against the French.

When Beauharnois finally managed to get an audience with the Kahnawake people in the summer of 1741 by engaging Father Lauzon to strongarm the sachems into coming to Montreal, he chastized them for fomenting dissent among the St. Francis Abenakis and the Mountain Indians. Charging that "one of your Chiefs wished to inspire them [the Mountain Indians] with sentiments of rebellion against the discipline of your common Father," he expressed his disbelief that they could have suggested such bad thoughts to the Mountain Indians, who "understand better than you the value of my friendship."<sup>49</sup> But the Sault sachems spoke ill of their Mountain Iroquois cousins, complaining that the latter had informed the French of Sault intrigues. Relations between the two communities were strained at best, and Beauharnois did not help by suggesting that the Mountain Iroquois were beyond reproach whereas the Sault Iroquois needed to be reprimanded and forced back into a posture of obedience. He complained that in contrast to the loyal Mountain Indians, almost all the Kahnawakes had "English hearts."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>NYCD 9:1073-1074; Camille Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVIIIe siècle 2 vols. (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1906), Vol. 2, p. 254. A similar statement comparing Sault and Mountain loyalty is found in CSHSW 18:18 (1749).

<sup>50</sup>NYCD 9:1071.



The warring efforts of the Kahnawakes against distant tribes in the 1730s and early 1740s clearly paid off at home; periodic raids against the Chickasaws as well as the Catawbas produced "a large number of slaves" to be brought to the mission village, according to Father Nau. But these so-called "slaves" were spared torture for the most part and were adopted into the community. Nau claimed that the Kahnawake Indians "instruct them in our mysteries, and by Holy baptism place Them in The way of reaching heaven." By this means as well as the voluntary immigration of "outside families coming from a distance who willingly settle down among us," the population of the Sault mission increased significantly in this period. Nau indicated that there was so much work to be done because of the influx of people, as well as caring for the sick and settling quarrels among the Indians, that the missionaries stationed there were extremely overworked. But the Jesuits could not have helped feeling gratified that Indians were joining the ranks of the Sault in such numbers and that conversely Six Nations sachems in the homeland were worrying about the exodus of their tribesmen and women.<sup>51</sup>

Undoubtedly, however, the influx of voluntary and involuntary newcomers complicated life at the Sault immeasurably. The number of tribal origins represented

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<sup>51</sup>JR 69:57-59 (quote); Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 223; New York Council Minutes Old Vol. 21, p. 33 (Calendar p. 349); NYCD 6:282, 645. In 1741 the population at Sault St.-Louis was 1160, with 270 warriors. (C11A 75:206-207)

increased, so that many languages must have been spoken in the longhouses, although Mohawk remained the dominant tongue. An example of the cosmopolitan nature of the Kahnawake community, was a man whom the French called Beauvais; he was a métis and could speak "every language," according to his compatriots.<sup>52</sup> During a raid against the Foxes and Sakis, Beauvais had been able to converse with them, which struck French observers on the scene as remarkable. Beauvais served as a reminder of the multi-cultural community in which he made his home.<sup>53</sup>

The polyglot nature of the Kahnawake community goes far toward explaining the many and contradictory responses to war which came from its members. With the outbreak of King George's War in 1744, the English and French once again prepared for military activity in the northeast and both sides courted their Indian contacts. The English goal was unqualified military support from the Six Nations and neutrality from the Kahnawakes and other mission Indians. The French sought the reverse. The French had reason to be worried about Sault allegiance, because trade ties with Albany were closer than ever in the mid-1740s, and the Albany Commissioners, if not the League Iroquois, might be able to convince the Kahnawakes to stand neutral in the conflict, as

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<sup>52</sup>CSHSW 17:227; Franquet, Voyages et Memoires, p. 35.

<sup>53</sup>Beauvais became a sachem, indicating that the Kahnawakes were color-blind, that mixed-bloods were not barred from being appointed to positions of honor. There were many references to mixed-blood people at Kahnawake. One family even retained ties to white relatives in New England. (JP 1:267)

they had managed to do previously. But whereas Europeans assumed that a belligerent group would have one policy to which the whole group would adhere, native society did not allow for leaders to force others to agree with them; sachems, elders, or matrons might decide on a policy, but this did not mean that warriors would adhere to it.<sup>54</sup> Individuals would make their own decisions.<sup>55</sup> At the Sault there were at least

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<sup>54</sup>Despite the cultural blinders with which most Europeans perceived Indian political culture, Iroquoian women played an integral role in deciding whether or not Iroquoian men would wage war. But since they were involved at the village level of negotiations, European politicians seldom witnessed their involvement. Only one meeting of Beauharnois with a Mountain mission council is documented specifically enough to distinguish between elders, women, and warriors speaking to the governor. (NYCD 9:1078-1079) The only other references in European sources documenting mission Iroquois women's involvement in politics were by Frenchmen interested in native culture. In the 1710s Father Lafitau noticed at Kahnawake that "the matron has the power to make peace or war," and Pierre Pouchot concurred in the 1750s. (Lafitau, Customs Vol. 2, pp. 163-164; Pierre Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war in North America between the French and English, 1755-60 2 vols., trans. Franklin B. Hough (Roxbury, Ma: W.E. Woodward, 1866), Vol. 2, p. 202.

<sup>55</sup>Claude LeBeau, Aventures du Sr. C. LeBeau, avocat en parlement, ou voyage curieux et nouveau parmi les Sauvages de l'Amérique septentrionale 2 vols. (New York: Johnson Reprints, 1966) [originally published in Amsterdam, 1738], Vol. 2, pp. 278-279; Joseph François Lafitau, Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times 2 vols., William N. Fenton and Elizabeth Moore, ed. and trans. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974-77), 1:293-296, 300; Theda Perdue, "Cherokee Relations with the Iroquois in the Eighteenth Century," in Richter and Merrell, eds., Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800 (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), pp. 148-149; Mary Druke, "Structure and Meanings of Leadership Among the Mohawk and Oneida During the Mid-Eighteenth Century" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1982), pp. 7, 22 23. Father Joseph François Lafitau observed that at times, war was a "political agreement between chiefs of opposing parties to keep their

two factions which pursued independent policies in the ensuing years of French-English conflict; this was more and more apparent in the years leading up to war.

Differences of opinion had been visible as early as the 1720s. In 1725, a group of warriors had murdered an Englishman at Saratoga, but some sachems hurried to Albany upon hearing of it to ensure the Albany Commissioners that they regretted the act, that it was in no way condoned by the majority of their community, and that it was only "some of their vilest people" who had committed the heinous deed.<sup>56</sup> In the same year, the Commissioners reported that there were six sachems at Kahnawake and two of them had been accepted by the Albany men "as Children of this Governmt" (allies of New York), and would give regular intelligence of affairs in New France. No doubt representing the pro-English position at Kahnawake councils was also part of their role.<sup>57</sup>

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youth alert and had no other object except to harry each other and put their valour to the test." (Lafitau, Customs... 2:105.)

<sup>56</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 1:151a.

<sup>57</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 1:129. Some captives taken by a Kahnawake war party in the early 1750s became an issue which illustrated this point; Susanna, a respected Kahnawake woman who was visiting in Albany, told Conrad Weiser that the conduct of that party in capturing the English traders in peacetime was not approved of at all at the Sault, and that most of the people there were angry at those who had done it, "and in their Drunkenness would call them [the captors] old women and Breakers of the Peace." (NYCD 6:796.) The peacetime taking of captives by Indians was becoming a social problem in New France, because it was condoned by the French, who purchased prisoners from Indians and kept them as slaves. An economic incentive for taking captives developed

An Indian named Skonondo also played this role for a time. A frequent visitor at Albany from 1724 to 1726, when he acted as a speaker on behalf of the Sault Iroquois and passed intelligence to the New Yorkers, he emigrated in 1728 from the Sault, bringing his family and about sixty others to live near Albany. He was unquestionably a pro-English Kahnawake at this time. It is unclear how long he and his group remained in New York, but by 1735 he had returned to the Sault and was by that time referred to as a sachem, not just a speaker. But he was still very much in the pro-English camp at the Sault and still made frequent diplomatic trips to Albany, ensuring the Commissioners of good relations between the Kahnawakes and New York. In fact, in 1736, he stated that he was "mindfull of his being a Child of this Governmt. [New York]" and that he would "be faithfull to the Same" by informing them of anything important that was happening in Canada relating to New York.<sup>58</sup> Skonondo was also instrumental in making sure relations between the Sault and League Iroquois were smooth, that the "Road [between Iroquoia and Kahnawake] should be kept Clean & be free for all to use it peaceably." In further pro-English activities, Skonondo went to Boston in 1744 to affirm that the mission Iroquois

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among native groups. (Lafitau Customs... 2:152; Ian K. Steele, Betravals: Fort William Henry & the "Massacre" (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 13-14.)

<sup>58</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 1:68, 171a, 211, 2:82a; Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 170; New York Council Minutes Old Vol. 15, p. 155 (Calendar p. 303).

would remain neutral in the war.<sup>59</sup>

However, once the war began, the enigmatic Skonondo changed his mind; he was present at the destruction of Saratoga by French and mission Indian forces in 1746, the event which proved to be the most destructive to Kahnawake - New York relations in King George's War. His presence there implies that he participated in the fighting, unless he was forced to go against his will. But he had become a supporter of the French cause. In 1754, when war was again imminent, a pro-English diplomatic mission from the Sault headed for Albany told New York authorities that Skonondo had wanted to join them, but "was Rejected Having often Given Reason to Suspect his Fidelity" to the pro-English faction.<sup>60</sup> This turncoat was living evidence not only of the variety of opinions at the Sault but also of the possibility that some would change their minds over the years.

Indeed, a group of Kahnawakes admitted to the Albany commissioners in 1741 that they had not yet decided whether to remain neutral in a French-English war. Three years later a Sault spokesman indicated that the sachems of Kahnawake supported neutrality, and perhaps in specifying the sachems, hinted that not everyone at the Sault agreed with the

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<sup>59</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 2:65a, 299.

<sup>60</sup>New York Colonial Manuscripts 75:33, 79:37.

sachems.<sup>61</sup> Two months later, some other Kahnawake Indians visiting Albany were called to task for a rumor that the New Yorkers had heard concerning the mission Iroquois: that the French governor had offered them the hatchet against the English and that they had accepted it. The commissioners complained to these visitors that this taking up of the hatchet was contrary to what the sachem had told them two months earlier and to what Skonondo had promised at Boston. The reply was that the Sault sachems had held a meeting with the warriors of their village, asking them not to use the hatchet "Contrary to the Covent. with ye English" but to make war only on the Catawbas.<sup>62</sup> Clearly, a majority of the sachems and matrons were pro-peace (pro-English) whereas most of the warriors seemed to want to make war against the English. And indeed, while some Kahnawake travellers came to Albany to pass intelligence to the New Yorkers, others spied on the English colony, returning to Canada with military information about New York for the benefit of the French.<sup>63</sup>

But even the pro-French faction was concerned about relations with their fellow Iroquois of the Six Nations; those who agreed to take up the hatchet on behalf of the French invited Six Nations sachems to join them in their French

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<sup>61</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 223; Minutes of Indian Commissioners 2:275a-276.

<sup>62</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 2:298a-299.

<sup>63</sup>NYCD 9:1109-1111; Minutes of Indian Commissioners 2:308a.

alliance and in living at the Sault.<sup>64</sup> New York officials worried about a positive response to either of these propositions, especially when they desired Six Nations military support for their own cause. The League Iroquois were extremely reluctant to pledge military alliance with the English in 1745, and one League Indian even emigrated to the Mountain mission, embarking on a career of leading war parties against New York.<sup>65</sup> In early 1746, the grand council at Onondaga flatly refused to join the English side, arguing that they and the Sault Iroquois were "One Family and one Nation that they intermarried amongst one Another and would not therefore make war upon each other."<sup>66</sup>

Some Kahnawakes continued to entreat the League Iroquois to remain neutral, claiming that "the white people might fight for themselves" and that "there were only a few of Unruly Cachnawage Indians at the Destruction of Saratoge" in 1745.<sup>67</sup> This was revealing on two scores: that there were some inklings of an Indian-versus-white alignment of sympathies, and that the "unruly" Kahnawakes present at the Saratoga raid represented a small minority of their people, most of whom disapproved of the raid.

The possibility of both groups of Indians aligning

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<sup>64</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 3:84, 90.

<sup>65</sup>Colden Papers 3:137; NYCD 10:32-33.

<sup>66</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 244.

<sup>67</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 2:359-359a.



against both sets of Europeans frightened the latter. French and English alike feared that the League and Sault Iroquois had a "secret understanding" not to fight each other even if forced to go along on war expeditions. Cadwallader Colden claimed that the two Iroquois groups had a code they used to identify each other in the woods between New France and New York; a Six Nations man told a Schenectady man who wanted to go to New France that he needed only to dress like an Indian and, when encountering mission Iroquois along the way who would ask him to identify himself, call out "Maria" to be safe. French officials claimed that in battles which involved Kahnawake and League warriors on opposite sides, the Kahnawakes would fire warning shots as the enemy approached, to save their fellow Iroquois from being slaughtered.<sup>68</sup> The French officials worried about the understanding and feared that the two groups of Indians would "allow the whites to fight each other without interfering with them on either side."<sup>69</sup> New York leaders went even further, worrying that the two groups, while protecting each other, would "continue their Depredations agt. the Christians [Europeans]."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations[...] 2 vols. (Reprinted from the London 1747 edition, New York: Allerton, 1922), Vol. 2, pp. 214-215; NYCD 10:105.

<sup>69</sup>NYCD 10:94. Also Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), pp. 232-233.

<sup>70</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 2:406. In 1750, Pennsylvania's Indian agent Conrad Weiser lamented that Onondaga, seat of the Six Nations Confederacy Council, "was

But these fears were probably unfounded, since the two groups of Indians did go to war on opposite sides and even knowingly killed each other on occasion near the close of the 1744-1748 conflict. The Kahnawakes instigated the distancing which led to this position, since they had been first to take up the hatchet. In the summer of 1746, when the Six Nations were agonizing over whether to go to war, their Sault cousins distanced themselves rhetorically from the League, speaking of "your Father" and "our Father," as though the European alliances defined their relationship, instead of the blood and family connection which League orators had emphasized.<sup>71</sup> Clearly, at least for the moment, the pro-French faction had won at the Sault, speaking for the community in general. But opposition still existed, since even at the height of Sault support for the French in this war, Canadian officials worried that the Kahnawakes were "treacherous, and favour the Mohawks in their incursions on our settlements; they are even suspected of giving the enemy notice when we are in pursuit of them."<sup>72</sup>

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thick with French praying Indians when I was there," adding to the fear of pan-Indian organization. (Samuel Hazard, ed., Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania 16 vols. (Harrisburg: 1838-1853), Vol. 5, p. 480.)

<sup>71</sup>Colden Papers 3:234.

<sup>72</sup>NYCD 10:92. Aaron, a League Mohawk, reported to New York officials in 1746 that he had visited a friend at Kahnawake who was against involvement in the war. (Minutes of Indian Commissioners 2:396a.) This is one of few glimpses into individual opinion of persons at Kahnawake.

Not all Kahnawakes favored the Mohawks; in the early spring of 1748, a group of Kahnawakes encountered some League Mohawks, and the two groups, speaking to each other in Mohawk, denounced each other and boasted of their own bravery. According to English accounts, the Kahnawakes not only killed most of the Mohawk group, but also desecrated the bodies of their victims, roasting various parts over a fire.<sup>73</sup> Although at other times, it was clear that Kahnawakes were coerced into fighting, there were no Frenchmen present at this fratricidal spree; those Kahnawakes who took part in this butchering of Six Nations warriors did so of their own volition.

But coercion was sometimes evident. In the summer of 1747, some 34 Sault Iroquois had been outfitted for a war party by French authorities, who ordered the warriors to divide themselves into two or three smaller groups. The reaction to this order was less than enthusiastic since the warriors "manifested some repugnance," but they were "authoritatively told that they were to submit to orders and obey." And some Six Nations representatives at a council with William Johnson in April 1748 told him that their Sault counterparts were "too much under the Directions of the French" to agree to be neutral for the remainder of the war.<sup>74</sup> New Yorkers who were personally acquainted with some

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<sup>73</sup>JP 1:146-147.

<sup>74</sup>NYCD 10:167; JP 1:163.

Kahnawake Indians because of the illegal trade reported that the priests at Kahnawake routinely pressed the Sault Indians to make war on the English.<sup>75</sup> When a League Iroquois diplomat came to Kahnawake for discussions in 1746, a presumably pro-French Sault Indian informed a missionary of this visit, who in turn notified the governor of the colony. The Jesuits acted as watchdogs for the interests of the French colony by monitoring talks between the Sault and League people. If Sault and League negotiators had desired to have private meetings, they were thwarted in this attempt as long as the meetings were to be at the mission village instead of in a village in Iroquoia.<sup>76</sup>

The government of New France also attempted to control the movement of Sault Indians. Governor Beauharnois claimed that he installed a chief at Kahnawake, and told him to report everything that happened at the Sault, and to heed the Jesuits at all times.<sup>77</sup> At a particularly delicate time in 1744, the Montreal governor decreed that no Kahnawakes should enter that city.<sup>78</sup> No doubt many chafed at this attempt to limit their

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<sup>75</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 1:143a. For additional evidence of Jesuit pressure, see C11A 95:152-154; NYCD 10:209; Minutes of Indian Commissioners 1:143a; "Les malignités du sieur de Courville," [anon.] Bulletin des recherches historiques L (1944), p. 73.

<sup>76</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 2:394-394a, 403. Another instance of this happening: 2:373.

<sup>77</sup>NYCD 9:1075.

<sup>78</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 2:298, also 2:286a.

freedom and to control their policy.

Some rebelled completely against the growing intrusion of French imperial control on life at the Sault by leaving the village and heading west to escape the restrictions. The Ohio country in the 1740s and 1750s was a haven for many dispossessed or discontented tribal groups from the east. For the discontented, the source of their unhappiness with life in the East was often disagreement with the policies followed by the sachems or warriors in their villages. Separating from the group had always been a way of dealing with such political factionalism and never more so than in the mid-eighteenth century.

The nature of politics in Iroquoian and other native societies was changing at this time; the traditional pattern of sachems, elders, matrons, and warriors enjoying a balance of influence within the polity was being replaced by decision-making by a few "pine-tree chiefs," men unofficially appointed by whites, or recognized by whites, as the men in charge of making policy. Often these were warriors or war-inclined men who were encouraged by Europeans not to seek consensus within the village council but to impose a policy.<sup>79</sup> Sachems duly appointed by matrons saw their position declining, but their

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<sup>79</sup>Mary Druke, "Structure and Meanings of Leadership..." pp. 93-94, 144-145, 151. Joseph Brant is an example of a white-appointed or recognized leader who usurped authority from traditionally recognized sachems. (See James O'Donnell, "Joseph Brant," in R. David Edmunds, ed., American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity (Lincoln, Ne: University of Nebraska Press, 1980). Also see above, footnote 82.)

role had not been one of coercion. This traditional authority had been that of speaking, of presenting a point of view in hopes of convincing others to agree with it rather than using force. The elders, sachems, matrons, and warriors had always sought agreement in council meetings. If one could not agree on extremely important issues and felt strongly enough about it, he or she could leave the village.

Many of the people living in the Ohio country were those who had voted with their feet. Many Six Nations people were there, particularly Senecas (these Ohio Senecas were called Mingos), as well as Delawares and Shawnees who had lost their land in the east, and Ojibwas, Hurons, Wyandots, Twightees, and others. Both Sault and Mountain Mission Iroquois people were found in these small communities.<sup>80</sup> Little is known about these newcomers except for the occasional captivity narrative by white prisoners such as Colonel James Smith of Kentucky. Smith was captured in 1755, shortly before Braddock's defeat, by a Mountain Iroquois and two Delawares. They took him to Fort Duquesne, forced him to run the gauntlet, and later escorted him to a community of Kahnawakes, Delawares, and Ojibwas on the Muskingum River northwest of

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<sup>80</sup>CSHSW 18:91; Guy Frégault, *Le Grand Marquis: Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil et la Louisiane* 2e. éd. (Montréal: Fides, 1952), pp. 357, 358; Shea, *History*, p. 335; Michael N. McConnell, "Peoples "In Between": The Iroquois and the Ohio Indians, 1720-1768," in Richter and Merrell, eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987).

Fort Duquesne. Smith was adopted by this group and spent several years among them. Fortunately, his subsequent account of life among them provides clues about these Ohio emigrants. For instance, the Kahnawakes among this group may have been religious as well as political refugees, since one of his adoptive brothers told him that many of the Kahnawakes (as well as Wyandots) "were a kind of half Roman Catholics." The brother also said that "the priest and him could not agree, as they held notions that contradicted both sense and reason," and that he believed the traditional native religious way "was better than this new way of worshipping God."<sup>81</sup>

Some were opposed to fighting in the Seven Years' War. Tecaughretanego, a Kahnawake member of the community, told Smith that although he had had a reputation as a warrior, he had been very much against the war in council. Therefore he "stayed home" rather than go fighting, the traditional Iroquoian method of dealing with dissent from the group. If this was his attitude in the community in the Ohio country, there is a good chance that Tecaughretanego had left his home at the Sault for similar reasons.<sup>82</sup> Conversely, Smith also recounted that Tontileaugo, a Kahnawake refugee at the Muskingum camp, who wanted to go to war against an enemy tribe

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<sup>81</sup>Samuel G. Drake, ed., Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam (Buffalo, N.Y.: 1854), p. 206. Pierre Pouchot reported that in the 1750s many Sault Iroquois were abandoning their mission village because of disenchantment with the Christian religion. (Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war... 2:224.)

<sup>82</sup>Drake, ed., Indian Captivities, p. 221.

was voted out of the war party. The community held a council when deciding whether or not to make war on another group, and they held votes on whether each potential warrior should be included in the expedition. Tontileaugo was disappointed because "the votes went against him, as he was one of our best hunters." He was needed to stay behind and provide meat for the women, children, and elderly people at the community.<sup>83</sup>

Smith also told of elders trying to cajole the young men into going to war; on this occasion the former did not believe that the warriors necessarily could drive all the English off the continent, but "they were willing to propagate the idea in order to encourage the young men to go to war." These elders also claimed to have visions just before a war party set out for battle in order to "animate and excite [the warriors] to push on with vigor."<sup>84</sup> Whereas at the Kahnawake community itself elders and sachems seemed to be opposed to war and warriors eager to go to war, more often than not, the reverse seemed to be true in this western community of Kahnawakes. The practice of cajoling and using gentle pressure on warriors shows that traditional behavior in decision-making and conflict resolution persisted.

Also revealing in terms of Kahnawake attitudes toward and perceptions of the League Iroquois, was a potential skirmish between this Muskingum community and William Johnson's war

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<sup>83</sup>Drake, ed., Indian Captivities, p. 195.

<sup>84</sup>Drake, ed., Indian Captivities, pp. 203, 216.



party which included Mohawk warriors. This party was spotted one evening near the camp and many feared that they would be ambushed. The women were sent out of the range of possible fire and the men hunkered down on the ground to wait for enemy action. But Tecaughretanego, Smith's Kahnawake friend from whom he had learned some Mohawk, whispered to him that he should not be afraid, because all the Mohawk speakers of the community had to do to ensure their safety was to talk with Johnson's Mohawk allies. Since they spoke the same language, Johnson's Mohawks would not hurt the Kahnawakes or Smith (since he also spoke Mohawk), although they would kill the Ojibwas and others.<sup>85</sup> Thus the "understanding" between the League and Kahnawake Iroquois was based on language. Once a European had been adopted into a tribe, he or she was no longer considered to have any identity other than that of the tribe. There was no distinction between natural-born native and white adoptee.<sup>86</sup>

While some Kahnawakes had emigrated to the Ohio country to find a freer life, other Iroquois people were forming new communities closer to New York and New France in the east. Abbé François Picquet, a Sulpician missionary, left Montreal

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<sup>85</sup>Drake, ed., Indian Captivities, p. 215. (Several languages were spoken at the community: Wyandot and Ojibwa as well as Mohawk, and possibly others, and some of these Indians also spoke English.)

<sup>86</sup>Indeed, at Smith's elaborate adoption ceremony, a sachem addressed him in a speech, declaring that "every drop of white blood was washed out of your veins." (Drake, ed., Indian Captivities, p. 186.)

in 1748 to start an Iroquois mission on the St. Lawrence far west of Sault St.-Louis, almost at the mouth of Lake Ontario. He called his mission "La Présentation," and recruited League Onondagas and Oneidas, whose homelands lay almost directly south of the mission. Picquet's mission became militarily significant; the League Mohawks were sufficiently enraged by it that they razed it in 1750, but the Sulpician was determined. He rebuilt it, had it fortified, and established a garrison there. By 1753 there were 400 Onondagas and Oneidas in residence.<sup>87</sup> Picquet aggressively attempted to influence these Indians with French culture; he sent some of the La Présentation people to France and had them dressed as Frenchmen "from head to foot" even when they returned to the mission community. Bougainville described one as "a savage harlequin in blond wig and lace-covered garb."<sup>88</sup> Picquet's aggressive approach also extended into the political realm, as he allowed New France officials to try to intervene in village politics, and he spied on the League Iroquois for the French in the early 1750s. Some Indians of La Présentation balked at this, and still felt themselves to be part of the Six Nations. By 1753, many were returning to their home villages, and the mission atrophied during the Seven Years' War. Picquet

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<sup>87</sup>John G. Shea, "The Jesuits, Recollets, and the Indians," in Justin Winsor, ed., Narrative and Critical History of America 8 vols. (Boston: 1884-1889), 4:285; DHNY 2:421; Michael Kammen, Colonial New York: A History (New York: Scribners, 1975), p. 314; NYCD 10:263.

<sup>88</sup>Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, p. 103.

abandoned the mission, but some Iroquois continued to live there until 1806 when the New York State government had them removed and sent to other reserves.<sup>89</sup>

Another mission community was established in 1753 at Lake Saint Francis on the St. Lawrence, halfway between La Présentation and Kahnawake. Fathers Gordon and Billiard left with thirty families from the Sault to settle on this site. Although official correspondence claimed that these families had decided to move because they could no longer make a living from the soil at Kahnawake, a Catholic historian claimed that one particular family did not fit in at Kahnawake and left with those who supported them against the majority at the Sault.<sup>90</sup> Although having to spend some money to help establish the new community, the French government approved of its foundation because it would add to the geographic barrier against enemy invasion which the Sault village and the La Présentation mission provided to the colony.<sup>91</sup>

Whatever the reason for the thirty families leaving

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<sup>89</sup>NYCD 6:780, 10:563; DHNY 2:421; Bougainville, *Adventure in the wilderness*, pp. 103-104; Robert Lahaise, "François Picquet," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Vol. 4, pp. 636-638. The mission was near present-day Ogdensburg, N.Y. (On this mission see Harold Blau, Jack Campisi, and Elisabeth Tooker, "Onondaga," in *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978- ) [William Sturtevant, gen. ed.], Volume 15, Northeast, Bruce Trigger, vol. ed. (1978), p. 495.)

<sup>90</sup>Shea, History p. 339. Also C11A 99:311-317; Devine, Historic Caughnawaga, p. 255.

<sup>91</sup>C11A 99:315-316.

Kahnawake for a new start, it was clear that this "St. Regis" or "Akwesasne" mission community was more attractive to potential newcomers from the Six Nations, as departing Governor Duquesne told his successor in the post, Pierre Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil, in 1755. Duquesne claimed that the League Mohawks "had evinced some repugnance to come to the Sault, either because the land there was not fertile, or rather because they had remarked that Brandy was as abundant among their praying Brethren as among the English."<sup>92</sup> By the 1750s, the social problems of the League Iroquois were as common at the Kahnawake community.

However, at the same time, a large number of English prisoners had been taken by Sault warriors, and many of these English adoptees at Kahnawake liked the community so much they decided to stay when offered safe return to their own colony. They had converted to Catholicism, been adopted by Kahnawake women into families, and dressed as the Sault people did.<sup>93</sup> It is puzzling that these adoptees seemed so enamored of the Sault community at a time when many Six Nations people viewed

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<sup>92</sup>NYCD 10:301; also Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, p. 112 (Vaudreuil inviting League Oneidas there (or to La Présentation or Fort Frontenac) in 1757). (This Governor Vaudreuil is not to be confused with the earlier Governor Vaudreuil who died in 1725. The one who became governor of Canada in 1755 was his son. See William J. Eccles, "Pierre Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil de Cavagnial," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. 4, pp. 662-674.

<sup>93</sup>C11A 95:100-105; NYCD 10:212, 214-216; New York Colonial Manuscripts 77:77 (Calendar p. 603); New York Council Minutes Old Vol. 23 p. 71 (Calendar p. 387); Franquet, Voyages et Memoires, p. 38; Lafitau, Customs... 2:172.

it as an undesirable place to live. Kahnawake was a place of enigma in the 1750s.

"Spirited opinions" were exchanged at Kahnawake council meetings leading up to the Seven Years' War. And whether or not the French allowed them to decide for themselves is difficult to tell. The Sault Iroquois experienced the tension between their desire for autonomy and the French desire to make them dependent and pliant. We have seen evidence of French attempts to control these people and their policy, and one of the most obvious attempts to have mastery over their fate was the imposition of French garrison troops and a commandant in the village fort. Louis Franquet visited the village in 1750 to make possible recommendations on improving fortifications and adding troops. He encountered an awkward subject in his conversations with the Jesuits there; when asking them about the number of people and of warriors in the village, the Jesuit replied that there was no way to calculate either population. Franquet noted that his query had been viewed as indiscrete, and that there might be difficulties for French authorities in "ascertaining the resources that we could draw from the community in wartime."<sup>94</sup>

Proof of the division in political opinions among the Kahnawakes emerged in regard to the garrison; at least two sachems (Teganagwasen and Beauvais) wanted the garrison maintained in the early 1750s, whereas three were opposed and

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<sup>94</sup>Franquet, Voyages et Memoires, p. 119.

demonstrated this by returning war medals they had received from the commander of the garrison, M. Douville.<sup>95</sup>

While factions at Kahnawake were engaged in a tug-of-war, so were New York and New France engaged in their own tug-of-war, a contest for the sympathies of both the Sault and the League Iroquois. Their attempts reached a fever pitch by 1755. Especially conspicuous were William Johnson's courting of the Kahnawakes, his willingness to spend money in the effort, and his orders to officials in Albany "to give the said Cagnawaga Indians no ill usage of any kind."<sup>96</sup> He did this in the face of opposition of other influential people such as William Shirley, governor of Massachusetts and major-general of British forces in the Seven Years' War, who believed that all Kahnawakes in Albany should be imprisoned. Goldsbrow Banyar, an important figure in New York governing circles, believed that the Sault Iroquois visited the colony of New York only to spy for the Canadians and to thwart New York's efforts at enlisting the League Iroquois.<sup>97</sup> Johnson

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<sup>95</sup>C11A 95:145-147, 150-151; Franquet, Voyages et Memoires, p. 120.

<sup>96</sup>JP 1:639-640, 643, 646, 2:582, 597; New York Council Minutes Old Vol. 21 p. 430-432 (Calendar p. 380); New York Colonial Manuscripts 79:44; NYCD 10:218; DHNY 2:384; Richard Day, ed., Calendar of the Sir William Johnson Manuscripts (Albany: New York State Department of Education, 1909), p. 37.

<sup>97</sup>JP 1:543-544, 650, 791. Banyar held the positions of deputy auditor-general of New York, deputy secretary of New York, deputy clerk of the Council, deputy clerk of the provincial Supreme Court, register of the court of chancery, and probate judge, until 1776.

invited individual Kahnawakes to live near his estate in the Mohawk Valley west of Albany for a two-year period starting in the spring of 1755, and he assured the Six Nations that one of his main concerns in preparing for the coming battles with the French was not to spill any Kahnawake blood, knowing that this was one of the main reasons why the Six Nations had not yet pledged their support for the English cause.<sup>98</sup>

Indeed, Kahnawake support was pivotal to military campaigns in the Lake Champlain corridor, the arena for which Johnson was preparing, not only because of their military prowess and intimate knowledge of the terrain and waterways, but also because the decision of most Six Nations warriors on whether to join Johnson's redcoats depended on whether their Sault relatives would join the French effort or remain neutral. The League Iroquois viewed the Kahnawakes as being "a part of themselves" and many of them pledged as late as 1754 that they would not ally with the English because of their alliance with their Sault cousins.<sup>99</sup>

The vast majority of Kahnawakes had refused to participate in the French campaign in the Ohio country at the start of the Seven Years' War, agreeing only to be employed on a monthly basis as hunters for the army's food supply.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>NYCD 6:973, 980-983; JP 9:619.

<sup>99</sup>Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war... 1:37; Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, pp. 54-55; DHNY 2:384; New York Colonial Manuscripts 79:105c, 80:51; NYCD 10:267-269.

<sup>100</sup>DHNY 2:365.

And when all the other mission Indians were out on scalping raids in New England in the early summer of 1755, only the Kahnawakes refrained from conducting such raids.<sup>101</sup> However, as the months, weeks, and days counted down to the time of battle in the Lake Champlain-Lake George region, with many attempts by Johnson and League delegates to dissuade the Kahnawakes from military involvement, the latter finally, in desperation and with deep regret, explained that they were powerless to remain neutral, that "the French Priests by throwing Water upon our Heads, subject us to the Will of the Governor of Canada." The Sault spokesman who announced this also reminded the League delegation that the Six Nations people were fortunate in that they were still "a free People." The Kahnawakes' decision was made with regret; they asked their League cousins to be careful for their own safety and to stay out of the way of the fighting.<sup>102</sup>

When Iroquois individuals had responded years earlier to the spiritual message of the Jesuits, they had not realized the imperial implications of their choice, but it now became clear.

Although the French had not been able to force the Kahnawakes to fight in the Ohio country or to go on scalping raids,

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<sup>101</sup>JP 9:201.

<sup>102</sup>JP 9:220-221; DHNY 2:399. The Sault spokesman also stated that "it is not in our power to comply with it [the plea for neutrality], for the French & we are one Blood, & where they are to dye we must dye also." (JP 9:221.)



Jesuits as well as military officers exerted significant and successful intimidation to enlist with General Dieskau's forces based at Fort St. Frédéric in the summer of 1755. A Dutchman who had been a prisoner in an Abenaki mission village east of Montreal told Johnson on his return to New York that the French had not been able to persuade the Kahnawakes to join them until the French "threatened to kill them or drive them out of their country."<sup>103</sup>

Johnson was deeply disappointed, not only because he would face these formidable Indians as foes, but also because his own Iroquois support would dwindle; on the eve of the battle at Lake George, he had only sixty League Iroquois, although he had expected four hundred.<sup>104</sup> And those who did accompany him into battle were not much help against the enemy.<sup>105</sup>

Nor, in the end, were the Sault Iroquois much help to Dieskau; in fact, they determined the outcome of the Battle of Lake George fought in September 1755 by sabotaging Dieskau's plan of attack. The tension between forest and European-style warfare was a constant theme throughout this war, but particularly in this battle the tension between the two approaches and the discontent of the Kahnawakes combined for

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<sup>103</sup>JP 2:649.

<sup>104</sup>DHNY 2:397-398; JP 1:880, 882, 894, 2:8, 383, 9:223; NYCD 6:994, 1001.

<sup>105</sup>NYCD 6:1012.

disastrous results. Although Governor Vaudreuil had instructed General Dieskau, a German baron who had made a career as a professional soldier in Europe, on how to treat Indians and how to conduct forest warfare, Dieskau could not adapt to the North American situation. Fresh from the European theater, he had not enough time, no experience, and little desire or patience to deal with Indians and Canadian habitant militia units and their customs of warfare.<sup>106</sup>

Dieskau's mistakes included not consulting with Indians on battle plans or at least making a pretense at doing so, not using Indian scouts, expecting them to attack a fortified camp (something Indians refused to do), expecting them to remain fighting and even to advance when the fighting was going badly and there was a chance at escape, and not taking into account the allegiance of Indian groups across enemy lines. The various accounts of what happened at the Battle of Lake George differ considerably, so that it is difficult to know precisely what happened, but it seems clear that the Kahnawakes, when told of Dieskau's initial plan, refused to participate, forcing him to change his plan. At least at this point Dieskau realized that the Kahnawakes "were considered by the other Indians as the oldest and first" and took the objections

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<sup>106</sup>NYCD 10:316, 329; Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, p. 60: Colonel Bougainville also shared the European mistrust and ignorance of the ways of forest and Indian warfare: George F.G. Stanley, New France: The Last Phase, 1744-1760 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), pp. 102-103; Steele, Betrayals, pp. 43-50.

seriously enough to adapt.<sup>107</sup>

All accounts concur that the Kahnawakes sabotaged the French plan by warning the League Iroquois and English of the approaching French ambush with warning shots. And when Dieskau tried to make the best of a bad situation (from a European point of view) by charging Johnson's fortified camp, the Kahnawakes, along with other Indians and the Canadian militia, fled leaving the French regulars to their bloody defeat. Dieskau himself was seriously wounded. The Kahnawakes later told some Six Nations deputies at a meeting that they should not have feared the Sault Iroquois in this battle; they claimed they had had only powder, no shot, in their muskets.<sup>108</sup> Clearly, although the Sault Iroquois had engaged in military action, they were pressured into it and rebelled by making the situation intolerable for the French, and by only pretending to fight against their fellow Iroquois warriors. Dieskau held them solely accountable for the French defeat at Lake George, expressing great bitterness at their treachery.<sup>109</sup> But since the Sault Iroquois were strongarmed

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<sup>107</sup>NYCD 10:342.

<sup>108</sup>NYCD 10:316-327, 335-336, 340-343, 367, 7:239-240; Daniel Claus, Daniel Claus' Narrative of his Relations with Sir William Johnson and Experiences in the Lake George Fight (New York: Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, 1904), pp. 13-16; Charles Henry Lincoln, ed., The Correspondence of William Shirley 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1912), Vol. 2, pp. 278-279; JP 1:744.

<sup>109</sup>NYCD 10:316-318, 340-343; Shirley Correspondence, Vol. 2, pp. 278-279.

into fighting, the French should not have expected unswerving obedience. Even as they were faced with an unwanted task forced upon them, the Kahnawakes had found a way to assert their own will.<sup>110</sup>

In subsequent military actions, the Kahnawakes were notable by their absence, despite Vaudreuil's efforts to reassure them that he was not angry with them for what had happened at Lake George.<sup>111</sup> When the French took Fort Bull and Fort Oswego in 1756, there were fewer than twenty Sault Iroquois present among the French forces as opposed to strong showings by other mission Indians. In the fall of 1757, over one hundred Kahnawake warriors joined a French attack on German Flats, a settlement of German refugees in the Mohawk Valley. They disagreed on strategy, however, and forty of the Sault warriors left the warpath in disgust.<sup>112</sup>

Many Kahnawakes had been very disappointed in the French victory at Oswego. Thomas Wildman, a Kahnawake known to be pro-English, "was crying like a Child" when he heard the news. There had been "a general Disgust agt the French" among the

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<sup>110</sup>The English were pleasantly surprised at Dieskau's defeat at Lake George, concluding that the Kahnawakes were "not altogether in the power of the French" after all. (JP 2:68; also 2:86.)

<sup>111</sup>NYCD 10:381, 448. (Vaudreuil treated them with kid gloves for the remainder of the war. NYCD 10:828, 838; RAPO 1923-24, p. 354.)

<sup>112</sup>RAPO 1923-24, p. 223, 1926-27, pp. 380, 403; C11E 10:249-250; DHNY 1:330-331; NYCD 10:404-405, 530, 674; JP 9:862.

Sault Iroquois in 1755 and 1756, according to a Dutchman who had spent time in New France as a prisoner. He claimed that the Kahnawakes wanted to leave New France but could not do it "without being hindred [sic] from the french," and that eight Frenchmen had been murdered in Montreal by some Kahnawakes. But there were no official reports about these killings, no doubt because the French did not want to risk further rage from these Indians which publicity would unleash.<sup>113</sup> The Dutchman's report included two contradictory realities: French tyranny over the Sault Iroquois and simultaneously a French fear of offending them because of their importance. The dynamic of autonomy versus dependency had clearly slipped toward dependency, but the Kahnawakes still had some clout and therefore some basis for autonomous power in their relationship with the French colony.

The Sault Iroquois could still threaten to leak intelligence to the Six Nations or the English, and the French took this possibility seriously, suspecting them of this form of treason in 1756.<sup>114</sup> In meetings with the French governor in that year and the next, the Kahnawakes made no secret of the fact that they were divided in their opinions and that

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<sup>113</sup>JP 2:649. On a similar note, see Louise Dechêne, Habitants et Marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Plon, 1974), p. 32; William J. Eccles, "Sovereignty Association, 1500-1783," in Essays on New France (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 166, 214; C11A 95:148-149.

<sup>114</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 5:63; RAPQ 1923-24, pp. 223-228; Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, p. 32; JP 2:709.

they had agents in Albany. Bougainville even claimed that, because they were divided among themselves, the Kahnawakes "do not dare to take a decisive course." Even if they were paralyzed by indecision, at least French officials still considered them to be in control of their own decision-making.<sup>115</sup>

Although they did accompany the French in large numbers to Fort St. Frédéric for a possible attempt on Fort William Henry in the spring of 1757, there is a good chance that the recruits were unhappy with their lot, since a brawl broke out between them and some Frenchmen at Fort St. Frédéric. Men on both sides were killed during the fight, with one witness (who probably exaggerated) claiming that sixty Kahnawakes were murdered. In the aftermath, the Sault people complained to the Six Nations that the French had formed a scheme to reduce not just the Kahnawakes but the League to slavery.<sup>116</sup> French-Kahnawake relations were at a low ebb.

Perhaps because of great efforts to recruit them, including visits by General (Louis-Josephe, Marquis de) Montcalm and Colonel Bougainville to "dance the war dance" and drum up support for the summer 1757 battle plans, virtually all of the Sault warriors journeyed to the Lake Champlain theater for the August siege of Fort William Henry. In fact,

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<sup>115</sup>Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, p. 110; NYCD 10:553; JP 9:606-607.

<sup>116</sup>Minutes of Indian Commissioners 5:120; JP 9:741; NYCD 7:285-286.

because they were the largest group of Indians allied with the French on this occasion, the war belt was given to them, symbolizing their leading military role among both the mission and the western French-allied Indians.<sup>117</sup> But since Montcalm was in charge of this military action, the same disregard for Indian allies marred the effort as had marred Dieskau's. The siege of the fort was successful, but the ensuing massacre of the surrendered English forces by Indians resulted from the misunderstandings between Europeans and North Americans (especially Indians) on the rules of warfare.<sup>118</sup> But the Kahnawakes do not seem to have been involved in the furious massacre at Fort William Henry. Some of them may even have left the area for Crown Point before the killing began.<sup>119</sup>

Proof of Montcalm's inability to incorporate Indians successfully into his military strategy was his desire to fight the battles of 1758 without native support. His supporters against the forest war strategy of Vaudreuil declared, in reporting the news of the French victory at Carillon (Ticonderoga) in July, that "what must the more excite the public admiration and joy, is the fact that no Indian has contributed to this great event -- a circumstance

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<sup>117</sup>RAPO 1923-24, p. 270; NYCD 10:575, 609.

<sup>118</sup>See Steele, Betrayals: Fort William Henry & the "Massacre".

<sup>119</sup>JR 70:91-203 - Father Pierre Roubaud's account.

which perhaps never occurred in this country."<sup>120</sup> And in 1759, the Kahnawakes informed the League Mchawks, no doubt hoping the information would reach Sir William Johnson, that "lately they had Buryed their Ax, & they did not choose to take it up again so soon."<sup>121</sup>

More than coincidentally, a few weeks later, after the French capitulated at the Plains of Abraham, Johnson sent a message to the Sault Iroquois, reminding them that he had always wished to befriend them and that it was not too late now for them to send wampum belts indicating their warming to the English.<sup>122</sup> Ever ready to make the best of their situation, the Kahnawakes responded not only by renewing good relations with Johnson but in 1760 by guiding General Jeffrey Amherst's British forces around the Lachine rapids in the St. Lawrence river to reach Montreal, the last piece of land held by the French in Canada.<sup>123</sup>

As the British subsequently marched into the city, the Kahnawake people faced a new reality. No longer having two European powers to play off against each other, they faced a Protestant landlord with a less-than-shining reputation for

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<sup>120</sup>NYCD 10:753. See also 10:805-806. Virtually to the end, Vaudreuil and Montcalm continued sparring about the usefulness and desirability of Indians as military allies: NYCD 10:780, 810-812, 828; RAPO 1923-24, p. 354.

<sup>121</sup>JP 9:68.

<sup>122</sup>JP 13:155.

<sup>123</sup>NYCD 10:1121; JP 3:273, 13:190.



dealing with Indians. However, they were personally acquainted with Johnson, who realized the importance of currying their favor. In Johnson's son-in-law, Daniel Claus, stationed in Montreal as the British agent for Indian affairs, the Kahnawakes had an advocate. Claus conscientiously kept an eye out for ill treatment of the Kahnawakes by British soldiers garrisoned in the area and by the Jesuits who were trying to wrest control of the mission lands away from the Indians.<sup>124</sup> With Claus' help, the Kahnawakes were successful at making the transition to English rule of the surrounding colony as painless as possible. Their resourcefulness and flexibility was seen by some as convenient collaboration with the invading force, but Sault support for the French had almost never been unwavering or unqualified.

From the earliest wars between the English and French, to the end of the Seven Years' War and the British conquest of New France, there had always been many "spirited opinions" at Kahnawake, and they had always attempted to reconcile differing opinions among themselves in such a way as to retain their sovereignty against the wishes of both the French and the English. At times they had walked a narrow road bordering on dependence, with the traps of Jesuit and official French control ready to snare them, but they had maintained political autonomy. Militarily, the Sault Iroquois had been important

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<sup>124</sup>Colden Papers 5:360, 7:19; NYCD 7:550; JP 3:332, 353, 380, 381, 383-384, 575-576, 638, 664, 862, 969-970, 10:269-270, 376-379, 13:164-165.

and even crucial to the French, but had not succumbed to French subjugation. They had forced the French to deal with them on their own terms, seizing the initiative when necessary, such as when Governor Beauharnois came to meet with the sachems in 1741, and in 1755 when the Kahnawakes turned a seemingly certain French victory under Dieskau at Lake George into a chaotic and embarrassing fiasco. Leaders such as Skonondo changed their minds, opinions differed greatly, and political splits remained unresolved but these variations notwithstanding, the Kahnawakes affected the outcome of warfare and diplomacy in the colonial Northeast. They were not mere puppets of the French.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### KAHNAWAKE AND FREE TRADE IN AN AGE OF MERCANTILISM

Shortly after the French completed fortification of Fort St. Frédéric at Crown Point on the southern end of Lake Champlain, which the English in New York regarded as being well inside their territory, a group of sachems from Kahnawake arrived at Albany. One would expect their reception by New Yorkers at this 1735 meeting to have been chilly. However, they sat down and amicably concluded a treaty with the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, a group of Albany merchants whom a succession of New York's governors had authorized to conduct business with Indians on behalf of the colony. The recording secretary, Peter Wraxall, found this situation loathsome, and editorialized in the minutes that most of these commissioners "swallowed the Bait with Greediness. by this Solemn Treaty the Canada Trade was opened & freed from all Obstructions."<sup>1</sup>

The bait of which Wraxall spoke was the steady stream of furs which the Kahnawake Indians brought to Albany from Montreal and points northwest to trade for English manufactured goods, chiefly woolens, to clothe Indians and French colonists. This arrangement infuriated Wraxall and others in New York who believed in the prevailing doctrine of

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Wraxall, An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs in the Colony of New York, 1678-1751, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (New York: Blom, 1968, reprint), p. 193.

mercantilism -- that a colony must trade only with its own mother country or perhaps with other colonies also tied to the same empire, but never with a colony of a rival empire. Trade between New York and Massachusetts was morally acceptable even if it went against the exasperating Navigation Acts, but trade between New York and New France was considered by most people in the English colonies to be tantamount to treason. And exasperated Canadians also complained of Kahnawake being "a sort of Republic" through which this smuggling trade flowed.

The conclusion of a treaty guaranteeing free trade between Albany and the Kahnawakes was merely a formalization of trade patterns which had existed for nearly half a century. As early as 1681, Governor Frontenac of New France had complained to the king that the Kahnawakes had commercial relations with "the Iroquois of their nation" (meaning the Iroquois adjacent to New York), and that their transportation of furs past Chambly to Albany was detrimental to the French fur trade company's ledger books but irresistible because the pelts brought a better price in the Albany fur market.<sup>2</sup> Frontenac lamented that Sault Saint-Louis seemed to be an entrepôt for this traffic and attempted to curb it there, even if he could do nothing about furs which had already been

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<sup>2</sup>Archives des Colonies (Paris) Série C11A (Canada: Correspondance Générale, 1540-1784, 122 vols.) 5:385 (original). (Hereafter cited as C11A; all C11A references are to the transcripts, rather than the originals, unless otherwise stated.) Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec 1922-23, p. 78, 1926-27, pp. 126-127 (hereafter cited as RAPO).

carried south beyond Chambly toward New York. But the trade increased instead of diminished, and by 1686 there was enough trade of this type that it was also discussed with grave concern among colonial officials in New York.<sup>3</sup>

The trade flourished for several reasons, not the least of which was geographic. The journey along the Lake Champlain corridor was fairly easy despite the Adirondack Mountains and their dense forests separating the Montreal area from Albany. Canoes were the ideal form of transportation, using the Hudson River at Albany, a twelve-mile portage to Wood Creek (Rivière des Chicots), Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River, and a portage at Chambly covering the eighteen miles to the Kahnawake village across the St. Lawrence River from Montreal.<sup>4</sup> Indians routinely made this trip of about two hundred miles in only a few days.

Since the furs of beavers, martens, foxes, and other creatures were thicker farther north, and since the price paid in Albany for these furs was higher, it was natural that a free-wheeling traffic developed, despite the invisible line drawn by cartographic imperialists between French and English colonies. That invisible line had routinely been crossed by Iroquois who travelled, and indeed, emigrated and immigrated,

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<sup>3</sup>Lawrence H. Leder, ed., The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1723 (Gettysburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956), p. 98.

<sup>4</sup>Cadwallader Colden, History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada... 2 vols. (New York: Allerton, 1922, reprinted from the 1747 edition), Vol. 2 p. 44.

back and forth between Iroquoia and the Kahnawake mission along the St. Lawrence. When relatives went to visit one another from the early 1670s on, they always brought gifts for each other -- the sine qua non of human relationships in native society. The fur trade along the Lake Champlain corridor grew out of this gift exchange heightened by the awareness that northern furs were thicker and that prices for them were better in the southern fur trade center of Albany than in New France. Some scholars have even gone so far as to suggest that one Iroquois motive for emigrating to the mission community was to engage in this profitable trade, which seems likely, since an enviable position developed for Kahnawake Indians within it.<sup>5</sup>

At the end of the 1689-1698 war between the French and the English and Iroquois, Colonel Peter Schuyler and Domine Godfrey Delliuss made an official diplomatic visit to Montreal on behalf of the colony of New York, and while there took the opportunity to invite the Kahnawake Iroquois to trade at Albany on a regular basis. This invitation was also extended when the Kahnawakes visited Albany in the summer of 1698 and attended meetings with New York's Governor Bellomont and the

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<sup>5</sup>Thomas E. Norton, The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776 (Madison, Wi: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), p. 122. (Norton cites E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 15 vols. (Albany, N.Y.: Weed and Parsons, 1853-1887), Vol. 9, pp. 145-146. [Hereafter cited as NYCD.]) Also Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1984), p. 200.

League Iroquois. The Commissioners expressly invited the Kahnawakes again two years later, playing on the kin ties between the Kahnawake and League Iroquois. The commissioners said they would trade with the Kahnawakes as if they were their own people (that is, League Iroquois.)<sup>6</sup>

At the turn of the eighteenth century prices fluctuated wildly, the rate given for furs in Montreal even sometimes rising above that in Albany. For instance, at the July 1698 meetings between Governor Bellomont and the League and mission Iroquois, an Onondaga sachem complained to the governor that prices were better in Montreal, and that Albany prices should be made more competitive so as not to lose Indian customers permanently to New France. (There can be no doubt that by this time, even if Indians had not been transformed into economically motivated people, they clearly understood market principles, and were using economic arguments with Europeans in order to persuade them to change market conditions to the Indians' favor.)<sup>7</sup> Four years later, the same complaint was

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<sup>6</sup>Bellomont's Conference with the Five Nations, July, 1698 (New York: 1698), p. 3. Daniel K. Richter, "Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics: New York-Iroquois Relations, 1664-1701," Journal of American History, LXXV (1988), p. 63. NYCD 4:692.

<sup>7</sup>Bellomont's Conference, pp. 5-7. Regarding the debate over when or if Indians adopted European-like economic behavior (acquisitive, accumulative, market-oriented) see Arthur J. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974). Arthur J. Ray, "Indians as Consumers in the Eighteenth Century," in Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray, eds., Old Trails and New Directions (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,

made to Bellomont's successor, Lord Cornbury, but shortly thereafter, longer-term trends returned and the traditional pattern of higher prices offered for pelts and lower prices charged for European goods at Albany than at Montreal prevailed.<sup>8</sup> Kahnawake carriers, with their crucifixes and bundles of pelts, became a familiar sight on the Albany horizon after the turn of the century, and by 1706 probably around half of the furs trapped in Canada ended up in the European market via Albany instead of Montreal.<sup>9</sup>

Frenchmen who wanted to pursue the trade seldom made the trip to Albany themselves. For a number of reasons, they found it much more convenient to hire an Indian who knew his

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1980). Arthur J. Ray and Donald B. Freeman, "Give Us Good Measure": An Economic Analysis of Relations between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company before 1763 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978). Daniel Francis and Toby Morantz, Partners in Furs: A History of the Fur Trade in Eastern James Bay, 1600-1870 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985). E.E. Rich, "Trade Habits and Economic Motivation among the Indians of North America," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science XXVI (1960), 35-53.

<sup>8</sup>NYCD 4:983-987; Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 29; C11A 29:130; Stephen Earl Sale, "Colonial Albany: Outpost of Empire" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1973), p. 146.

<sup>9</sup>David A. Armour, "The Merchants of Albany, New York, 1686-1760" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1965), p. 112. (Exact numbers are impossible to know, because the trade was contraband. It is also unclear what percentage of the furs being brought to Albany were trapped by Kahnawake hunters themselves, but at least some of them came originally from points north and west of the St. Lawrence Valley. These were trapped by other Indians, brought to Montreal, and then smuggled out of Montreal to the Sault mission village, to be taken down to Albany.



or her way to Albany to carry their cargo of furs (acquired in New France from up-country Indians) to the New York fur mecca on the upper Hudson River. The Albany fur merchants/Indian Commissioners, and certainly New York colonial officials, preferred this as well; they did not want Frenchmen "trading within his Majesty's dominion on this side of the Lakes."<sup>10</sup> The New Yorkers were jealous of the French success in the fur trade; one official lamented in 1686 that the French had made many discoveries and formed alliances with Indians because of it.<sup>11</sup>

But whereas the French were more adept at relations with Indians and at travelling great distances to find them, the English had an unmistakable advantage which kept them competitive in the strictly monetary aspect -- the high prices they offered for pelts. The French admitted this in 1689, complaining that the Albanians gave Indians better rates for furs and also that they exchanged English trade goods at a better rate. Apart from the aberrant price fluctuations from 1697 to 1702 associated with the end of a long period of warfare and a short-lived glut in the English fur market because of a change in hat styles, the better prices in Albany were due partly to a long-term glut in the French fur

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<sup>10</sup>Livingston Indian Records, p. 98.

<sup>11</sup>NYCD 3:395.

market.<sup>12</sup>

For the last three decades of the seventeenth century, Frenchmen at trading posts in the pays d'en haut (the "upper country" of the northern Great Lakes) had taken advantage of a liberal license policy, which opened up the fur business to individual profit, despite the official monopoly of the Compagnie des Indes.<sup>13</sup> By 1700, the fur market in France had been all but ruined, flooded with pelts from many individual license-holders in New France. The price of peltries on the Paris market plummeted and the economy of New France was marginal from then until the 1730s, at which point other industries had developed sufficiently to take over the export revenue once generated solely by furs.<sup>14</sup> Illegal trade between Albany and Montreal, while siphoning off potential profits from the Compagnie des Indes, actually helped the

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<sup>12</sup>William J. Eccles, "The Fur Trade in the Colonial Northeast," in Handbook of North American Indians (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978- ) [William Sturtevant, gen. ed.], Volume 4, History of Indian-White Relations, Wilcomb Washburn, vol. ed. (1988), p. 327.

<sup>13</sup>E.R. Adair, "Anglo-French Rivalry in the Fur Trade During the Eighteenth Century," in J.M. Bumsted, ed., Canadian History Before Confederation: Essays and Interpretations 2d ed. (Georgetown, Ont.: Irwin-Dorsey, 1979), p. 135.

<sup>14</sup>Jean Lunn, "The Illegal Fur Trade Out of New France, 1713-1760," Canadian Historical Association Annual Report 1939, p. 84. Dale Miquelon, New France 1701-1744, "A Supplement to Europe" (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), pp. 174-175. Allen W. Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 293. The trade also rebounded somewhat when western posts were reopened in 1716, and new eastern European markets were found.

French fur economy by diverting a glut of furs from Paris to Albany and London. By the 1720s, the French market for furs had recovered (although profits were more moderate than formerly) and the smuggling trade to Albany had helped the French fur economy to weather the collapse of prices up to that time.<sup>15</sup>

Another factor affecting the price disparity for furs in Montreal and Albany was the difference in structure of the trade itself. The French trade was controlled by a single company, which, although going through several metamorphoses, set the prices for pelts. Conversely, the New York trade consisted not of one large monopoly but of about a dozen independent merchants. While many historians and economists have stressed the difference between this competitive (supposedly healthy) atmosphere and the (presumably unhealthy and unfair) French monopoly, the Albany merchants together had a monopoly granted by the New York government. At the highest level, Albany's fur trade was no less a monopoly than

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<sup>15</sup>Miquelon, New France, p. 174. Richard L. Haan, "The Covenant Chain: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Niagara Frontier, 1697-1730" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Santa Barbara, 1976), p. 143. Denis Riverin, a prominent Canadian, offered "reasons for the bad state of affairs of the colony of Canada" in 1705, in which he argued that the solution to the crisis of the fur trade (brought on, he believed, by the monopoly's fixed price) was to export beaver surpluses to Albany. Pontchartrain, the Minister of Marine, did not take Riverin's advice, but it was a viable solution and underscores that the trade between Albany and Montreal in furs aided the French in overcoming the glut in their peltry market. (Miquelon, New France, p. 66.)

Montreal's.<sup>16</sup> Their town's prerogative excluded people in neighboring towns from carrying on the fur trade and resulted in a situation far from a free marketplace.

Although in theory the Albany merchants were in competition with each other, in fact they acted together as an interest group, the most obvious example being the collective role they pursued in managing Indian affairs on behalf of the colony. However, they were more open to market forces than were their French counterparts, since prices for furs were controlled more directly by the market price in London than by the price in Paris in the case with the French.<sup>17</sup> The French company could and did set a low price for a pelt, giving the impression that it was under financial stress and had no choice in the matter. French officials commented on this, revealing the lack of confidence which the French commercial community had in the company; they complained that the company actually had made great profits but was keeping the price offered for furs artificially low. Pierre Pouchot also accused the French trade of being poorly managed, corrupt, and irrational. His description of how the trade worked leaves little question as to why the Albany traders were able to

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<sup>16</sup>Adair debunks the myth of the moral superiority of the English "non-monopoly" trade. (In "Anglo-French Rivalry..." pp. 136, 140.)

<sup>17</sup>Robert Sanders, Letter Book, 1742-1758, in National Archives of Canada, p. 43. NYCD 10:199-201. Norton, Fur Trade, p. 64. William J. Eccles, "A Belated Review of Harold Adams Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada," Canadian Historical Review LX (1979), p. 436.

offer more competitive rates.<sup>18</sup>

Albany's ability to post more alluring prices were also rooted in general differences between the colonial economies of France and England. The English were much more business-oriented than the French. In England, becoming a merchant was increasingly respected from the time of the Reformation, and more and more Englishmen pursued this mode of making a living. In French society, commerce never gained such prestige. As a result, the French economy was never as strong or rationalized as the English from the sixteenth century on, because the cream of society eschewed involvement in that sector, preferring royal administrative service instead. The French colonial economy depended on a few thriving industries, which by good fortune held the whole together, but in general it was not as strong as the English economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>19</sup>

Logistical factors were also considerable in calculating the differences between English and French colonial economies.

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<sup>18</sup>NYCD 10:200-201, Pierre Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war in North America between the French and English, 1755-60 2 vols. [Franklin B. Hough, trans.] (Roxbury, Ma: Woodward, 1866), Vol. 2, pp. 47-51. Also, ultimately the French were much more interested in the fur trade as a way of maintaining and extending Indian allegiances than as a way of making money. See William J. Eccles, "The Fur Trade and Eighteenth Century Imperialism," William and Mary Quarterly 3d ser., XL, No. 3 (1983), pp. 341-362.

<sup>19</sup>Charles W. Cole, Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), Vol. 2, pp. 362, 553. Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century (London: Allen Lane, 1982), Chapters 5 and 6.

New York had the advantage of an easily accessible port at Manhattan and of the Hudson River, which remained ice-free year-round. That meant that twice as much cargo could be transported in a year as on the St. Lawrence, and return on investment was much faster in New York than in New France. The Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River were ice-free for only six to seven months of the year, so that often a vessel could make only one trip across the Atlantic from France each year. The Hudson River was much easier to navigate than the shoal-ridden St. Lawrence, providing another geographic advantage to the New Yorkers over the French, which translated into a time and cost advantage.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, there were no duties on furs in the English colonies, whereas the government at Quebec imposed duties on furs leaving the colony, an impediment to trade.<sup>21</sup> All these factors added up to the overwhelming ability of Albany to undersell the French. It is remarkable that the French fur trade continued to function for as long as it did.

But there were intangibles involved in the fur trade too, which sometimes outweighed the considerations of the ledger book. One French official reasoned that if the French offered merchandise at the same price the English did, the Indians would immediately turn to trade with the French, because,

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<sup>20</sup>Peter Kalm, Travels into North America [John R. Foster, trans.] (Barre, Ma: Imprint Society, 1972), p. 134; Colden, History of the Five Indian Nations 2:21.

<sup>21</sup>NYCD 5:729, 733; C11A 31:266-270.

prices being equal, the Indians "like our liquor better than they like [theirs], and they get along with us better than they do with other nations," particularly the English.<sup>22</sup> The French were much more interested than the English were in learning Indian languages, sending missionaries and others to arrange peace settlements between warring tribal groups, and respecting Indian customs and preferences. They also occasionally intermarried with Indians, and in general were not interested in owning native land, all of which stood in stark contrast, in the native eye, to the English attitude toward their American hosts.<sup>23</sup>

But prices were far from equal. Nicolas Perrot documented the differences between prices at Montreal and Albany in 1689; for eight pounds of gunpowder an Indian had to pay with one beaver pelt in Albany, but with four in Montreal. Similarly, a musket cost two beaver pelts in Albany, five in Montreal. Woolen and cloth goods such as blankets, shirts, and leggings cost twice as many pelts in the French town as in Albany.<sup>24</sup>

These woolen and cloth goods were another reason for the

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<sup>22</sup>RAPO 1922-23, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup>Adair, "Anglo-French Rivalry..." pp. 149-152. James Axtell, The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), esp. Prologue and Ch. 12.

<sup>24</sup>Nicolas Perrot, Mémoire sur les moeurs coutumes et religion des sauvages de l'amérique du nord (Leipzig and Paris: 1864), p. 314.

rush to take furs to Albany. English woolens were acknowledged by everyone in northeastern North America to be so far superior to French that by the 1720s and 1730s Montreal fur merchants were using any means possible to send their furs to Albany to exchange them for high-quality English blankets. In turn, the English woolens were sold to Indians in Montreal and at posts far away in the pays d'en haut.<sup>25</sup> Cadwallader Colden, the surveyor-general of New York, noted that in a single year nine hundred pieces of "strouds" (woolen blankets made near the Stroud River in Gloucestershire) were transported north from Albany, along with other English commodities, to be sent by the French "into the Indian Countrys."<sup>26</sup>

These "strouds" were of a color and consistency favored by Indians all over northeastern North America, but try as they might, the French could not manufacture a comparable product. Numerous efforts were made, and as late as 1749 French officials reported that yet another attempt had been made to produce a blanket of comparable value to the English scarlet strouds. But this effort by the Compagnie des Indes

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<sup>25</sup>Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin Vol. 18, pp. 72-73; Francis Back, "The Trade Blanket in New France," Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly Vol. 26, No. 3 (1990), pp. 2-8.

<sup>26</sup>NYCD 5:729. Most of the Indian trade prosecuted by Samuel Storke's London merchant firm with Livingston and others in New York was in textiles. (William I. Roberts, "Samuel Storke: An Eighteenth-Century London Merchant Trading to the American Colonies," Business History Review XXXIX (1965), p. 162.



(the organization which held the French fur trade monopoly) was a failure. They sent four pieces of fabric to New France on trial, and the pieces were sent back with the comment that they were "frightful; the red cloth is brown and unpressed; the blue of a very inferior quality to that of England; that as long as such ventures are sent, they will not become favourites with the Indians."<sup>27</sup> These brilliant red blankets were so vital to the Albany-Montreal commerce that a New York official referred to the smuggling trade as "the Strowd Trade" and claimed that this trade alone provided the livelihood of the Kahnawakes. If not for the transport of this one commodity, the observer noted, the Kahnawake Indians would no longer find smuggling lucrative and would settle permanently in New York.<sup>28</sup>

Albany officials gave strouds as gifts to Indians

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<sup>27</sup>NYCD 5:747, 10:199-200. Also C11A 67:96-101, 93:170-172. Pierre Pouchot commented in the late 1750s that French blankets, made in Normandy, were much finer than the coarse English variety. It may be, however, that Indians valued durability more than fineness of texture. A European's opinion of what made a good blanket by no means coincided with an Indian view of desirable woolens. (Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war in North America between the French and English, 1755-60, Vol. 2, p. 191; Roberts, "Samuel Storke..." p. 163.)

<sup>28</sup>Commission for Indian Affairs, Albany. Minutes of meetings at Albany [1722-1748] and schedule of propositions made by the Indians and answers given to them, 1677-1719. 5 vols. National Archives of Canada. (Hereafter cited as Minutes of the Indian Commissioners.) Vol. I, p. 109. (This account even stated that many Kahnawakes had moved to the mission community from Iroquoia for the purpose of carrying on "the Strowd Trade.") Also NYCD 5:753; The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden (New-York Historical Society, Collections, L-LVI [New York, 1917-1923]), Vol. 4, p. 286. (Hereafter cited as Colden Papers.)

whenever the latter came on diplomatic missions and colonial officials needed to curry favor with them.<sup>29</sup> Although the trade between Montreal and Albany was frowned on by government officials, merchants in both colonies and of course the Kahnawake Iroquois continued to pursue it. While New France officials attempted to expose abusers and to prosecute violators of ordinances, at times even intendants and governors of New France felt it necessary to condone emergency importations of strouds from Albany, because the commodity was desperately needed at Indian trading posts and for government use as gifts for Indians.<sup>30</sup> Trade was tied to imperial alliance and rivalry; Indian alliances needed to be maintained because Indians could always threaten to ally themselves instead with France's adversary, the English.<sup>31</sup> Ironically, the French desperately needed English trade goods and had to go against the morals of their imperial allegiance to get them, in order to maintain the friendship of Indians rather than lose them to the English. Cadwallader Colden did not exaggerate when he claimed that no considerable trade could be

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<sup>29</sup>e.g. Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 2:143, NYCD 5:245.

<sup>30</sup>C11A 30:255-257, 35:55, 55:190-191, 68:28-29.

<sup>31</sup>William J. Eccles, "The Fur Trade and Eighteenth-Century Imperialism," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., XL (1983), pp. 341-362. C.H. McIlwain even stated that "the object was to get the trade; it made less difference whether the furs were needed or not." (In Introduction to Wraxall's Abridgment, p. xxvii.)

carried on with Indians without strouds.<sup>32</sup>

The governor of New York in the 1720s, William Burnet, engineered passage of legislation in the New York Assembly which officially outlawed "the Canada Trade" (much to the chagrin of the Albany merchants/Indian commissioners who were not the least bit concerned with mercantilism). The main effect of this prohibition after two years, however, was merely the escalation of stroud prices at Montreal. Before the act was passed, a stroud selling for 10 pounds at Albany sold for 13 pounds and change at Montreal. After the act, the Montreal price jumped to 25 pounds and upwards.<sup>33</sup> After four years of the ban on the "Canada trade," Colden noticed that the French had still not found another source of strouds (at least not one as inexpensive as the Albany source, despite skyrocketing prices). He concluded that as long as the French wanted these English woolens and were willing to pay the spiralling prices for them, the trade would continue indefinitely, ban or no ban.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Colden, History of the Five Indian Nations, 2:22.

<sup>33</sup>Colden, History of the Five Indian Nations, 2:22; NYCD 5:762; Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:141a.

<sup>34</sup>NYCD 5:753; Colden, History of the Five Indian Nations, 2:22; Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:104. The Montrealers could have bought strouds in Boston or London, and in fact they did obtain some from these sources, but they must not have been able to buy enough of them, or as cheaply, since they continued to buy them in ever-increasing volume from Albany, regardless of the ban. (Armour dissertation, p. 154.) One way to get around the ban on trade between Albany and Montreal was to take goods such as strouds to Mohawk villages west of Albany, where Kahnawakes could come via Lake Ontario

Another commodity which the Albany merchants provided to New France via Kahnawake carriers and Montreal businessmen was wampum beads, which were manufactured on Long Island and New Jersey. Robert Sanders, an Albany merchant who became mayor and an Indian Commissioner by the 1750s, regularly sent shipments of wampum beads through his Kahnawake carriers to customers in Montreal.<sup>35</sup> Every government which had dealings with Indians had to use wampum for diplomatic purposes; New France got its supply from a rival colony.

Also explosive in terms of imperial allegiances was the issue of selling gunpowder to Indians who might use it to fight alongside a rival power or, worse, sell it directly to the French. An Albany entrepreneur bent on turning a profit could not very well argue that Indians needed gunpowder for hunting animals with desirable pelts, because even by the eighteenth century, Indians used firearms only for moose, elk, and bear. For fur-bearing creatures -- beavers, minks, raccoons, muskrats, and martens -- Indians used traditional (and more effective) means such as nets, snares, and cage

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to pick them up in exchange for furs. They would not be subject to New York law in Mohawk country, and furs coming into Albany from the Mohawk valley would not appear suspicious. (Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:102; Livingston Indian Records, p. 229; Armour, "The Merchants of Albany," p. 150.)

<sup>35</sup>Robert Sanders Letter Book, pp. 23, 31, 50, 51, 62, 63. (On Sanders, see Norton, Fur Trade, p. 190.) Miquelon, New France, p. 175.

traps.<sup>36</sup> Gunpowder, firearms, and lead for shot were unmistakably meant for human targets, but the traders of Albany were not too concerned. They sold these items to Kahnawakes for their own use as well as sale in Montreal.

Conrad Weiser, the Pennsylvania Indian agent, reported with distress to the New York Colonial Council in 1745 that someone in Albany had sold many barrels of gunpowder to the French, via some "praying Indians." Weiser pointed out that this had "enabled the French to fight against the English." Worse than that, the Albanian culprit had violated a prohibition, agreed on in 1744 at the outbreak of King George's War, that all sales of ammunition to and repair of arms for Indians from Canada would not be allowed.<sup>37</sup> During this war, the Albany merchants were made responsible for the security of the town, being posted in turns on sentry guard duty through the night.<sup>38</sup> This may have been done in order to press upon these men the fact that Albany was not far from the frontier between New York and New France, and that especially during war the safety of the colony against enemy

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<sup>36</sup>Norton, Fur Trade, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup>New York Council Minutes, 1668-1783, New York State Library, Old Vol. 21, p. 36; NYCD 9:1109, 6:286. In 1741 New England officials charged the Albanians with selling to the French ammunition which was used to kill New Englanders, and the latter claimed that they had seen their own goods (presumably stolen in raids) purchased from the "French Indians" at Albany. (Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 221 fn. Also Kalm, Travels into North America, p. 334.)

<sup>38</sup>NYCD 9:1110.

attack was much more important than making money from potential enemy customers.

To the Albany men, profits had always been more important than colonial allegiance largely because they were descendants of the Dutch traders who peopled Albany, or "Orange" as it had been called, before the Dutch lost the colony to the English in 1666. Generations after this conquest, much of the population of the Hudson Valley was still ethnically Dutch, and even in the mid-eighteenth century, one could still find as much Dutch as English spoken on an Albany street.<sup>39</sup> The merchants who prosecuted the fur trade, if not Dutch themselves, had married into old elite Dutch families and had soaked up the prevailing preoccupation with profit.

English officials appointed by Whitehall to oversee the colony of New York were not always welcome in towns such as Albany, where the fiscal and trade policies of the alien mother country sometimes collided with the Dutch way of doing things.<sup>40</sup> However, English governors, following Thomas

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<sup>39</sup>Alice P. Kenney, The Gansevoorts of Albany: Dutch Patricians in the Upper Hudson Valley (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1969), pp. xxi-xxiii. Patricia U. Bonomi, A Factious People: Politics and Society in Colonial New York (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 54.

<sup>40</sup>Just after the capture of New Netherland by the English in 1664, the issue of whether these merchants would have to relinquish their ties with Amsterdam commercial agents colored their attitude toward mercantilism. (Robert Ritchie, "London Merchants, the New York Market, and the Recall of Sir Edmund Andros," New York History LVII (1976), pp. 4-29. See also Donna Merwick, Possessing Albany, 1630-1710: The Dutch and English Experiences (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).)

Dongan's example in 1686, granted Albany a continuance of its monopoly in the fur trade and also continued the prerogative of the Chamber of Commerce-like body to make policy on Indian relations. Because the merchant elite was virtually synonymous with the town leadership, this body evolved from Albany's town government and was formalized in 1696 as the "Commissioners of Indian Affairs."

To limit abuses of Indian customers, however, trade was confined to the town limits, so that Indians could freely choose their trading partners, and not be subject to coercion. Just outside the town were buildings set up to lodge Indians who came annually for the summer trading season, as a safe haven away from grasping merchants.<sup>41</sup> Other than these safeguards built into the Albany monopoly, the merchants, or handlers, had free reign. Their advantageous situation enabled them to prevent budding entrepreneurs in the neighboring town of Schenectady from sharing a part of the fur trade.

The Albany merchants were used to getting their way. As time went on, however, politicians outside Albany complained that there were too many on the board of Indian Commissioners; over the decades their number had grown to twenty.<sup>42</sup> By the

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<sup>41</sup>Sale, "Colonial Albany: Outpost of Empire," pp. 86, 116; Norton, Fur Trade, pp. 28-29, 57, 61-62.

<sup>42</sup>The twenty in 1730 were a substantial increase from the original number of four in 1696. The position was one of prestige and was highly in demand by the elite of Albany. (Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:311; NYCD 4:177;

1730s, important figures in New York colonial politics lobbied for the demise of the body altogether. They argued for giving the responsibility to one person alone, and William Johnson was appointed to the position in 1755.<sup>43</sup> The interests of empire were becoming increasingly important in the 1730s and 1740s, and Albany's relations with Indians were coming to have a larger significance for all of North America. Many New Yorkers wanted a single commissioner to make policy with imperial interests in mind, not just the commercial concerns of the Albany merchants. In fact, the Albany men were increasingly seen as having a conflict of interest in being involved in Indian affairs.

One reason for tension between these Albany merchants/commissioners and other politicians in the colony was the neutrality, often tacit, sometimes official, which the commissioners engineered between themselves and the mission Indians of Canada. This amounted to a de facto neutrality between the province of New York and the colony of New France during Queen Anne's War, which infuriated New Englanders and

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Norton, Fur Trade, pp. 74-75.)

<sup>43</sup>Archibald Kennedy, in The Importance of Gaining and Preserving the Friendship of the Indians (New York: 1751), claimed that the commissioners "have so abused, defrauded, and deceived these poor, innocent, well-meaning People [the Indians]" that one would have thought he was an Indian rights activist. In another pamphlet, Serious Advice to the Inhabitants of the Northern Colonies (1755), Kennedy also railed against "our late bad Management." Peter Wraxall's Abridgment was published in order to demonstrate the incompetence of the commissioners and the fitness of Johnson to take over their responsibilities. (Wraxall, p. xcvi.)



imperial appointees in New York. While the Kahnawake and other mission Indians were helping the French attack various towns on the exposed frontiers of New Hampshire and Massachusetts, these same Indians were allowed to trade with Albanians as honored guests. New York governors had to appease angry New England leaders because of the tainted neutrality.<sup>44</sup>

This controversial neutrality has affected the historiography of colonial New York. The Albany merchants have been repeatedly portrayed as villains who selfishly put the concerns of their own pocketbooks ahead of the safety and security of the colony.<sup>45</sup> Only recently have they been rehabilitated by Thomas Norton, who suggested that their policy of neutrality can be interpreted positively. He claimed that they were not necessarily unpatriotic, but were opposed to war and saved the colony from being involved in, and devastated by, war with neighboring New France many times. Although the merchants may have been primarily concerned with protecting the fur trade, they also provided for the military security of the colony by maintaining peaceful relations with the mission Indians instead of inciting war with them as many

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<sup>44</sup>NYCD 5:42-43, 72-74, 141, 228; New York Colonial Manuscripts, 1638-1800 (83 vols.) New York State Library, Vol. 56, p. 126. Of course, French officials constantly attempted to persuade the Kahnawakes and other mission Indians to abandon pledges of neutrality they had made with English colonies. (See for example: NYCD 9:856.)

<sup>45</sup>Wraxall referred to them as "Dutch reptiles." (In Abridgment, p. 180 fn.)

New Englanders did.<sup>46</sup>

When fear of war between the English and the French swept the colonies in the 1730s, peace conferences were held between the Kahnawakes and the Albanians, and again in 1744 when King George's War was imminent.<sup>47</sup> New York Governor George Clinton spoke angrily of "an abominable neutrality" entered into during that war.<sup>48</sup> At one point during the conflict of 1744-1748, neutrality was suspended because Kahnawakes took part in a raid on the hamlet of Saratoga just north of Albany. But earlier, the neutrality had been so secure that Kahnawakes came to Albany claiming that they wanted to conduct business as usual despite the circumstances. Although it is difficult to discern whether this request was granted and trade was carried on, the audacity of the Kahnawakes demonstrates that they felt they could disregard the state of war around them and that they did not consider trade and war to be related. Soon after this request, the governor of New York asked the assembly to pass a law prohibiting trade with the "French Indians" in time of war.<sup>49</sup>

For their part, the New France authorities were uneasy about close relations between the Sault Iroquois and the

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<sup>46</sup>Norton, Fur Trade, pp. 7-8, 75-82.

<sup>47</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, pp. 191, 223, 233; Minutes of the Indian Commissioners, 2:61a, 69, 284a, 359; NYCD 6:207.

<sup>48</sup>NYCD 6:416.

<sup>49</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 233; New York Colonial Manuscripts 74:222; NYCD 6:645.

Albanians. The relationship could either help or hurt New France, depending on the circumstances and the wishes of the Indians. Especially since the Kahnawakes were "well acquainted with the English language," it was not unusual for them to provide their business contacts in Albany with information regarding war preparations or plans in Montreal.<sup>50</sup> Trade could often be used as a pretext for gathering intelligence. For instance, two Iroquois Indians sent by Albany officials to spy in Canada told those who questioned them at the village of Kahnawake that they had come only "to fetch beavers." Not only Indians but whites also mixed trade and intelligence-gathering. Cornelius Cuyler, an Albany merchant, went to Montreal in 1738 and spied on the French for the New Yorkers, probably claiming he was there on business.<sup>51</sup> In the midst of his business records, Robert Sanders (another Albany merchant) mentioned some intelligence to which he was privy regarding an impending French attack; no doubt he got this information through personal friendships with Montreal merchants or from the Kahnawake carriers who regularly delivered pelts to him.<sup>52</sup>

New York officials as well as those in New France were concerned that Indians who traded between the two colonies

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<sup>50</sup>NYCD 10:19 (quote); Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:193, 195, 253a.

<sup>51</sup>NYCD 9:899, 6:131.

<sup>52</sup>NYCD 5:85, 6:131; Robert Sanders Letter Book, p. 83.

also spied. At the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, a New York politician complained to William Johnson, "I dont like these French Indians being suffered to come to Albany to hear & carry away what they can." There was reason for this concern, as the gathering of sensitive information by Kahnawakes while in Albany seemed to be promoted by the French. French records mention the return to New France of Nanangousy, a Kahnawake sachem, from the English trading post of Oswego "where he has been to spy."<sup>53</sup> William Shirley complained in 1755 that the French had "constant intelligence ... of every motion of the English" given to them by the French-allied Indians who frequented Albany.<sup>54</sup>

Kahnawakes often did not heed the wishes of the French. Louis Antoine de Bougainville reported with dismay during the Seven Years' War that the Sault and Mountain Iroquois wanted to remain neutral because they did not wish anything to interfere with their smuggling, but that they still desired to be privy to French intelligence. Bougainville seemed to be wary of allowing them to keep open the path to Albany and to

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<sup>53</sup>James Sullivan et. al., eds., The Papers of Sir William Johnson 14 vols. (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1921-1965), Vol. 1, p. 499 (hereafter cited as Johnson Papers.); E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documentary History of the State of New York 4 vols. [quarto ed.] (Albany, N.Y.: Weed and Parsons, 1850-1851), Vol. 1, p. 305 (hereafter cited as DHNY.) Another similar incident: NYCD 10:19.

<sup>54</sup>Johnson Papers 1:543. Also New York Council Minutes, Old Vol. 25, p. 37 (Calendar p. 416); Richard Day, ed., Calendar of the Sir William Johnson Manuscripts (Albany: New York State Department of Education, 1909), pp. 33, 36; DHNY 2:384.

tell them of French war plans; this could have been a dangerous combination.<sup>55</sup>

But there were personal ties between Sault Iroquois and Albany merchants over which French officials and military personnel had no control. Kahnawake people came to Albany sometimes on "private business," and their merchant friends in Albany consoled the deaths of Kahnawake family members.<sup>56</sup> French government officials had a reason to be nervous about such personal contacts between trading partners. In 1739, some Kahnawake sachems who came to trade at Albany were invited to diplomatic talks as well, a situation which must have irked the French.<sup>57</sup>

Sometimes, however, diplomacy was used for furthering trade instead of vice versa. During the 1720s New York ban on the smuggling trade, Kahnawakes came to Albany to trade clandestinely, under the pretext of announcing that they were ready to make peace with the New England colonists.<sup>58</sup> At one point, some Kahnawakes and possibly Mountain Indians as well registered their protest against the New York trade ban by

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<sup>55</sup>Louis Antoine, [comte] de Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness; the American journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760 [Edward P. Hamilton, trans. and ed.] (Norman, Ok: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 110. Colden also saw danger in this from the New York side. (Colden, History 2:53.)

<sup>56</sup>For example, see Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 2:177a, 187a.

<sup>57</sup>Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 2:173.

<sup>58</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 151.

threatening to join Abenaki Indians in raiding Massachusetts towns.<sup>59</sup> The Albany commissioners, too, could use the blurring of trade and diplomacy to their own advantage. When a group of five Kahnawake sachems came to discuss diplomatic issues in the summer of 1741, the commissioners did not like what the Indians told them. As a kind of sanction imposed against their Indian counterparts in these negotiations, the commissioners refused to trade with them, claiming that "it is no Custom for sachims to Come with Bevers, when they come about publick business."<sup>60</sup> Everyone present knew this was not true, but the commissioners held the upper hand in this diplomatic encounter because they could deny the privilege of trade. To trade or not to trade was a powerful question in this context, and trade and diplomacy were inextricably related.

At times the Albany men abused their right to trade with Indians, giving rise to the litany of complaints about ill treatment of tribesmen and women who had come in good faith to exchange pelts for blankets and other trade items. As early as 1702, some Iroquois Indians complained to Governor Cornbury that Albany traders used skewed scales in weighing pelts in order to cheat Indians, and that in general they did not

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<sup>59</sup>NYCD 5:744. The Commissioners did not like the ban either, and not only because it hurt their pocketbooks but also because it meant that not as much intelligence would come their way from Canada. (Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:186.)

<sup>60</sup>Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 2:214a.

conduct business fairly.<sup>61</sup> For several decades it was considered not unusual for traders from Albany, when they heard of a group of mission Indians coming down the Hudson River from Canada, to travel north of Albany (or send scouts) to wait for the entourage, "lay hold of the Indians, and secure their [pelts]." Then they would "escort" these Indians into the town to the trader's own house and relieve the visitors of their bundles, getting them drunk so as to cheat them. Some even prepared wagons to be stationed five or six miles outside of the town to unload the canoes and carry the cargo to their homes.<sup>62</sup>

In 1715 a Kahnawake reported that some of John Schuyler's servants confiscated his cargo of pelts against his will and transported it into town to an unknown location. The commissioners acted as their own police force by investigating the matter and locating the cargo. Discovering that the Kahnawake victim had been transporting the goods on behalf of a French merchant for delivery to Myndert Schuyler, they ordered the shipment delivered to the latter.<sup>63</sup> It was not unusual for Kahnawakes to be accosted and harassed by Albany traders when venturing into New York territory; this happened

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<sup>61</sup>NYCD 4:987; Norton, Fur Trade, pp. 29, 32-33. (They were accused of watering down the rum they sold to Indians as well. Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:13.)

<sup>62</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 53 fn.

<sup>63</sup>Wraxall, Abridgment, pp. 110-111.

again in 1738.<sup>64</sup>

A particular problem associated with New Yorkers' abuse of Indian traders and carriers was the use of liquor to get them drunk and take advantage of their intoxication.<sup>65</sup> Robert Sanders was apparently one who did not engage in this sort of trickery, since he complained about one of his colleagues using liquor to intoxicate an Indian and take advantage of him in trade. Sanders attempted to prosecute the man for his deviousness.<sup>66</sup>

Peter Kalm, a Swedish botanist who travelled throughout North America in 1750 and 1751, claimed that rum was "absolutely necessary to the inhabitants of Albany; they cheat the Indians in the fur trade with it; for when the Indians are drunk, they will leave it to the Albanians to fix the price of furs." From talking to many people and from witnessing these transactions himself, Kalm estimated that Indians trading at Albany sometimes got less than half of the value of their goods. He also charged that the Albany merchants "glory in these tricks, and are highly pleased when they have given a

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<sup>64</sup>Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 2:143.

<sup>65</sup>Only New Yorkers and not Frenchmen are singled out for this because there is little evidence that French traders abused Indians, and plenty of evidence that the English (Dutch) did. Many Indians of varying nations came great distances to trade with the English because the French would not sell them liquor in as great quantities or as often. (For instance see Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:12a.) Norton, Fur Trade, pp. 68-69; Adair, "Anglo-French Rivalry," p. 145.

<sup>66</sup>Robert Sanders Letter Book, p. 44.



poor Indian a greater portion of brandy than he can bear." But Kalm also stated that Indians seemed to weigh their losses and grumble only mildly about being cheated, because at least they had been able to drink heavily, something which (Kalm observed) they valued more than almost anything else in the world.<sup>67</sup>

Alcohol dependency was indeed a social problem in Iroquoia and at mission communities such as Kahnawake in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Jesuits had attempted to ban the sale of alcohol to Indians in Canada, and were at times partially successful, but even responsible traders in New France stocked liquor for sale to Indians. This was necessary in order to keep the trade with Indians from being completely usurped by the English.<sup>68</sup> And of course, liquor was the one commodity which could increase Indian consumption levels. Without it, there was a definite limit to the Indian notion of consumption and profit motive, a limit which Europeans were constantly attempting to raise. Even so, the French trade in liquor to Indians was negligible compared to the English volume of sales; Dale Miquelon

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<sup>67</sup>Kalm, Travels into North America, pp. 322, 331-332. Kalm also visited New France and did not comment on such abuses there.

<sup>68</sup>Governor Vaudreuil of New France feared in 1710 that the English would be able to make alliances with the mission Indians solely because the Albany merchants sold them liquor. He claimed that Indians could buy unlimited quantities of it there, implying that the sale of liquor to Indians was more restrained in Canada. C11A 31:10-10a (original).

estimates that at one French post, woolens made up 64 per cent of goods sold to Indians, and alcoholic beverages only 6 per cent.<sup>69</sup>

Kahnawake Indians complained in 1742 that they did not like going to Oswego, the New York trading post northwest of Albany, because alcohol and therefore abuse and social chaos were endemic there. A Kahnawake orator told some Onondaga Iroquois that the demon of rum ran rampant at Oswego and had been responsible for the murder of eight Kahnawake men there by League Iroquois people.<sup>70</sup> By 1750 many League Iroquois had become so badly indebted to Oswego and Albany traders, largely for rum, that they attempted to sell their own children to the traders as security for their debts. That the traders let the situation deteriorate so far indicates that their morals did not interfere with selling alcohol to make money.<sup>71</sup>

Given the notoriety of English traders for taking advantage of an Indian weakness for drink, it was no wonder that Indians considered the French more honest in commercial dealings. Kahnawake people, in regular contact with both the English and the French and travelling between the two colonies

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<sup>69</sup>Miquelon, New France, pp. 150, 152. No numbers are available for New York, but Norton suggests that sales of rum in the Indian trade were surpassed in volume only by textiles at Albany at this time. (Norton, Fur Trade, p. 30.)

<sup>70</sup>NYCD 9:1093. Also Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 2:237; Norton, Fur Trade, pp. 31-34.

<sup>71</sup>New York Colonial Manuscripts 76:118a, 121.

frequently, were in a position to notice the difference more than others. It may have been this obvious difference which infuriated them when they came across examples of English foul play and trickery. Their consciousness of being cheated may explain periodic acts of hostility by Kahnawakes toward Albany people.

In 1711, some Kahnawakes murdered several New Yorkers outside of Albany but the following spring offered atonement for them and desired a renewal of commercial relations with the Albany traders.<sup>72</sup> Robert Sanders noticed that they cheated either him or his trading partner in Montreal while carrying shipments of goods back and forth between Montreal and Albany. Sanders made light of it, dismissing the carriers as "rascals [who] do well for themselves often."<sup>73</sup> Alexander McGinty and David Hendricks, traders from New York, were taken as prisoners by Kahnawakes and kept at the mission village for some time before being released. They may have been taken captive because of abusive behavior toward these Indians, who by the 1750s, when this capture took place, had had many negative experiences with greedy, dishonest traders from English colonies.<sup>74</sup>

The New Yorkers were aware of the native preference for

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<sup>72</sup>New York Council Minutes, Old Vol. 11, p. 87. (Calendar, p. 247.)

<sup>73</sup>Robert Sanders Letter Book, pp. 43, 76.

<sup>74</sup>New York Colonial Manuscripts 77:97, 100, 112; Robert Sanders Letter Book, p. 76.

dealing with Frenchmen, resented it, and were bothered by the presence of French traders in League Iroquois villages. The Joncaire family, hardy coureurs de bois, enjoyed generations of successful relations with the Senecas near Irondequoit and Niagara. They traded with the Senecas, repaired their muskets and ironware, and married into their families.<sup>75</sup> In 1719, it was discovered that the French were building a fort at Niagara, in addition to the trading post the Joncaires had erected at Irondequoit. This development was of grave concern in New York, especially since some Kahnawakes were at Niagara recruiting League Iroquois people to move to the new French post.

The French beachhead at Niagara was part of the impetus for the 1720 New York law banning trade with Canada.<sup>76</sup> But the movement for this law was also a strategy of the recently arrived Governor Burnet to end the hegemony of the Albany merchants and to force the recalcitrant Dutch to adhere to the British empire's priorities -- namely, ending the boon to the French which the "Canada trade," or "Strowd trade," provided. In the 1720 act, Burnet argued that "the French build Forts

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<sup>75</sup>New York Colonial Manuscripts 60:156; Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:124; Colden Papers 4:279. Regarding the Joncaire family, see Yves F. Zoltvany, "Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. 2, pp. 125-126, and Malcolm MacLeod, "Philippe-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. 3, pp. 101-102.

<sup>76</sup>NYCD 5:485, 528, 571.

with our goods."<sup>77</sup>

Burnet had managed what no other New York governor had been able to do: overcome the political clout of the Albany interest in the colonial assembly. However, he did not count on opposition from another source: some influential London merchants who were suppliers to the Albanians and profited by the wholesale woolen trade carried on with Kahnawakes and Montrealers. Samuel Storke, Samuel Baker, and other London merchants petitioned the king against the law generally and particularly against a strengthening of the act which Burnet proposed in 1724. Acceding to their wishes, the Lords of Trade disallowed the New York law. All those who had favored the law had to accept its revocation, since even its staunchest advocates realized that it had failed to stop the trade.<sup>78</sup>

The disallowing of the trade ban was a pyrrhic victory

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<sup>77</sup>NYCD 5:577.

<sup>78</sup>Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:105a, 58a, 103-103a; Colden, History 2:6-11; Haan, "The Covenant Chain: Iroquois Diplomacy...", p. 221; Norton, Fur Trade, p. 147. Burnet's law was ineffective because it only outlawed selling goods to Canadians and Canadian Indians, but did not ban the importation of furs. (NYCD 5:582) This left a large loophole which was easy to use to advantage. Also, Burnet himself issued passes to travel to New France to the most notorious Albany merchants involved in the stroud trade: men such as Cornelius Cuyler. (NYCD 9:899) Thomas Norton suggests that despite his get-tough stance, Burnet realized that he should not crack down too heavily on the trade for fear of alienating the Kahnawakes. (Norton, Fur Trade, p. 139.) New York officials had to admit anyway that the trade ban was useless because Indians were "very difficult to detect...and to bind them any way to observe the laws in force." (NYCD 5:811.)

for the Albany merchants, however. Their singular control over the fur trade was gradually eroded in the 1720s, and not just by Joncaire's fort at Niagara. Burnet was still determined to break their hold on the trade and had a New York court strike down their monopoly in 1726. That meant that neighboring Schenectadians could prosecute the trade, but more importantly, it cleared a path for the opening of a frontier trading post, fortified soon after it was built, at Oswego on Lake Ontario, northwest of Albany, in Onondaga territory.<sup>79</sup> Both the League Iroquois and the French had misgivings about the erection of this fortified post in the heart of Six Nations territory, and the Kahnawakes made official trips to Albany to warn officials that the French would not countenance this move.<sup>80</sup>

But this diplomatic role of the Kahnawake Indians did not preclude their own trading at the new post. They became

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<sup>79</sup>Sale, "Colonial Albany: Outpost of Empire," pp. 175, 180; Wraxall, Abridgment, pp. lii, lxxx-lxxxii.

<sup>80</sup>DHNY 1:290; Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:111a-114, 174a; New York Commissioners of Indian Affairs at Albany, Instructions for Lonrence Claese the Interpreter to the Six Nations, Dec 27 1727, New York State Archives; Wraxall, Abridgment, pp. 170-171. The Governor of New France was trying to use this building of Oswego to drive a wedge between the Kahnawakes and the New Yorkers. Acting administrator of the colony in 1727, Charles Le Moyne, Baron de Longueuil, tried to take advantage of any League opposition for his own purposes; there was not nearly as much opposition within Iroquoia as he claimed. However, in 1743, rumors abounded in Albany that the Onondagas had become hostile to the English presence at Oswego, and that they were recruiting Sault and Mountain mission Iroquois, and French ammunition supplies, to attack the post. (Colden Papers 3:9.)

regular customers, along with other Canadians and French-allied Indians. Soon French interpreters were needed at Oswego, so great was the volume of French-speaking traffic there. The French, even in a de facto sense at Oswego, were defeating the English at the game of placing posts in Indian country whether the contest is seen as a territorial-imperial challenge or as a commercial one.<sup>81</sup> During the Seven Years' War, the Ottawa Indians helped the French take Oswego from the English. Later, however, the Ottawas came to regret their decision to help the French because in French hands the post was no longer a profitable shopping mecca. The French did not sell as many goods per skin as the English had, "tho' they [Indians] had been disgusted with some ill treatment they had received from some of the English," and despite the fact that the English were stingier with gifts.<sup>82</sup>

The French responded to the building of Oswego with the building of a post at Crown Point at the south end of Lake Champlain in 1731. Fortification was completed four years later. The French were attempting to ward off the English who

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<sup>81</sup>New York Colonial Manuscripts 78:115; Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:185a; Johnson Papers 9:128-129. In 1749, one day's count of canoes from Kahnawake at Oswego was 43, and the number of packs of furs was 301. (NYCD 6:538.) One indication that the French were seriously undermining English efforts in the fur trade-imperial alliance game was that French interpreters were regular customers at Oswego, buying goods which they in turn traded for furs in Seneca villages, thereby strengthening French-Seneca relations. (Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 197.)

<sup>82</sup>NYCD 7:233-234.

had become bolder with each passing year by travelling farther north of Albany to trade with Indians coming down the Lake Champlain corridor. Fort St. Frédéric was also meant to curb the smuggling trade in general by serving as a mandatory customs house at which all passing canoes were to stop for inspection. However, Indians could get around the customs check by sending empty canoes past the fort, while the furs were portaged around behind the fort where no one was looking. And French officials could not prosecute Indians even if they caught them.<sup>83</sup> The effect of this fort as a deterrent to smuggling was so negligible that, by 1751, Cadwallader Colden suspected that it may even have facilitated the illegal trade, serving as an entrepôt for the shipments going back and forth.<sup>84</sup>

The customs house at Fort St. Frédéric was not the first French effort to curb the extralegal commerce. Canadian officials had made innumerable efforts to stop the trade almost as soon as it became noticeable. Claude de Ramezay was assigned to crack down on it after 1700. He assured the Minister of Marine that he was doing everything possible to check the trade, but the extent of his efforts could not have been great, since some of the merchants most heavily engaged

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<sup>83</sup>NYCD 9:1021; Lunn, "The Illegal Fur Trade out of New France," p. 82; C11A 93:170-172. Kahnawake Indians were at times so brazen as to announce to the Canadian governor-general that they were leaving for Albany to buy strouds. (NYCD 9:1069)

<sup>84</sup>Colden Papers 4:286.



in the trade with Albany were also his personal creditors. In 1707 he suggested bringing in heavily subsidized trade goods (underwritten by the Ministry of Marine) to lure customers, but this would have cost the French government a great deal of money at a time when it was carrying out an expensive war in Europe.<sup>85</sup>

In 1708, French officials wrote a series of memos concerning the smuggling and about how best to prevent Kahnawake involvement in it. Around that time, Canadians who left New France in canoes with bundles of pelts bound for Albany were arrested, had their cargo seized, and were often imprisoned for a few months for the offense. But such arrests did not last long, since Frenchmen interested in the business could always hire Indians, who were not bound by French laws. Montrealers could not prevent Kahnawakes from leaving with a load of furs for shipment to another colony.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, New France officials found it politically suicidal to raise the ire of Indians, since the latter could always threaten to emigrate to New York, where the English were waiting with open arms and land grants for the Kahnawakes and other Mission Iroquois.<sup>87</sup> Or even if they did not leave New France, these Indians could withhold needed military support in time of war

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<sup>85</sup>Yves F. Zoltvany, "Claude de Ramezay," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. 2, p. 546.

<sup>86</sup>RAPO 1939-40, pp. 418, 433, 458-460; C11A 67:186-195; RAPO 1939-40, pp. 355, 360, 459-460.

<sup>87</sup>C11A 69:74-80.

if French officials harassed them too much.<sup>88</sup>

Officials at Chambly, where another customs post was placed, could demand of New France habitants to see official documentation allowing them to leave the colony for New York, but they could not demand this of Indians. Indians were free to cross all frontiers, and there was nothing that officials could do to prevent this.<sup>89</sup> New France officials were also authorized, by an edict of 1719, to search every home suspected of holding contraband goods, but this was unenforceable at Kahnawake and other mission villages. One official attempted to establish a garrison and fortification at the new Kahnawake village site in 1719, expressly to keep the Indians from trading with Albany, but besides being politically unpopular, the plan was also thwarted by the Jesuits in the village. They pointed out that in the past, when the mission had been occupied by a garrison during war, the officers of the garrison themselves had been some of the worst offenders in contraband trade. Later on, when the Desauniers sisters had set up a provisioning shop at Kahnawake, they complained about a plan for fortification of

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<sup>88</sup>C11A 75:206-219.

<sup>89</sup>NYCD 9:908-909; C11A 70:48-59, 69:74-80, 67:188-192, 55:181-183; Arrêts et Ordonnances Royales (Quebec: 1854), Volume 1, p. 489 cited in E. J. Devine, Historic Caughnawaga (Montreal: Messenger Press, 1922), p. 209; Eccles, "The Fur Trade and Eighteenth-Century Imperialism," p. 349.

the village because it would hinder their trade.<sup>90</sup> These women and the Jesuits carried on their trade with impunity at Kahnawake for many years.

Attempts by the Minister of Marine to prevent the Jesuit missionaries at Kahnawake from allowing the French to have shops at the village and to prevent Jesuits themselves from giving the Indians merchandise for trade were unsuccessful.<sup>91</sup> Kahnawake Indians, through their Jesuit spokesmen, responded to official requests that the smuggling trade cease by saying that they would be happy to stop as soon as the officials also demanded that others cease the trade as well. Involvement in the trade was too widespread for this to happen, as the Kahnawakes well knew.<sup>92</sup>

On one occasion, a few miles south of Montreal, a cache of over three hundred beaver pelts was found in the woods near an Indian woman who was apparently guarding it. The Kahnawakes claimed the cache, arguing when challenged that officials would not be able to prove it was the property of any French or English person. The governor of Montreal finally had to give the pelts to the Kahnawakes, at the instructions of the governor and intendant of the colony.

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<sup>90</sup>C11A 69:74-77, 70:48-59; Devine, Historic Caughnawaga, p. 189; Louis Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires sur le Canada [J. Cohen, ed.] (Montréal: Editions Elysée, 1974), p. 120.

<sup>91</sup>RAPO 1941-42, p. 236; NYCD 9:938-939; C11A 55:181-183.

<sup>92</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows, 1896-1901), 67:77 (hereafter cited as Jesuit Relations.)

Despite the official sanction against carrying around large bundles of pelts outside of Montreal, and particularly in the direction of New York, Kahnawakes were able to evade the prohibition and act at will.<sup>93</sup>

It took many years for New France officials to enforce their own rules against French offenders at Kahnawake. Suspicion that the Jesuit missionaries there were involved in, or at least cognizant of, the transport of peltries south arose as early as 1698. In 1705 authorities in New France accused them of being directly involved in the fur trade. Nothing was done about the charge, however, and there was no further mention of suspicions of Jesuits until the late 1720s, when Father Lauzon was accused of being involved in the smuggling trade.<sup>94</sup>

In the early days of the mission, the Jesuit missionaries had attempted to prevent French businessmen from opening stores within the Indian village, mainly because of the inevitability that they would peddle alcohol to their Indian customers. However, by the 1720s, the Jesuits were glad to lease space within their compound adjacent to the longhouses to nearby merchants interested in setting up a dry goods shop.

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<sup>93</sup>RAPQ 1939-40, pp. 459-460.

<sup>94</sup>Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires et autres documents historiques relatifs à la Nouvelle-France 4 vols. (Québec: Côté, 1883-1885), Vol. 1, p. 604; C11A 22:314v-315 (original); Camille Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVIIIe siècle 2 vols. (Paris: Alphone Picard, 1906), Vol. 2, p. 245; C11A 69:224.

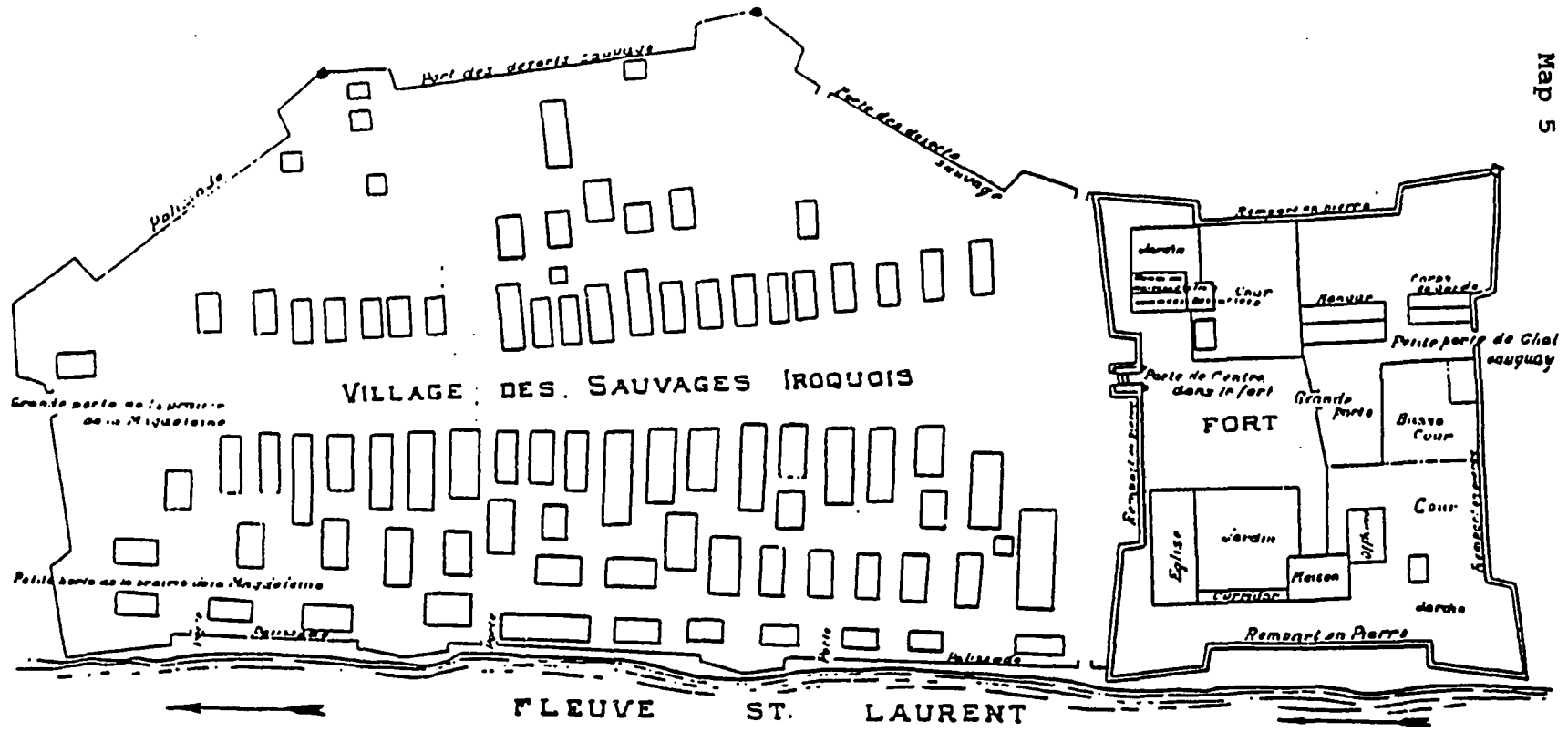
In the late 1750s, they were leasing store space to a Mr. de Musseaux, probably the same facility which had been established by three famous - or infamous - sisters in 1727. The "desdemoiselles Desauniers" secured a concession of land in that year adjacent to the chapel, and had a shop built on the site.<sup>95</sup> [See Map 5] These women, Marguerite, Marie, and Magdelaine Desauniers, belonged to a prominent Montreal merchant family, so they came by their chosen livelihood naturally.<sup>96</sup> There was no disputing their involvement in the smuggling trade with Albany based at Kahnawake; they sold goods at a much cheaper rate than the going price in Montreal just a few miles away and still made healthy profits (and, it seems, paid their Kahnawake carriers well too).<sup>97</sup> It was commonly believed that the Desauniers women gave the Jesuits large donations and that the Jesuit college in Quebec was built with Desauniers "Albany trade" money. So lucrative was

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<sup>95</sup>RAPO 1923-24, p. 50; Devine, Historic Caughnawaga, p. 236; Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites, Vol. 2, p. 253.

<sup>96</sup>Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin 18:71-72; Personal communication with Louise Dechêne, 26 Nov 1990; Cameron Nish, Les Bourgeois-Gentilshommes de la Nouvelle-France 1729-1748 (Montréal: Fides, 1968), pp. 46, 74, 178; C11A 69:60-66; Jacqueline Roy, "Thomas-Ignace Trottier Dufy Desauniers," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. 4, pp. 739-740.

<sup>97</sup>Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin 18:72; Devine, Historic Caughnawaga, p. 236; NYCD 9:1096; Edward P. Hamilton, The French and Indian Wars (New York: 1962), p. 63; Edward P. Hamilton, "Unrest at Caughnawaga, or The Lady Fur Traders of Sault St.-Louis," Bulletin of Fort Ticonderoga Museum XI (1963), pp. 155-160; [Anon.] "Les Malignités du Sieur de Courville," Bulletin des Recherches Historiques L (1944), p. 72.



PLAN OF FORT AT CAUGHNAWAGA, 1754  
(Kahnawake)

From E.J. Devine, Historic Caughnawaga

the sisters' trade at Kahnawake that prominent Montreal businessmen envied them greatly and would have paid handsomely to rent commercial space at the village in order to be at the hub of the smuggling trade with Albany.<sup>98</sup>

Kahnawake was the acknowledged center of the illegal trade, where the three French women had a unique partnership with their Kahnawake carriers. Governor Beauharnois lamented in 1741 that the village had "become a sort of Republic, and it is only there that foreign trade is carried on at present." Although Indians who bought merchandise at the Desauniers store used beaver pelts to pay for them, it came to Beauharnois' attention in 1741 that the sisters had not brought a single fur to the Compagnie des Indes' office in the fifteen years that they had been at Kahnawake. Not only that, but furs were actually being carried covertly out of Montreal (presumably having been brought in from the upcountry) to the Kahnawake store. The Desauniers women, besides sending furs obtained in exchange for goods at the store, also were acting as middlemen for Montreal merchants (perhaps even corrupt officers of the Company) to exchange furs coming into Montreal for the woolens and other manufactured goods from Albany and probably to make the connections for these Montreal

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<sup>98</sup>NYCD 9:1071; Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites, Vol. 2, pp. 252-253; J.F. Bosher, The Canada Merchants, 1713-1763 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 182. (The Desauniers women also donated land to the Jesuits in 1742. RAPO 1973, p. 53.)

businessmen with Kahnawake carriers.<sup>99</sup>

Kahnawake women were hired to smuggle the pelts out of Montreal in baskets to their mission village and both male and female Sault Indians hired themselves out to transport the cargo down to Albany.<sup>100</sup> The Kahnawake Indians, known to be shrewd dealers themselves, may even have initiated an independent branch of the trade,<sup>101</sup> Governor Beauharnois was under the impression that they carried this "foreign trade" into habitant villages near the Sault. By 1750, Governor La Jonquière noted that there was hardly a house in the entire area which was not furnished with linens and calicoes from the English.<sup>102</sup> And even guards posted on the outskirts of the colony cooperated with the transport of their goods.<sup>103</sup>

Governor Beauharnois attempted to put the Desauniers sisters out of business when he became fully aware of the situation in 1741, but although they were ordered to close their store, they remained at Kahnawake, and in fact continued

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<sup>99</sup>NYCD 9:1071; C11A 73:129-130, 77:403-406.

<sup>100</sup>NYCD 9:1071.

<sup>101</sup>When Governor La Jonquière visited the Kahnawake village, he noted that "many of their stores are filled with English goods, and they are very shrewd in their dealings." C11A 97:120; Devine, Historic Caughnawaga, p. 249.

<sup>102</sup>NYCD 9:1096; Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin 18: 62, 72.

<sup>103</sup>Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites, Vol. 2, p. 252: "No beaver will go to Albany or Oswego unless these same guards want to let them go." (Rochemonteix quotes from C11A.)



to trade, notwithstanding government orders.<sup>104</sup> This half-hearted enforcement of the law, resulting only in a temporary cessation of trade and the need to be more clandestine about their operations, was politically motivated. New France authorities, as those in New York, could not afford to offend the Kahnawakes too much lest they turn their backs on the colony. Intendant Gilles Hocquart did not even want to investigate the Desauniers operation, let alone shut it down, for fear of antagonizing the Indians.<sup>105</sup>

The Desauniers sisters had a close and positive relationship with the Kahnawake people; they treated them well as employees (sometimes almost as partners) and customers and gave charitably to the poor and sick of the village. They also knew the Mohawk language fluently, better than many of the official interpreters hired by the colonial government. When Claude de Ramezay was stationed at the Sault as commander of the garrison, he was indebted to them for their services as translators.<sup>106</sup> The women were well-liked by the Jesuit missionaries, and the latter were implicated with having worked hand-in-glove with them when they were finally

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<sup>104</sup>NYCD 9:1095-96; C11A 77:13-14, 89-91, 386-388, 79:188-192. The Minister of Marine decreased the amount of money spent on gifts and supplies for the Kahnawake people in 1741, presumably as a punishment. (Devine, Historic Caughnawaga, p. 217; Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites, Vol. 2, pp. 249-250.)

<sup>105</sup>C11A 54:148-154, 76:26-28, 97:277-281; NYCD 9:1071; S Dale Standen, "Politics, Patronage and Imperial Interest," Canadian Historical Review LX (1979), p. 26.

<sup>106</sup>C11A 97:287-288.

apprehended.<sup>107</sup>

In 1750, shortly after taking office, Governor La Jonquière decided that the Desauniers sisters and Father Tournois, the Jesuit priest at Kahnawake at the time, were to be tolerated no more in their flagrant violation of the law. He succeeded in having them removed from the village and deported to France.<sup>108</sup> The Jesuit order protested his removal, and the Desauniers women rallied forces to protest their removal as well. The ship which the women boarded for France overturned on the way back across the Atlantic, but they survived, having lost some of their belongings.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>C11A 95:145-147, 157-161.

<sup>108</sup>Jesuit Relations 69:237, 286; C11A 95:131-144, 97:191-201; RAPO 1934-35, pp. 132, 145, 147. Despite Father Tournois' involvement with illegal commerce, it was evident that he was an effective missionary, as colleagues commended him (Father Nau told his mother in a personal letter in 1743 that Tournois "had much merit and [was] very amiable." RAPO 1926-27, p. 328). A contemporary account claimed that "they say it's a pity to see that village [now that he is gone]: there is no more mass and no sermons. One only knows that liquor is given in abundance." (RAPO 1934-35, p. 145.) Governor Duquesne, La Jonquière's successor, petitioned the French minister to allow the return of Father Tournois to Kahnawake, "because no one of his successors there had been able to manage the Indians of that mission as he had done." This appeal was unsuccessful. (Jesuit Relations 69:286; C11A 99:286-287, 316-317.) Duquesne claimed that Tournois ran the mission very well -- better than anyone else -- and that they needed him back, particularly because the mission was growing rapidly. Duquesne also told the Minister of Marine that he believed that La Jonquière had made a bad judgment about Father Tournois. (For a biography of Tournois, see Jean-Marie LeBlanc, "Jean-Baptiste Tournois," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. 3, pp. 627-628.)

<sup>109</sup>RAPO 1934-35, pp. 145, 147. The Desauniers women gathered six witnesses, some of whom were prominent members of the Montreal elite, to testify to their good character. (C11A

Nevertheless, their bad luck continued, matched by their nerve. They returned to New France not long after having been expelled, and attempted, by sneaking past the notice of the governor and the intendant, to return to Kahnawake. They even resorted to claiming that they had the king's permission to re-open their store, but could furnish no proof of this claim. After La Jonquière died in office in 1752, they convinced the interim governor to allow them to visit the village for twenty-four hours, but so blatantly took advantage of this allowance that finally they were physically removed.<sup>110</sup>

The Indians at Kahnawake, it seems, were not at all happy about the turn of events, as they told La Jonquière flatly that they would rather be dead than go without English goods.<sup>111</sup> This was brazen behavior, since La Jonquière had warned them that Indians found to be involved in the smuggling trade would also be banished from the village.<sup>112</sup> But the threat was not carried out and the Kahnawakes who wanted to, continued their involvement in the transport business between

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97:289-295.)

<sup>110</sup>C11A 97:191-196,277-281, 282-286, 98:36-39.

<sup>111</sup>C11A 97:139.

<sup>112</sup>Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin 18:62. This indicates that the number of Sault Indians directly involved in the trade may have been small. (Sanders mentioned only five or six carriers by name.) (Also, other French officials had tended to blame the Kahnawakes' involvement in the trade on the Desauniers women or the Jesuits, absolving the Indians themselves. (See for example, NYCD 9:1071; C11A 97:191-201.)

New France and New York, trading at Oswego as well as Albany on a regular basis, and casting their net even wider to procure the furs to be sent to the English. They travelled all the way up to Lake Huron for shipments of peltries in the years after the Tournois-Desauniers fiasco.<sup>113</sup> These were self-sufficient, highly motivated people. They also became agents for Robert Sanders of Albany and various merchants in Montreal who needed Indians to carry their shipments and make the connections. Sanders' trade records indicate that he became involved in this commerce just after the demise of the Desauniers women, and had direct connections with Montreal merchants. But women remained prominent in the trade, since about half, and some of Sanders' most frequent, carriers were women from Kahnawake. Relations were close enough between this Albany wholesaler and the Kahnawake community for one of the Jesuit missionaries in charge at the reserve community in 1754 to request Sanders' help in purchasing a bell for the church at Kahnawake.<sup>114</sup>

By the 1750s, men such as Sanders were an exception. Not nearly as many Albanians were involved in the trade with Indians as had been formerly. Albany was no longer the fur mecca it had been before Oswego was established. Instead, it

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<sup>113</sup>NYCD 9:953; New York Colonial Manuscripts 80:51.

<sup>114</sup>Robert Sanders Letter Book, pp. 26, 31, 44, 51, 62. About half of his Sault carriers were women. In 1753, a woman named Susanna from Kahnawake was visiting Albany by herself. She knew Sanders and may have been a carrier. (NYCD 6:795-796.)

had become primarily a wholesale clearing house for strouds and other English woolens, sold to Kahnawakes or Montreal merchants.<sup>115</sup> The few Indian Commissioners who were still involved in the fur trade dealt almost solely with Kahnawakes.<sup>116</sup> The presence of these mission Indians in the town was so commonplace as not to arouse any particular concern; it did not seem unusual for them to be there, as a group of them casually mentioned to William Johnson on one occasion that they had stopped by his house in Albany to speak with him.<sup>117</sup> Larger numbers of them could be a problem, however. In the summer of 1751, sixteen large canoes brought almost two hundred Kahnawakes to Albany, an indication that the trading ties between these Indians and the people of this city had grown to outsized proportions. The booming nature of this wholesale trade became a problem in the 1750s, as the number of Kahnawakes visiting the city became unwieldy.<sup>118</sup>

The situation also became a problem in New York-Six Nations relations, since the latter were jealous that their Catholic cousins had usurped such a profitable aspect of the

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<sup>115</sup>By 1731, some trading houses of Montreal were "Considerable Indebted" to Albany merchants. (Minutes of the Indian Commissioners 1:332a.)

<sup>116</sup>NYCD 10:19.

<sup>117</sup>Johnson Papers 1:634. Johnson mentioned to some Cayuga Indians in 1755 the casual and regularized nature of relations between Kahnawakes and Albanians. (NYCD 6:980).

<sup>118</sup>New York Council Minutes, Old Vol. 21, pp. 430, 436; Norton, Fur Trade, p. 185.

fur trade. The League Iroquois resented the Albany commissioners for their cultivation of close relations with the Kahnawakes, and for New York's hypocritical policy of discouraging them from developing ties with the French. Some Mohawks pointed out to Conrad Weiser, Pennsylvania's Indian agent, that it was unfair for New York to allow close relations between Kahnawakes and New Yorkers, while censuring League Iroquois delegations from visiting Montreal.<sup>119</sup> Peter Wraxall noticed this problem in New York-Six Nations relations as well, blaming the Albany commissioners for wrecking the province's good working relationship with their western neighbors because of their greed in promoting the trade with Canada. (He even claimed that they lost control of Indian affairs to Johnson because of their single-minded pursuit of the trade with Kahnawakes.)

Indian ill will toward New York could have serious consequences in 1755 and after because the colony needed Iroquois military support in the unfolding conflict with the French. Acting as William Johnson's cheerleader, Wraxall noted that since taking over the post of sole superintendant for Indian affairs in the northern colonies, the latter had managed to repair some of the damage done by Albanians to the colony's relations with the Six Nations. Johnson had managed

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<sup>119</sup>Journal of Conrad Weiser's journey to Albany, 1751, quoted in Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), p. 326.

to convince at least the eastern tribes of the League that they were more important to the New Yorkers than their mission counterparts and that favored status for the Kahnawakes would end.<sup>120</sup>

A delicate balance was required, however, because the League people still had close ties with their Kahnawake kin, and there was concern in 1754 that Kahnawakes were encouraging large numbers of League Mohawks to emigrate to New France and become military allies of the French. The need for a balancing act indicates both that relations between the two groups were still good, so that Johnson could not speak too strongly against the Kahnawakes for fear of offending Six Nations people, and that the English had better treat League Iroquois people well, so as not to encourage them to emigrate to a colony whose officials were wooing them with lavish gifts and respectful, deferential speeches. Johnson had to ensure some League sachems in 1755 that, although he disapproved of the Albany-Kahnawake stroud trade (especially since it smacked of disloyalty at a time when the French and English were going to war), the Kahnawakes who came to Albany would be treated well. This was also a strategy to keep the Kahnawakes neutral in the impending war; Johnson and others in New York did not expect that the Kahnawakes would join the French in doing

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<sup>120</sup>NYCD 7:19-20. Also Colden Papers 9:425, 430. League resentment against the Albany-Kahnawake trade went back as far back as 1712. (New York Colonial Manuscripts 58:5; Wraxall, Abridgment, p. 120.)

battle with English forces, since these Indians had such firm and long-standing trade ties in New York.<sup>121</sup>

The Kahnawakes surprised Johnson, however, inasmuch as at least some of them joined the French in the Battle of Lake George in 1755 and in the attack on Fort William Henry two years later. Immediately after the 1755 battle, the reaction in New York was emphatically to outlaw any trade with Kahnawakes, a trade which was now routinely called "pernicious," and to scorn the Albany merchants, who were now labelled "mercenary."<sup>122</sup> Arguments came out in a torrent about how that "pernicious" trade did nothing but support the French empire at the expense of the English. But at the same time, Johnson in particular held out the hope that the Kahnawakes could still be won over from the French and perhaps even convinced to return to live within New York.<sup>123</sup> This hope, and the extreme caution which Johnson used with Indians who had fired on his own troops at Lake George, indicates the importance of the Kahnawakes to the balance of power as well as trade in the Northeast.

As in military affairs, in trade relations the Kahnawakes could make their own policy, beholden to neither the French nor the English, and both powers were forced to make the best

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<sup>121</sup>Johnson Papers 9:127-130; NYCD 6:980.

<sup>122</sup>Johnson Papers 2:52, 76; DHNY 2:407; NYCD 6:1012, 7:77, 278.

<sup>123</sup>DHNY 2:408; New York Council Minutes, Old Vol. 25, p. 45 (Calendar, p. 418.)



of the situation, even if it was detrimental to their long-term interests. The Kahnawake Iroquois had managed a position in which they could defy the usual laws of mercantilism and imperial rivalry. Seeing themselves courted by both powers, they realized the value of remaining independent of both.<sup>124</sup> But for the elimination of the French as a power in North America in 1760, officials in both New France and New York would have continued to shake their heads at the "sort of Republic" on the banks of the St. Lawrence outside of Montreal.

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<sup>124</sup>Most seemed to remain independent of the profit motive as well. For a discussion of this and related issues, see Chapter VIII below.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE KAHNAWAKE IROQUOIS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Kahnawake people diverged from the course of cultural and political history taken by their League Iroquois relatives because they inhabited a different space geopolitically in the Northeast. Living in a Jesuit mission village, even if they had complete political control (and it was not always complete), they were physically closer to Europeans for most of the first half of the eighteenth century than were their League counterparts. Iroquoia was a sovereign territory, even if the eastern boundary separating it from white settlement was eroded in the 1740s and after. The Kahnawake village was a piece of land within a European colony. The land was owned by the Jesuit order for the Kahnawake people; the Jesuits were considered the seigneurs of the land until 1762. This geographical reality, as well as the constant presence and influence of the Jesuits and their church, shaped the diverging paths which the League and the Sault Iroquois took.

By 1700 the Kahnawakes saw themselves as no longer part of the League but as a separate people, despite the League's insistence up to 1760 that their Catholic cousins were "a part of themselves."<sup>1</sup> But the Kahnawakes did not see themselves

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<sup>1</sup>The Sault men adopted a distinct hairstyle, perhaps to distinguish themselves from their League cousins, since they were otherwise indistinguishable in appearance and language. The men raised the hair of the crown in a bunch and held it there with mixture of wax and vermilion. They allowed three or four hairs to protrude above, to which they fastened a bead or exotic feather. (Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit

as French, as subjects of the French king, or as subject to French control; they consistently demonstrated their independence, earning the reluctant admission by Governor Beauharnois that their community was "a sort of Republic." When Frenchmen married Kahnawake women, they were adopted into Kahnawake families and clans, even though their marriages took place in the Catholic Church. Marriage in the church did not preclude traditional ways of courtship and the arrangement of marriages by matrons, nor did it preclude traditional economic arrangements associated with the institution. Despite the Catholic character of the community and the fact that Christian ceremonies covered the important passages of life, men still went to join their wives' households and contributed to a communal economy within the extended family controlled

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Relations and Allied Documents 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows, 1896-1901) (hereafter cited as JR) 68:265; Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), pp. 17, 398; Carl F. Klinck and James J. Talman, eds., The Journal of John Norton 1816 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1970), p. 266; James Thomas Flexner, Mohawk Baronet: A Biography of Sir William Johnson (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1989), p. 64.) Apart from the hairstyle, whites confused League and Sault people with each other because they looked and spoke so much alike. (New York Council Minutes, 1668-1783, New York State Library, Old Vol. 23, p. 104 (Calendar p. 389); Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York 15 vols. (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1853-1887) (hereafter cited as NYCD) 4:871; James Sullivan et. al., eds., The Papers of Sir William Johnson 14 vols. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1921-1965) (hereafter cited as JP) 2:740.)

completely by the women, as was the extended family dwelling.<sup>2</sup> Every member of the community still belonged to one of the three clans: Turtle, Wolf, or Bear.<sup>3</sup>

Despite their proximity to whites, this situation did not change extensively in the eighteenth century, although by the later part of the century there was evidence that a few of the Kahnawakes were starting to change their dwelling patterns, abandoning the extended family longhouse built of trees and bark, for single-family cabins of squared timber with windows.<sup>4</sup> This shift would suggest that the women of these

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<sup>2</sup>Isaac Weld, Travels through the states of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada During the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797 (London: John Stockdale, 1799), p. 259; William Henry Atherton, Montréal, 1535-1914 2 vols. (Montreal: S.J. Clarke, 1914) 1:351; Louis Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires sur le Canada J. Cohen, ed. (Montréal: Editions Elysée, 1974), p. 37; Joseph François Lafitau, Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times 2 vols., William N. Fenton and Elizabeth Moore, ed. and trans. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974-77) 1:338-349.

<sup>3</sup>Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup>Franquet, visiting in 1752-53, saw mostly longhouses in the traditional style, but also indicated that some Kahnawakes were beginning to build "houses in the French style, with squared timber and even masonry," and claimed that the Jesuits encouraged this new trend in construction. (Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires, pp. 37-39) Louis Antoine de Bougainville and Pierre Pouchot, who both visited Kahnawake during the Seven Years' War, spoke of longhouses, but Pouchot said that they also had some rooms furnished for visiting whites, implying European-style construction. (Louis Antoine [comte] de Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness; the American journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760 Edward P. Hamilton, ed. and trans. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 124; Pierre Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war in North America between the French and English, 1755-60 2 vols., Franklin B. Hough, trans. (Roxbury, Ma: Woodward, 1866) 2:186-187). When the St. Regis-Akwesasne mission was being organized in 1753, the king donated money for a saw-mill to

families were no longer in control of the family economy. The fur trade might have had something to do with this, if the Kahnawakes became involved in the trade in order to make profits and acquire concentrated wealth, and if the trade were controlled by men. If as a result some Kahnawakes were no longer depending directly on food produced by the community, then they no longer depended specifically on women to be the economic mainstays. If profits from the fur trade meant that men involved in it bought corn and other agricultural products from the women who produced them, then they were no longer dependent within their family unit on women for their livelihood. This could have spurred a break from extended- to single-family living arrangements. However, women who were

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help with building houses, an indication either that the French were strongly encouraging assimilation of the mission Iroquois, or that this was a logical extension of trends in housing style being pursued by Indians at Kahnawake. (NYCD 10:266-267.) Curiously, John Long, an English trader who lived at Kahnawake for a while around 1770, reported that there were "about two hundred houses, chiefly built of stone" at the village. (Milo Milton Quaife, ed., John Long's Voyages and Travels [in the Years] 1768-1788 (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1922), p. 9) This high number of dwellings suggests single-family units, as does stone construction, but no other visitors mention predominantly stone dwellings, and Long's description contradicts later as well as earlier accounts. In about 1796, Isaac Weld described the village as consisting of fifty log houses. (Quaife, ed., p. 259) While "log" houses is ambiguous -- it could have meant either log cabins or longhouses -- the number suggests extended family dwellings, since the total population was around 1,000 in the 1750s, and even after the Seven Years' War, with both smallpox epidemics and war casualties having taken their tolls, the population was said to be rising. (Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires, p. 119; Quaife, ed., John Long's Voyages, p. 9; Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (hereafter cited as CSHSW) 17:175; NYCD 10:838; JP 3:291, 9:412.)

involved in the fur trade (and there is plenty of evidence of their involvement) may have been able to accumulate wealth in the same way.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, there is little evidence that the fur trade had such an effect at Kahnawake up to 1760. One reason for this is that extended family longhouses remained the norm throughout this period. Furthermore, there is no evidence that individuals were accumulating wealth. Property had always been held communally, and it seemed to continue in this way since extended family dwelling was still prevalent.

If there were significant profits being made in the fur

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<sup>5</sup>Iroquoian women had traditionally been as active as men in economic (subsistence) pursuits as well as politics. Therefore, it was perfectly logical for them to be actively involved in the fur trade as carriers. The example of the Desautniers women running the shop at Kahnawake probably did not seem odd there. Women at Kahnawake continued to be active in agriculture, in family control (since women decided which prisoners, and how many, would be adopted), and in politics. It has been mentioned earlier that observers at Kahnawake noticed the control of matrons over political decisions such as the waging of war. And a woman who was active as a diplomatic messenger was mentioned by Conrad Weiser. When the Pennsylvania Indian agent was visiting Albany in 1753, he met Susanna, a Kahnawake who was visiting the Albany Indian commissioners. (She was a personal acquaintance of Robert Sanders, perhaps because of involvement in trade.) She had brought a letter with her from a prisoner being held at Kahnawake, and attempted to smooth over ruffled feathers in New York over this captive, unfairly taken in peacetime. She engaged in some diplomacy, assuring Weiser and other English notables that virtually everyone at Kahnawake had disapproved of the actions of the warriors who took the Englishman prisoner, and was given a wampum belt to deliver to the Sault. Weiser mentioned that she was considered "a noted Woman" and was "very intelligible," as if most women were not. His comments may have reflected her behavior; she was probably confident, self-assured, and as well-spoken publicly as any Kahnawake man and this would have been strikingly noticeable to a non-native. (NYCD 6:795-796.)

trade (and there is no way to determine this) much of it was being spent on liquor and on lavish dress. As early as 1718, Father Lafitau complained of heavy debt among the Kahnawakes because of their copious consumption of alcohol. In 1732 another mention is made of extensive Kahnawake debt to John Lydius, a Dutch trader living at this time on the New York frontier. This may also have been for liquor.<sup>6</sup>

Lavish dress and body decoration were features of pre-Columbian native cultures and continued to be after contact. The Kahnawake people were no exception; with the availability of new materials from Europe, they brought high fashion to a new level, one which was characterized by a generous mixing of Iroquois and European materials as well as by its lavishness. As early as the 1710s the Sault Iroquois had developed a reputation for being well-clothed; a nun commented a few years later that "they are as vain of dress as any Frenchman."<sup>7</sup> Louis Franquet, the engineer, noted that the Kahnawakes appeared to be wealthy because of their elaborate dress. In

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<sup>6</sup>NYCD 9:882; The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden (New-York Historical Society Collections, L-LVI [New York, 1917-1923]) (hereafter cited as Colden Papers) 4:202-203. Liquor was consumed in great quantity by some Kahnawakes, and it constituted the major social problem at the community throughout the eighteenth century. (JR 66:171, 67:39; Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war 2:225; Rapport de L'Archiviste de la Province de Québec (hereafter cited as RAPO) 1922-23, p. 184, 1934-35, p. 145; Pierre F.-X. de Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France 6 vols., John G. Shea, ed. and trans. (New York: Harper, 1866-1872) 5:204; NYCD 10:232, 301.)

<sup>7</sup>NYCD 9:887; Atherton, Montréal 1:350 (quote).

particular, he noted that "they wear good quality fabric with braids of gold and silver that they usually get from [Albany]." And John Long concurred that the Sault people were "extravagantly fond of dress, and that too of the most expensive kind." There is no doubt that if there were profits being made in the fur trade, much of it was going into clothing.<sup>8</sup>

White observers described Kahnawake people as wearing bracelets of both silver and wampum, gold and silver brocade, necklaces of various materials, "the value whereof sometimes reach 1,000 francs." They wore traditional mocassins of smoke-dried deerskin, but also donned European-style shirts (only the mission Indians wore these, and it distinguished them from "non-domiciliated" Indians, as did the crucifixes they wore). Kahnawakes preferred their shirts with lace on the seams. They wore leggings decorated with ribbons from Europe, but also with flowers embroidered in dyed elk-hair. In cold weather or for special ceremonies they wore mantles which were often trimmed with eight or nine bands of lace. Some wore silk stockings and some French-made shoes with

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<sup>8</sup>Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires, p. 38; Quaife, ed., John Long's Voyages, p. 10. Long stated of the Sault people (in about 1770) that the extravagant clothing and adornment was financed by income from the land they leased out to neighboring habitants. This was a decade after the Montreal-Albany smuggling trade ended. (In 1762, the Kahnawake people had been awarded sole possession of at least a portion of the original 1680 royal grant of land, and evidently were renting out parts of it not occupied by their own people. JP 10:376-379.)



silver buckles instead of mocassins.<sup>9</sup>

When Franquet made his official visit to the village, the sachem he met was wearing "a red outfit laced with gold and silver" given to him by the king. Franquet noted other European influences too; most of the other Indians were wearing "silver medals hanging from their necks," as well as wool blankets (strouds, no doubt) which they wore as jackets. But Peter Kalm, visiting only one or two years earlier, noted the traditional touches -- faces painted with vermilion, a dye which was also used to mark their shirts across the shoulders. Another traditional feature which struck Kalm was that "most of them had great rings in their ears, which seemed to be a great inconvenience to them."<sup>10</sup> All the accounts over many decades indicate both the cultural mixing of styles and the extravagance of dress. The Kahnawake people considered it important to use lavish materials to adorn themselves properly.

Another outlet for spending surplus income was the tithing expected by the Catholic Church of its members and, in this case, collected by the Jesuit priests in the village. But parishioners paid in the form of pelts taken in hunting

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<sup>9</sup>Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, p. 124; Atherton, Montréal 1:350; JR 68:263-265; RAPQ 1922-23, p. 37; Cadwallader Colden, History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada... 2 vols. (New York: Allerton, 1922, reprinted from the 1747 edition) 2:39.

<sup>10</sup>Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires, pp. 36-37; Peter Kalm, Travels into North America John R. Foster, trans. (Barre, Ma: Imprint Society, 1972), p. 364.

and corn from the harvest.<sup>11</sup> Payment in commodity suggests that most Kahnawakes, if not all, were still tied to a subsistence economy wherein money did not circulate and surpluses were not large or converted into currency. Indeed, despite the Kahnawakes' continued involvement in the fur trade even after the British conquest of New France, they still tilled the soil, and to a lesser extent, raised domesticated animals and hunted for meat for their own consumption, as the main modes of maintaining the communal livelihood.

A 1757 memoir on the state of the colony claimed that the Kahnawakes made their living from farming and raising livestock and poultry. John Long recounted a decade or more later that they did not depend mostly on hunting to make a living, since there were far fewer deer in the woods than previously, but that the main economic occupation was sowing corn. Long also mentioned their involvement in the fur trade, but clearly saw it as a secondary, even tertiary, occupation. The skins procured when men were out hunting were taken to Montreal to sell for money or barter for goods, according to Long, but he clearly did not characterize this as the way they made their living. It was an occupation undertaken as a way to obtain certain desired goods which they could not produce themselves. The predominant livelihood remained the female-

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<sup>11</sup>Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war 2:225; Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires, p. 37.

centered farming of traditional Iroquoia.<sup>12</sup> The market economy of the French colony had intruded somewhat into the mission village; Bougainville noted that the Kahnawakes "sell, buy, and trade just like Frenchmen," but since at the same time tithe payments were being made with their subsistence products rather than cash or trade goods, the European trade nexus could not have completely overtaken the Sault economy.<sup>13</sup>

There was community pressure against the intrusion of the European economy and its values into Kahnawake as late as the turn of the nineteenth century. Isaac Weld, a British visitor to North America in the 1790s, met a Sault man named Thomas whose chief occupation seemed to be that of a trader. When Weld met him, he was on his way south to Albany with thirty horses and "a quantity of furs" to sell there. A French Canadian who knew Thomas said he was "a very rich man" and had "a most excellent house, in which ... he lived as well as a seignior." Thomas was not a typical Kahnawake resident.

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<sup>12</sup>RAPO 1923-24, p. 50; Quaife, ed., John Long's Voyages, pp. 9-10. (After 1760, with the British in charge of Montreal, one could take furs there to buy strouds or other inexpensive English goods. There was no longer a need to go to Albany.) Also JR 68:275; JP 3:970, 10:372-373; Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, pp. 124-125. Colden's 1725 claim that the Kahnawakes made their living solely from the fur trade could not have been true. Colden never visited their village, and those who did clearly saw the "industrious" farming activity which went on there. (Colden, History 2:53). Long described the Kahnawakes as "industrious" (Quaife, ed., John Long's Voyages, p. 9.)

<sup>13</sup>Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, p. 125.

Another indication that he was not was his insistence that "his people ... had but very few wants." He explained to Weld that this was because he took care of their needs and that in return they kept him supplied with furs for his trading business, they took care of his horses, and "voluntarily" accompanied him on his commercial trips to Albany. (Thomas' emphasis on the voluntary condition of their joining him is curious and even suspicious.) Weld speculated that Thomas' profits were "immense" and he later heard that Thomas could get £500 worth of credit at any Montreal store.

The trader was notable also in his appearance. Weld noted that he "was dressed like a white man" but that all the other people in his party were costumed "in the Indian habit." Thomas was different from those accompanying him in another respect; while "not one of his followers could speak a word of English or French," Thomas could speak both languages fluently and appeared as much at ease in French as in his own Mohawk language. Thomas instantly befriended Weld as he had the Frenchman from whom Weld had first heard of him and invited Weld and his party to stay with him at his home. Thomas even indicated that there were many beautiful Indian women at his village who would make good wives for Weld and his travelling companions. While some of these traits appear consistent with the profile we have seen of Kahnawake people who were adept at dealing with outsiders and learning their languages, the individual accumulation of wealth and unequal power

relationships between Thomas and his "followers" or "attendants" does not seem consistent with Kahnawake behavior up to 1760:

But even in the late 1790s when Thomas and Isaac Weld met, the Kahnawake people had not yet given up their traditional communal values and equitable power relationships. Weld later found out that his new friend from the Sault was "not a man respected among the Indians in general." The Indians, Weld discovered, "think much more of a chief that is a good warrior and hunter, and that retains the habits of his nation, than of one that becomes a trader, and assimilates his manners to those of the whites."<sup>14</sup>

It is all the more remarkable that the Kahnawakes retained as many traditional ways and mores as they did with the large influx of white adoptees they absorbed. Numerous captivity narratives, observations by visitors to the community, and accounts by Jesuits attest to the significant white additions to the families and clans of Kahnawake. Names

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<sup>14</sup>Weld, Travels through the states..., p. 170-171. In the 1750s the Mountain mission Indians reacted similarly to a Nipissing Indian who set up shop there. He was "dishonored" in the eyes of his brethren at the mission because he dressed, ate, and slept like a Frenchman. He went "neither to hunt nor to war," which further discredited him in native eyes, and they scorned him because he carried on a lucrative business at his shop. (Bougainville, Adventure in the wilderness, p. 123.) Both Mountain and Sault Indians saw nothing wrong with involvement in the fur trade, when it was pursued within certain parameters, namely, the desire to obtain certain trade goods by bartering furs for them. But to set up shop oneself crossed a line in behavior which most had not embraced -- undertaking the trade for the purpose of making profit, for accumulating wealth.

such as Powell, Cook, Williams, Tarbell, Naim, Yort, Philipson, Suitzer, and Volmer contributed to the population of the community, although they were given Iroquois names and identities in adoption ceremonies.<sup>15</sup> White influences were also introduced at Kahnawake from the troops garrisoned there, whose commandants often had much to do with the Indians.<sup>16</sup> Traders such as the Desauniers women and Monsieur Musseaux, to whom the sisters' shop was subsequently leased, had frequent contact with their customers and carriers in the village. Periodically, whites came to live at the village; John Long lived there for a time in order to learn the Mohawk language. About the same time, a Frenchman named Clingancourt bought a house at Kahnawake and probably lived in it.<sup>17</sup> Even hostages or prisoners who were not adopted into families had an influence as well. In the early 1750s, two prisoners from English colonies, Captain Robert Stobo and Jan Van Braam, "had

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<sup>15</sup>Emma Lewis Coleman, New England Captives Carried to Canada between 1677 and 1760 during the French and Indian Wars 2 vols. (Portland, Me: 1925-26) 2:37; Samuel G. Drake, ed., Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam (Buffalo, N.Y.: 1854), pp. 110-112; Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires, p. 38; Lafitau, Customs... 2:171-172; JP 3:191; New York Colonial Manuscripts, 1638-1800 (83 vols.) New York State Library, 78:115, 79:51; NYCD 10:214-215; Weld, Travels through the states..., p. 259; John G. Shea, History of the Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1529-1854 (New York: P.J. Kennedy, 1854), p. 332; E.J. Devine, Historic Caughnawaga (Montreal: Messenger Press, 1922), p. 246.

<sup>16</sup>Commandant Douville was heavily involved in daily life and political events at the Sault.

<sup>17</sup>NYCD 8:238.

the run of our [mission Indian villages] with whom they have had conferences," according to French officials.<sup>18</sup>

And of course, the Jesuits were a great influence, or attempted to be, but they stopped short of demanding widespread cultural change. Indeed, they conformed to Iroquoian ways of doing things. Any Jesuit who did not succeed in learning the Mohawk language within a year would not stay long at the Sault. Priests who wanted to be taken seriously by the Indians had to agree to be adopted, becoming a member of the tribe. Once that happened, the Jesuit would use only his adoptive name within the village, and the Kahnawake people would not recognize any other name for him.<sup>19</sup> Conversely, many Kahnawakes took baptismal names along with their Iroquois names, showing the hybrid Iroquois-Catholic nature of the community. Many men took the name François-Xavier and many women names such as Marie, Madeleine, and Marguerite.

Catholic Christianity became part of the Kahnawake culture in many ways, despite the lack of piety among some of the people there. Father Nau claimed that although they were not perfect, the Kahnawakes were much more virtuous in their religious belief and practice than most other Indians, and indeed than most Frenchmen. Accounts of devout Kahnawake

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<sup>18</sup>NYCD 10:308.

<sup>19</sup>JR 68:269; RAPQ 1926-27, p. 268; Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war 2:226; Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires, p. 37.

worshippers in the church singing hymns, saying prayers, and participating in mass were common.<sup>20</sup> The village was much better equipped for Christian worship than most surrounding parishes. In the 1720s Kahnawake was at the southwestern edge of settlement in New France, but even the habitant parishioners on their eastern side had to come to the church at the Sault for mass on Sunday after the priest had said mass for the Kahnawake people. Three quarters of the white population of the Montreal area heard mass said only four times per year, and often without the sacraments; they were not as well versed in their religion as were their native counterparts. Those who were often came to the Sault village to pay homage to Kateri Tekakwitha, the saintly Kahnawake who modeled herself after the Virgin Mary and inspired worship of the mother of Jesus at Kahnawake for decades to come.<sup>21</sup>

There seemed to be many pious Sault Iroquois. For instance, a Protestant Deerfielder captured by Kahnawakes in 1704 was forced to cross himself and to kiss a crucifix which his captor wore around his neck. This prisoner reported that other Puritan Deerfielders who were captured by Kahnawakes were forced to say Catholic prayers and to attend mass rather

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<sup>20</sup>JR 68:267-279; Sylvester K. Stevens, Donald H. Kent, and Emma Edith Woods, eds., Travels in New France by J.C.B. (Harrisburg, Pa: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1941), p. 24; Quaiife, ed., John Long's Voyages, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup>Louise Dechêne, Habitants et Marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle (Montréal and Paris: Plon, 1974), pp. 452-453; Devine, Historic Caughnawaga, p. 167; JR 68:271; Weld, Travels through the states..., p. 259.



than remain in the longhouses when the Kahnawake villagers attended the daily ritual.<sup>22</sup> And in 1770 a Sault sachem sent wampum belts to Sir William Johnson, asking him to ensure that the Kahnawakes could practice their Catholic faith without disturbance by intruders in their village.<sup>23</sup>

However, not all Sault people felt this way. Some were said to be indifferent to the Christian belief. While devout Kahnawakes were walking the streets of Montreal with crucifixes and rosaries, others were "constantly abandoning the mission" for reasons associated with religion. Pierre Pouchot observed this in the 1750s, adding that those who remained were practicing Christians.<sup>24</sup> In the same decade, Franquet cynically surmised that the Kahnawake people were attached to Catholicism only "in as much as their interests dictate."<sup>25</sup> Pouchot noted that even those who nominally adhered to the faith and revered the priests, calling them "Praying Fathers," still "have no very distinct idea of this Infinite Being," the Christian God. "They render to him no

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<sup>22</sup>John Williams, The Redeemed Captive returning to Zion Edward Clark, ed. (Amherst, Ma: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976, first published 1707), pp. 62, 66, 69.

<sup>23</sup>NYCD 8:238.

<sup>24</sup>Quaife, ed., John Long's Voyages, p. 9; Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war 2:224. No doubt many who left the mission headed for the Kahnawake settlements in the Ohio country, since James Smith told of Kahnawakes on the banks of the Muskingum who were disillusioned with Catholicism. (Drake, ed., Indian Captivities, p. 206)

<sup>25</sup>Franquet, Voyages et Mémoires, p. 37.

homage, and only designate him as the Master of Life." Pouchot witnessed the persistence of traditional spiritual practices such as juggling, a type of vision quest in which a person heated his or her body in order to receive visions and prophesy coming events. Pouchot concluded that the Kahnawake people had not assimilated to any great degree, claiming that they "have lost none of their customs."<sup>26</sup>

Despite their proximity to and frequent contact with whites, the Sault people had adapted Iroquoian material culture, life ways, and religious beliefs to a new situation but had not assimilated. They had changed but chose what to change and consciously avoided some adaptations. They were distinct from the French-Canadian society around them while finding ways of developing beneficial economic ties with the surrounding whites into the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> And much more than their southern brethren, they managed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to find new ways of making a living from their considerable skills, but always on their own terms, maintaining their independence from their white neighbors. By the turn of the nineteenth century, they were hiring themselves out as river pilots on the upper St. Lawrence and points west because of their skill in passing rapids and rafting timber. Some travelled as far as the Rocky

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<sup>26</sup>Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war 2:226-228, 186.

<sup>27</sup>See David Blanchard, "Patterns of tradition and change: the re-creation of Iroquois culture at Kahnawake" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1982), p. 171.

Mountains and the west coast, and later to the Middle East, as skilled boatmen. In a late-nineteenth century stint in Egypt, a group of fifty Kahnawake boatmen showed the natives how to maneuver around the dangerous cataracts of the Nile River. By the end of the nineteenth century, with tall steel bridges being built in their own backyard across the St. Lawrence river, they found that unlike most workers, they could walk fearlessly on construction scaffolding hundreds of feet from the ground. Many took advantage of this skill and became high steel workers, starting a tradition still alive today at Kahnawake. Such work enabled them to take individual jobs all over North America when they wanted to, always maintaining independence from an employer and from the political boundaries of Canada and the United States. Kahnawake men could leave the village for a few months at a time, perform tasks of skill and courage, and return home with money in pocket and feats of bravery of which to brag. In doing so, they maintained the traditional rhythm and temperament of the Iroquois warrior-hunter.<sup>28</sup> Not all native groups were as successful at finding occupations with which they could relate

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<sup>28</sup>See Joseph Mitchell, "The Mohawks in High Steel," in Edmund Wilson, Apologies to the Iroquois (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1959) esp. p. 281; Blanchard, "Patterns of tradition and change," pp. 211-214, 403; Bruce Katzer, "The Caughnawaga Mohawks: Occupations, Residence, and the Maintenance of Community Membership" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1972), pp. 48, 53, 61; Devine, pp. 416-418; Louis Jackson, Our Caughnawaga Indians in Egypt (Montreal: Drysdale, 1885); Alexander Chamberlain, "Iroquois in northwestern Canada," American Anthropologist VI (1904), pp. 459-463.

traditional patterns of work and values. Today, as a measure of their success in surviving as a people, the Kahnawakes have more native Mohawk speakers than any other Iroquois reserve or reservation and the lowest unemployment rate, and they were among the first to establish their own schools with a native curriculum. They also have the first and only fully functioning hospital on a reserve in Canada.<sup>29</sup>

The modern success of the Sault Iroquois had its roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when they learned to take advantage of their importance to both the English and French colonial powers. Although both powers tried to own them and they were at times placed in a subordinate position, particularly to the French, they used what leverage they could to steer their own course. In trade, they took advantage of their unique position to be involved in a contraband commerce by their own choice and maintained only as much involvement in it as they wished. The smuggling trade between Albany and Montreal would not have existed without them.

In diplomacy and warfare, the Kahnawakes sustained a variety of opinions, but the net effect was almost always to make the French and the English come running to them for support. This usually worked, as in the Seven Years' War when their decision on whether or not to go to war for the French

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<sup>29</sup>Katzer, "The Caughnawaga Mohawks," pp. 69, 172, 176; Blanchard, "Patterns of tradition and change," p. 273; John Beatty, Mohawk Morphology (Greeley, Co: University of Northern Colorado Museum of Anthropology, 1974), pp. 4-8.

determined whether Indians would fight on the English side. Even if coerced into joining a war party, they could and did sabotage war efforts which went against their interests (particularly the desire not to fight against fellow Iroquois warriors). From Denonville to Dieskau, French military leaders were duped and dumped by the Kahnawakes. Although many times they seemed to have become subordinate to the French, they never gave up their autonomy and, within the sometimes narrow framework in which to maneuver, they did so with consummate skill. They retained ties with the Albanians so as to remind the French of their freedom to make policy. The European powers had to consider what the Kahnawakes would do when they were attempting to influence what the Iroquois League would do, and the Five/Six Nations hesitated to make policy without first consulting with their Kahnawake kin. Their role in this struggle made it a much more complex struggle than would at first appear. The Sault Iroquois were yet another variable in the equation of English, French, and Iroquois Indians, often seen as a triangular power struggle. But none of these three belligerents made policy without first considering what effect the policy would have on Kahnawake motivation. The Sault Iroquois forced the French, English, and the Iroquois League to deal with them as an independent power, ever complicating the diplomatic machinations of the colonial struggle for control of the Northeast.

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