

CULTURAL NEWS

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Iroquois League were aligned to both the French and English, with trade proceeding with both through the tribes' frontier settlements.

SIX NATIONS EXPANSION

The Great Law of Peace of the Iroquois people allows for the assumption of sovereign rights over non-Iroquois people by the Iroquois. Specifically, Wampums 74-78 of the Great Law deal with procedures for bringing nations "under the shade of the Tree of Great Peace" (see Parker 1916 and *Akwesasne Notes* 1973). Wampum 74 of the law states that when a nation is adopted by the League, the adoption shall be considered temporary and that "if the person or nation, create loss, do wrong, or cause suffering," then the offending party shall be expelled from the territory of the League. This law applies to cases such as the Tuscarora who were brought into the League and were allowed to settle on Oneida lands.

According to Wampum 75, adopted nations, or allies, were accorded full rights within the Confederacy, except those mentioned in Wampum 76. According to Wampum 76, alien nations were not given a voice in the councils of the League. This is because, not knowing the law, they "might go against the Great peace [and] in this manner Great Peace would be endangered and perhaps destroyed."

The temporary nature of adoptions is reiterated in Wampum 77. Also in this law nations are further warned that, should they be accepted into the league, they must not disturb the Great Peace. Finally, the formula for expelling an adopted nation is spelled out. In Wampum 78 adopted nations agree to contribute to spreading the Great

Law of Peace [and thereby Iroquois influence] and to "endeavor to persuade the other nations to accept the Great Peace."

Historical evidence of Iroquois expansion and their tendency to establish alliances with "satellite" neighbors is contained in numerous places. Perhaps the best references and summaries are Francis Jennings (1971), Frank Speck (1915) and Randolph Downes (1940). These alliances were viewed by the Iroquois as part of the process of consolidation originally begun by Deganawida in his efforts to bring all of the Iroquois under the Tree of the Great Peace. The extent of consolidation largely depended on the "other" group and its relationship to the nuclear Confederate Alliance. These "others" included Native as well as European nations. What is more, it was not always the Iroquois who initiated the process of alliance.

For example, the first nation outside of the Five Nation alliance to become aligned to the Confederacy was the Mahican in 1666. At this time the Mahican already existed in a confederacy with the Wappinger and Housatonic nations. The Mahican initially enjoyed "brother" status with both the English at New York (Jennings 1971:90) and the Mohawk. Later the Mahicans became "children" to the English and thereby also to the Iroquois who insisted on maintaining their status as equals with the Europeans (ibid).

The Massachusetts Archives contain six references to an "Eight Nations" Confederacy in its manuscript collection. During the King William and Queen Anne's Wars when the Governor of Massachusetts Bay wanted to receive assurances of the support or at least neutrality of the S c h a g h t i c o k e ,

Housatonics and Mohicans, he addressed himself to the "Eight Nations" (these three plus the Five Nations) through the governor of New York. Although all three of these Algonquin groups met with representatives from Massachusetts Bay, the colonials received their final assurances from the Mohawk.

Jennings traces the development of the Covenant Chain in the southern areas of Iroquois expansion, noting the 1700 submission to the Iroquois by the Abenaki and the 1711 submission of the Susquehanna River Shawnee. The Shawnee were forced to accept an Oneida chief to govern them, after the abdication of the sachem Opessa. The Lenape had an Iroquois "resident supervisor" in the late seventeenth century and by 1741 were reduced to the status of women in relation to the Iroquois¹.

The reduction of the Lenape also signaled the beginning of the end of the Covenant Chain. As Jennings notes;

The Indians...conceived the chain as an organization of peers, unequal in power and status, but equal in the right of each to govern itself (1971:95).

Some nations joined the alliance out of convenience in trade. Others were "invited" to join by the Iroquois, after suffering defeat at their hands. It created a mechanism for the Europeans to deal with the tribes and provided a forum for the tribes to consider a united course of action with respect to their dealings with the Europeans. As a political alliance it was useful to the English, the Iroquois and their allies.

Similar advances and political consolidations by the Iroquois can be seen in the Upper Ohio Valley². The Iroquois

drove the Shawnee from the Upper Ohio Valley long before White traders and trappers penetrated the area (Witthoft and Hunter 1955:53-54). The Iroquois were not initially interested in settling the Upper Ohio but only in hunting there (Hunter 1978:590). The Seneca settlement of the valley began in the late 1730s. The first settlements were family-sized villages or else Algonquin settlements with some Seneca in residence. In his book *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio* (1940) Randolph Downes notes that these Seneca "were looked upon merely as hunters by the grand Iroquois council at Onondaga . . . They had not been sent out deliberately by the New York Iroquois to keep the rest of the tribes in submission" (1940:44). Nevertheless, it was quite apparent to the French Colonial Minister that the Ohio nations were under Seneca control. He wrote that the Ohio nations had formed "a sort of republic dominated by some of the Iroquois of the Five Nations who form part of it" (WHC 18:11-13). The Senecas in the Upper Ohio Valley were called "Mingos" (when allied to the French). The Seneca overlords were called "Half Kings."

The collapse of the Seneca's colonization of the Upper Ohio Valley was tied to the fur trade between the Iroquois and the English. The western Seneca were allied with the French in the Seven Years War. Unhappy with the English penetration of the Ohio Valley after the close of the war in 1760, the Seneca instigated and participated in Pontiac's uprising against the English. Following the suppression of this uprising by the English, the credit system that had formally been extended to the Seneca was abolished. In 1768 they were induced

to sell their lands (and the lands of their dependents) west of the Allegheny and south of the Ohio rivers, a move that destroyed their influence and respect in the eyes of the Shawnee, Delaware and Wyandots.

The most durable of the Iroquois alliances was the Seven Nations of Canada, whose central council fire was located at Kahnawake. The Seven Nations Alliance allowed for disparate groups, traditionally in conflict with the Iroquois, to establish communication and alliance with the league through Kahnawake.

The Seven Nations Alliance traces its roots to the initial Iroquois southern migration in 1667. Twelve years after settling Kentake this community was composed predominantly of Mohawk, with some Oneida, Onondaga and Huron as well. The first Huron exodus from the settlement occurred in 1673 (JR 63:101). When the village moved from Kentake to Kahnawake in 1676, some additional Huron and Mohawk left the group and settled at Mount Royal. The Huron eventually joined the Huron settlement at Lorette while the Mohawk settled at Kanesatake, "The Place of the Silvery Sands." the Kanesatake settlement is located at the junction of the Ottawa River and Lake St. Louis, a spot regarded as the frontier of Algonquin and Mohawk territories. Eventually the Kanesatake settlement was settled by Nipissing and Algonquin who maintained a separate council fire from that of the Mohawk. As already mentioned, the Akwesasne and Oswegatchie settlements were founded, respectively, in 1755 and in the early 1750s.

