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# The Iroquois Indians in Ohio, 1600–1763

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The Iroquois Indians in Ohio, 1600–1763

by

Woody Crow

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
History

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Portland State University  
2022

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## **Abstract**

The Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy hold a noted position of the history of Native Americans in North America especially the northeastern woodlands. My thesis states that the Iroquois people were the dominant Native Americans in the Ohio during colonial period. In stating this, I would also relate that the Iroquois people were more than just the Five Nations and their related Nations controlled a broad swath of land from Lake Superior to Chesapeake Bay.

Due to limitations of space, this thesis will span the period of pre-discovery to the end of the Seven Years War in 1763. However, this represents an important period of time in the evolution of the Indian world in Ohio. Ohio is an Iroquois word that means big or beautiful river depending on which language is spoken but it was home to several Iroquois Nations. The Erie lived along the southern shore of the Lake Erie to modern-day Detroit and Iroquois people lived south on the Ohio River into the mountains of West Virginia. As the Western Door of the Five Nations, the Seneca were most involved in Ohio but it was home to all Iroquois who came to hunt and live.

With the coming of the Europeans, the Native Americans had to deal with a number of unprecedented challenges that had never been experienced. Before they ever saw a white person, they felt the effect of virgin soil epidemics that swept North America from the coast inland. Once established, the Europeans brought firearms and new forms of warfare that required strategies to adapt and utilize for their security. The Iroquois also acquired an interest in trade goods and sought a strategy to identify strategies to develop a market economy so they could acquire these trade goods. Once they had a musket in their hands, they did not want to go back to traditional weapons and once they had copper

pots and European clothes, they never went back to the old ways. Europeans realized early on that alcohol had a profound effect on the Native Americans and they utilized it to weaken and corrupt Native societies.

However, the Iroquois developed strategies to cope with these changes and maintain their dominance over the surrounding Indian Nations while negotiating an identity independent from the growing European powers. They were known for their diplomatic skills which could include use of flattery, condolence, deception and coercion but they could also remain stalwart in the face of intimidation and threats. When it came to war, the reputation of the Iroquois stands above all others that they faced and they often went into battle outnumbered and less supplied. Yet they were usually victorious and managed to insure their people and their traditions for the next generations.

Once peace was achieved, they sought to preserve it and enhance it through their councils with various other Indians Nations in the establishing relationships through the covenant chain. Their protocol for managing Indian councils became universal in the Northeast and was widely admired by statesman such as Benjamin Franklin.

## Acknowledgements

As I grew up away from my tribe, the Seneca-Cayuga who had been removed from Ohio by President Andrew Jackson in the 1830s I wondered as a child why this happened. After peppering my father with various questions, he told me to ask my Uncle and he answered what he could until I wore him out and he told me: “You’re the smart kid, you should write our history!” At this time, I was home for Green Corn Ceremony and was also doing a tribal research project funded by the NEH. I found it interesting but went on to pursue other avenues of higher education and a career.

Upon retirement, I began to read a couple Iroquois books that I had collected over the years and became amazed at what these people had to deal with to survive as a people with a distinct history and culture. There was an innate toughness or warrior culture to the Iroquois that led them to deal with and overcome the many challenges that life brought them. That is evident in the speech from the Old Belt of Wampum when he told the Pennsylvania colonial representatives: “We are all warriors;” that although the Ohio Iroquois were small in number, they led by example for the other Indians to unite around. I believe that findings from primary sources will support this thesis. Although the Chiefs at Onondaga liked to dismiss the Ohio Iroquois as “They have no Chiefs,” the Iroquois in Ohio operated as a more fundamental council of Warriors with Chief Warriors such as Guyasuta, Pluggy, and Broken Kettle. With the flow of events, they lost respect for and contact with the central fire at Onondaga but always stayed close to the Seneca.

As an Iroquois, I come into this project with a certain level of bias in viewing the previous work on this subject. My life history has also taught me to be skeptical in regards to military and political leaders exaggerating their accomplishments. I have tried

to incorporate more primary sources from Native Americans when it is available recognizing that this may have been subject to interpreter bias when it was written in early history work.

In researching this paper, I need to first acknowledge my father, my uncles and those that came before me for providing motivation. I have had the privilege of interacting with a number of Iroquois from various communities over the years to give me some insight into cultural aspects. My initial research in undergrad was supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and I was able to spend a limited time doing research at the Newberry Library, Smithsonian and BIA Archives. I have also spent a career working in Indian country broken up by deployments with the military so I have received additional perspective on this subject.

As much of this research has been done online due to the Covid-19, I would like to thank the HathiTrust for the work they have done in digitizing historical records. I would like to thank the History faculty at Portland State University especially Professor Thomas Luckett who stepped up to serve as thesis adviser. Support from the Veterans Administration under the GI Bill was important in my decision to take on this project. Use of the Library at Portland State was critical in getting access to secondary sources. I have been amazed at the amount of scholarship that has been done on the Iroquois and would have to acknowledge some of those including Arthur Parker, William Fenton and others and appreciate the encouragement from current Iroquois scholars at the Iroquoia Society and their annual Conference on Iroquois Research. I hope that I have been able to add to the science on this subject and can contribute to future scholarship and inspiration for others.

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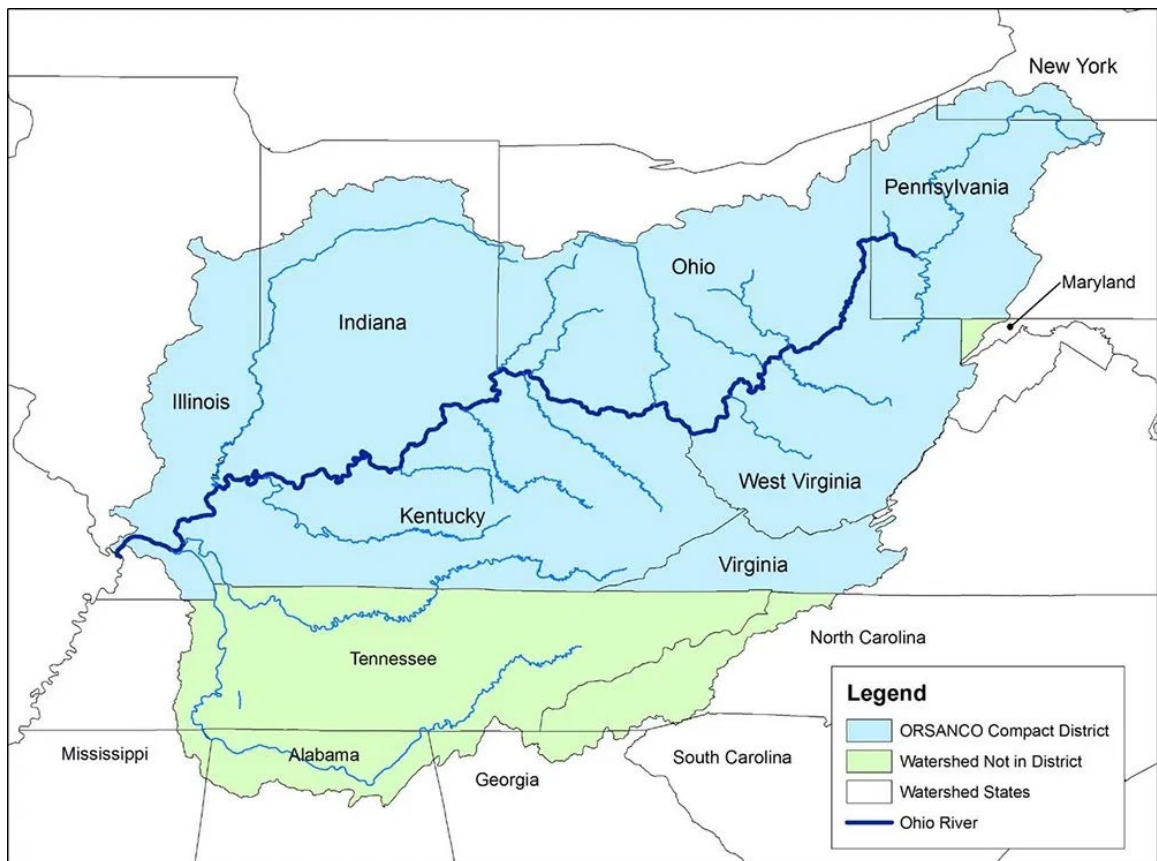
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## Chapter 1: Before the Storm

### The Ohio River Valley

To initiate discussion of the historical events that shaped the Native American experience in Ohio, it is important to examine the land as the land helped shape the nature of the people and civilizations that developed there along with historical events.

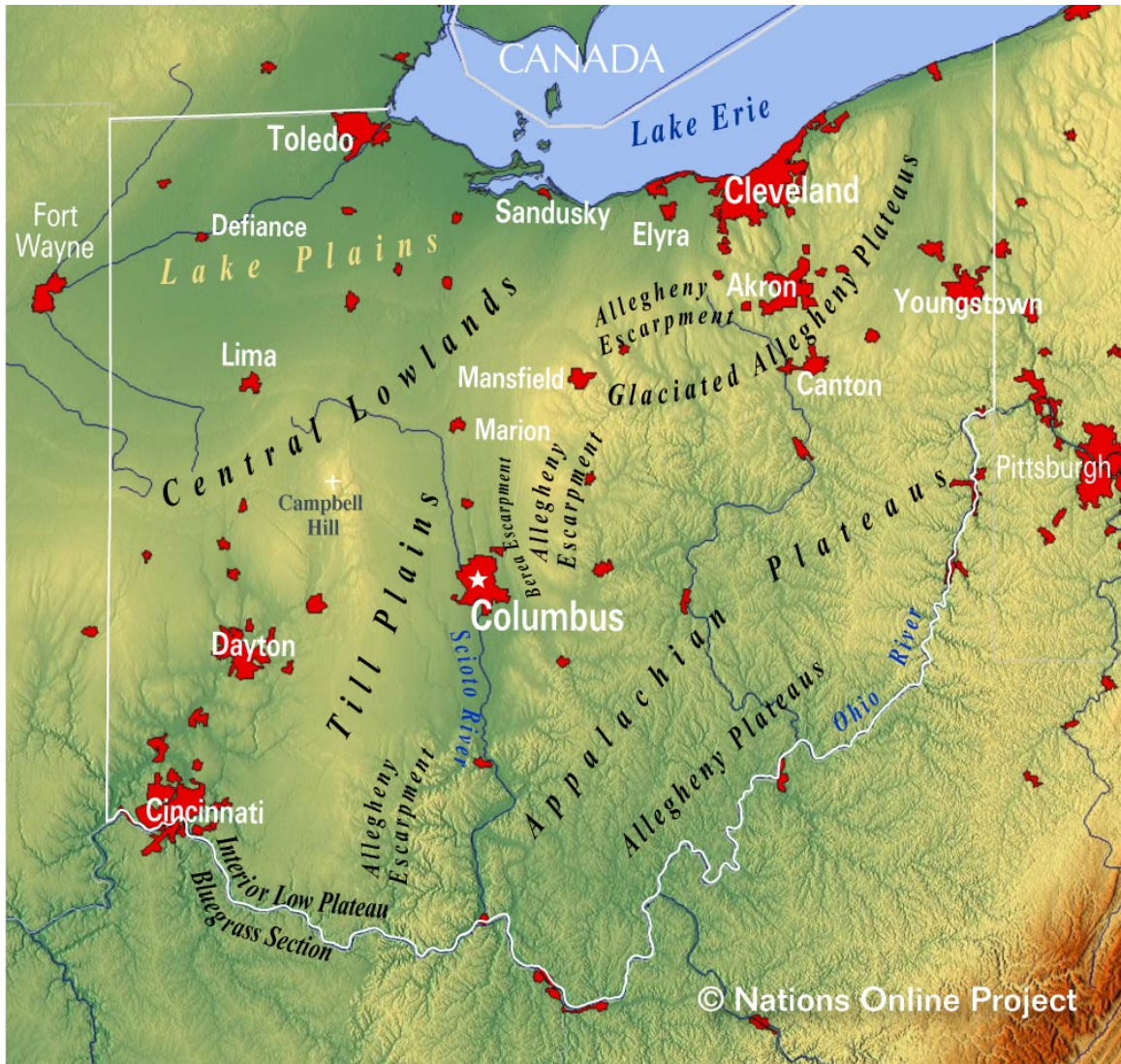
The Ohio River drainage area of study is highlighted in blue here.



**Figure 1: Map of Ohio River Drainage<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The author of the Map of Ohio River Drainage is the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Geological Survey.

Another map that is helpful in evaluating historical events involving the Native Americans is the following topographical map of the State of Ohio.



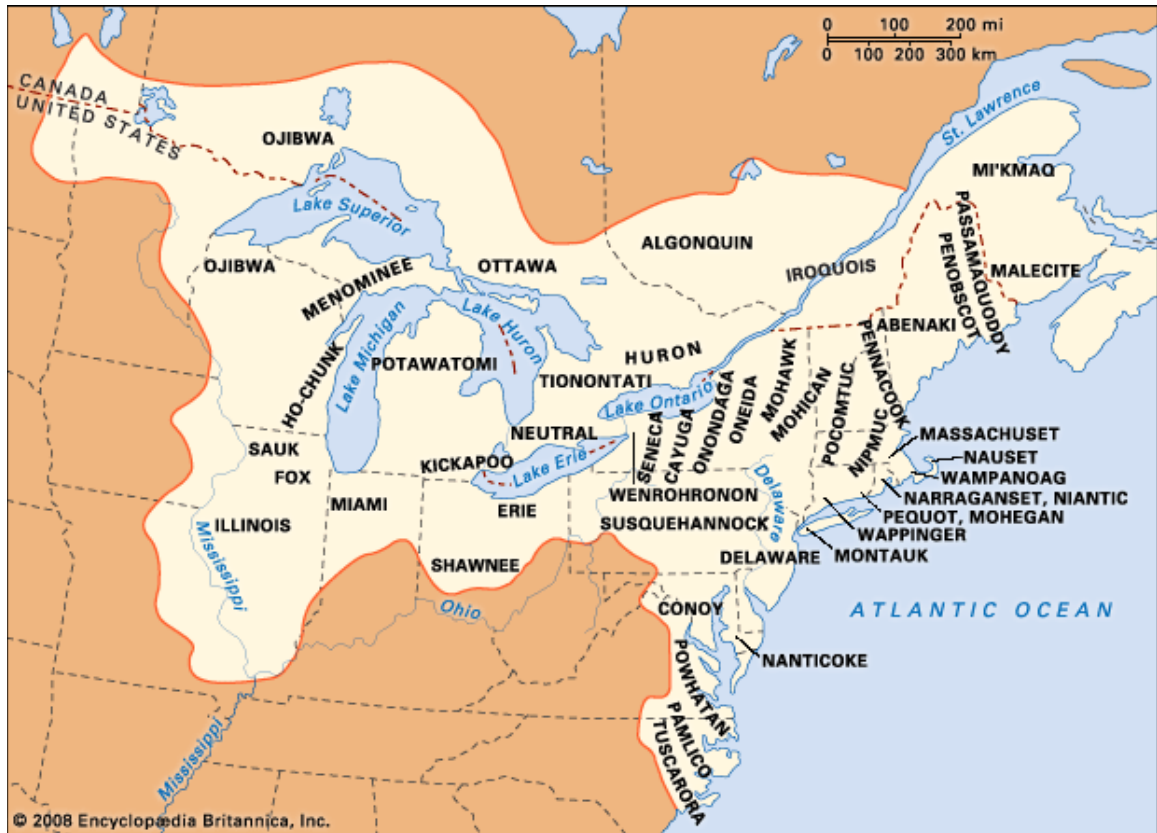
**Figure 2: Elevation Map of Ohio with Principal Rivers**

This map shows the hilly eastern side of Ohio that extends to the Allegheny Mountains in the east. The Scioto River is evident in the middle of Ohio and represents the western extent of the Iroquois influence while due north is the Sandusky River flowing into Lake Erie. The river system to the west is the Maumee River complex where the Ohio turns into more open land with prairies and patches of trees. The Scioto, Maumee, and the Ohio

Rivers represented the three most important native American travel corridors through Ohio along with various Indian trails. It was possible to travel from Lake Erie to the Ohio River by portages from French Creek to the Muskingum River or the Scioto by way of Sandusky River. At various times, these geographic features played an important role in the history of Ohio. Although this study focuses on the Ohio River drainage, it is not possible to isolate it as adjacent lands played a role in its history.

Eastern Ohio was the preferred home of the Woodland Indians such as the Iroquois. As it opened more into grasslands to the west, other Indian Nations felt more at home. The climate was not as severe as that found in the Five Nations homeland of upstate New York, and it was well suited to the corn culture subsistence model found in the Iroquois Nations. The land consisted of several mountainous areas with broad fertile valleys between the river systems that drained into Lake Erie and ultimately the Saint Lawrence or into the Ohio River and ultimately the Mississippi. This study focuses on the colonial period of time ending with the Seven Years War but it is important to understand pre-colonial relationships between the various Indian Nations in the region.

The western extent of Iroquois Archaeology extends to the area along the Maumee River south of Lake Erie known as the Whittlesey. Remnants of Iroquois style palisaded town go south into Indiana. Only one of these sites contained European trade goods so the rest of the communities may have disappeared by then. This style known as Ripley is associated with the Erie and extends eastward along Lake Erie to Buffalo. Archaeological studies on the Black Minqua show them living west of the Susquehanna River drainage and over the crest of the Mountains into the Ohio River drainage.



**Figure 3: Map of Northeastern Indian Nations**

There is no reason to discuss all the Indian Nations named in this map, but the two main groups by language affiliation would be the Iroquoian Family (Erie, Neutral, Tionontati (Tobacco), Huron, Susquehannock, and the Five Nations making up the Iroquois Confederacy: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. Among the Algonquin speaking Indian Nations, the Delaware, Shawnee, Miami, and Ottawa play important roles.

### **The Indian Nations**

It is important to give a brief introduction to the various Indian nations to set the scene for the body of the paper. There is some oral history supporting this, and some early French, Dutch, English, and Swedish colonial writing supports these generally accepted accounts, although gaps in knowledge are apparent and there is little ability to

verify some observations unless archaeological data provides support. Predating these colonial era Indians were the Mound-builder, Fort Ancient, and Monongahela Cultures that provided little recognized contribution to the historical record.

**Huron** were a large Iroquois confederation of towns or castles as the early European explorers called them. They lived in large towns of over 1,000 inhabitants surrounded by wood palisades and miles of cornfields and other crops. They lived north of Lake Ontario in a large expanse of land and have been described as the father nation of the northern Iroquois-speaking nations although they had a history of conflict with the others.

**Mohawk** were the most eastern of the Five Nations and known as the Keepers of the Eastern Door, as they were responsible for protecting the Five Nations from attacks coming from the east.

**Oneida** were west of the Mohawk and considered one of the little brothers of the Confederacy.

**Onondaga** were known as the Central Fire of the Iroquois Confederacy and the place where the chiefs met to make important decisions.

**Cayuga** were next and had responsibility to protect the southern borders of the Five Nations.

**Seneca** were the Keepers of the Western Door and were responsible for protection from the western Indian Nations. They were the largest nation of the five by numbers and had the most influence on Ohio due to proximity and the presence of their towns on the Allegheny River, which flows into the Ohio River.

**Susquehannock** were located south of the Five Nations and lived along the Susquehanna River Valley down to Chesapeake Bay, where they dominated the mid-Atlantic Indian nations. They were also known as Conestoga and White Minqua. They seemed to be on good terms with most of their neighboring Indians and the Swedes spoke highly of them in regards to their civility and fur trading skills.

**Erie** lived west of the Seneca and stretched along Lake Erie and also lived along the Ohio River south. They were not well-known by the Europeans and may include a tribal group called the Black Mingo that extended south down the Ohio River and along the mountains. They were known by different names including Kah Quahs, Andaste, Mingo and Guyandot who are less understood as they extended down the Ohio River to the area of Wheeling Virginia. These names are all given from different European powers and may signify the same Indian nation as there were no well- defined borders between Indian nations and it could ebb and flow with events.

**Neutral** were a large Iroquois Nation who acquired their name by their role in remaining aloof from the periodic battles between the Huron and Five Nations. They lived in fertile farmland along the north side of Lake Erie and their primary enemy was the Fire Nation on the Michigan peninsula which was thought to be the Pottawatomie Nation. The Recollet Father Daillon was the first to visit the Neutrals in 1626, and he described them as very numerous and very warlike with a language and culture similar to the Huron.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896–1901), 21:193.

**Tionontati** (Tobacco) were another Iroquois tribe north of the Neutrals and east of Lake Huron. Later in the period of this study, they became known as the Wyandot or Wendat, who were joined by remnants of the various Huron, Neutral and other Nations.

**Massawomeck** (Black Mingo) occupied land down the spine of the Adirondack mountains and along the Ohio River to the Scioto. They are not well known because colonists or traders did not spend much time in their land before they were defeated, dispersed and absorbed by the Five Nations. The Black Mingo were only met when they brought furs to trade for European goods to the Dutch, Swedish and British colonies as they were established. In 1612, John Smith named this people Massawomeck. The Massawomecks are described in John Smith's 1612 writing as: "Beynd the mountains...the Savages report, inhabit their most mortal enimies, the Massawomekes...These Massawomekes are a great nation and very populous." He added that all of the Virginia tribes: "are continually tormented by them."<sup>3</sup>

**Delaware.** In regard to the Algonquin-speaking nations, the Delaware actually came from New York, New Jersey and Delaware coastal areas and were gradually pushed westward by colonists into the region of the Ohio Valley. They interacted with the Dutch and Swedes as those colonies were established. The Munsee band of Delaware maintained a close relationship to the Seneca.

**Shawnee** were known as a wandering Indian nation who ranged far and wide although they may have originally lived south of the Ohio in the Cumberland River

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<sup>3</sup> John Smith, *A Map of Virginia with a Description of the Countrey*, from the book *Narratives of Early Virginia, 1606–1625*, ed. Lyon Gardiner Terry (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 105.



valley. Some eventually moved north into Pennsylvania from where they were pushed west into Ohio where they played a prominent role in affairs of the Ohio Indian Nations. Shawnee were located near the site of present-day Louisville by the French Explorers Dollier and Galinee.

**Miami** were a large collection of Indian towns west of Ohio ranging to the base of Lake Michigan and down to the Mississippi River Valley. Several separate tribal groups were known as the Miami Indians, or Twight twees as they were also known.

**Illinois** were another large confederation of Algonquin Indians to the west who were discovered by the French and suffered greatly from the various Indian wars.

**Ottawa** ranged in the north country above the Saint Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. They were known as traders and trappers and were usually allied with the Huron due to their shared animosity toward the Five Nations. They lived in traveling bands and were primarily hunters, unlike the Iroquois who lived in palisaded towns and had a balanced diet derived from hunting and agriculture. As hunters, they ranged north of the Saint Lawrence River between Quebec and Lake Superior and were bonded by their culture and Algonquin language with the Chippewa and Pottawatomie in an affiliation known as the three fires.

**Fox**, were more associated with Wisconsin but were said to have lived in the area of present-day Detroit when the Europeans first began to arrive on the shores of America. Although speakers of Algonquin, they developed some attachment to the Seneca and animosity towards the French.

Intertribal relationships were dynamic, and intertribal conflict was not uncommon as the Indians fought to defend their hunting land. Once the Five Nations formed a

confederacy, they could combine forces to exert their will on other nations. Pre-colonial relationships were thought to be somewhat benign with some low-grade warfare, although some nations like the Huron got along with most of the other Indian nations except the Five Nations. The Five Nations lived in a temperate region of the northeast strategically located to control trade and travel from all directions by virtue of their proximity to the Great Lakes, the Saint Lawrence River, and the Ohio River. The early Native Americans living in their natural state were required to compete for habitat and by virtue of their superior culture, the Five Nations were able to control this space as opposed to other nations that were known to live in more marginal land.

### **Iroquois and their Culture**

Any discussion of the Iroquois people has to include some mention of the aspects of their culture that differentiated them from the neighboring Algonquin Indian nations and others. The Iroquois presence in the area where they were found at the time of European explorers dates back to about 500 AD based on radiocarbon dating their identified corn culture settlements and there are theories of both in-situ evolution and migration up the Ohio Valley. Prior to the colonial period, they lived in larger palisaded towns and were sedentary agriculturalists. The women shouldered the bulk of daily tasks while the men focused on hunting and war. As a matriarchal society, the women also had a hand in selecting the men who handled the affairs of the nation during times of peace while the war chiefs and the council of warriors took the lead in times of war. One Chief told Sir William Johnson that “women have a great influence on our young Warriors, I must desire that the women now present in particular may be acquainted with what news

you may have and with all public affairs relating to the five Nations, for their Influence is a matter of no small consequence with our Fighters.”<sup>4</sup>

At the time of the formation of the Iroquois Confederacy, Hiawatha is said to have proposed that he “Unite the Five Nations in a common interest, and no foe shall disturb or subdue us; the Great Spirit will then smile upon us, and we shall be free, prosperous and happy.” From this time the Five Nations or Iroquois Confederacy represented a potent military threat to any neighboring Indian nations and their ability as diplomats enabled them to adapt to the changes brought by the European powers that came to America. Their sense of pride is demonstrated by their name for themselves; the Ongwe Onwe meaning “Real Men” which also served them well in the coming challenges to their society.

Religion pervaded all aspects of Iroquois life, although it was practiced in an individual, family and community context. It was encouraged but never required of all who claim to be Iroquois. It is said that the concept of one main god, who has been described as the Master of Life was acquired from the early Europeans. The presence of a heaven was a universal belief, and Thanksgiving was a regular part of life while Hell was not accepted or even imagined.

The Europeans made note of the Iroquois structure and mode of governance and were impressed by their ability to debate and govern by community agreement. The Iroquois were known for seeking peace as well as delivering the hammer of war. As long

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<sup>4</sup> John Romeyn Brodhead, Edmund Bailey O’Callaghan, and Berthold Fernow, eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co, 1853–1887), 7:103, Meeting of Chiefs, May 10, 1756.

as their people were safe and secure, they sought to maintain peace. Cadwallader Colden described the Iroquois Confederacy as: “each nation acted as an absolute Republick by itself.”<sup>5</sup> Iroquois villagers retained personal autonomy and leaders were selected by consensus. The Iroquois Confederacy did not always function as a well-oiled machine but they recognized their relations to each other and tried to remain united in their collective history and worldview.

This Thesis will review the primary literature to explore the influence of the Iroquois Indians on the region of the present-day State of Ohio. Most history books spend little time with this subject while more attention is devoted to the Shawnee and Delaware who were actually considered tributary tribes to the Five Nations. When I use the term Iroquois, I refer to all of the Iroquois-speaking nations as they were united by history in Ohio. Due to proximity, the Seneca were the dominant Iroquois influence but all of the Five Nations were represented in Ohio along with those said to be Erie, Neutral, Petun and Huron. The Christian Iroquois from Caughnawaga were also a strong presence in the Ohio Valley. O-Hee-Yo is an Iroquois word for beautiful or big river.

Before the coming of the Europeans, the Erie Nation extended along the south shore of Lake Erie to the area of Sandusky and Detroit. Iroquois communities also extended south and west down the Allegany and Ohio River to the mouth of the Scioto River. Archaeological evidence extends this territory across Ohio through the remains of the palisaded towns the Iroquois built along with other artifacts. Iroquois-speaking people also extended south down the Appalachian Mountain Chain with the Cherokee branch

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<sup>5</sup> Cadwallader Colden, *History of the Five Nations* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1988), xx.

extended to the west and the Tuscarora extending east into the Carolinas. With the coming of the Europeans, the Iroquois established trade relations with the Dutch, Swedes and English while their first encounter with the French was Champlain who attacked the Mohawk without provocation. Learning from this encounter the Five Nations devised strategies to overcome the technology deficit presented by firearms and soon came to control and dominate the French and an expanding region.

Along with firearms, the Five Nations suffered from the diseases brought by the Europeans in what has been referred to as Virgin Soil Epidemics. Unable to control the disease once established and watching their populations reduced by 30 to 60 percent in one event, their strategy became one of seeking isolation from others and expanding their hunting territory by attacking neighboring Indians. Women and children were also captured and chosen for adoption helping to augment the number of Iroquois. Besides firearms, that were initially obtained from the Dutch, the Five Nations became eager consumers of European trade goods so they devised strategies to identify trade items wanted by the Europeans and strategies to control more of the trade.

This initiates what historians have termed the Beaver Wars which I consider a misnomer that fails to respect the thousands whose deaths were not due to a rodent. The wars had multiple causes and the final result was the Five Nations usually dominant or at a standoff as they expanded their sphere of influence. This ran its course by the 1680s when the market for Beaver pelts declined and the struggle became more about control of land as both the French and English grew larger in number and power and the Five Nations sought ways to maintain their position of strength. The resulting Great Peace of 1701 brought a relative peace in the north between the French and their allied Indians and

the Iroquois which persisted some time until the Ohio Valley became a focus of interest by the two European powers. The Five Nations, who claimed ownership of this region had to devise strategies to remain neutral between the two parties as they were no longer strong enough to defeat either. The Five Nations at this time, were divided into pro-French and pro-English factions and they stayed out of the conflict until they felt a shift in power and were able to support the English in expediting the end of the conflict.

I realize that this has evolved into a somewhat expansive subject and I have been impressed by the embarrassment of riches in primary sources but I could not reduce the scope and still do justice to this subject. The focus will remain on Ohio but factors elsewhere affected the ultimate outcome and should be addressed.

## **Chapter 2: The Iroquois Wars of Conquest**

Although war was a constant in northeastern North America, it began to take on a new intensity in the mid-1600s driven by competition for trade and loss of land to colonists along with the disease epidemics that struck all the native communities. From the time that Champlain attacked the Mohawk in 1609, France became enmeshed in these wars also. As my focus is on Ohio, I will concentrate there but some mention must be made of the totality of military campaigns launched by the Iroquois.

Before discussing the wars, it is important to focus on the virgin soil epidemics that struck Iroquois lands and the rest of North America. The European colonists brought waves of disease to the New World and the inhabitants were lacking resistance to these and suffered greatly with some communities effectively eliminated while others suffered population losses of 30 to 60 percent in a single disease epidemic. Although it has not been discussed much, the Iroquois custom of living in large numbers in palisaded towns densely packed in communal longhouses was a public health nightmare for disease incubation and spread. Furthermore, their mode of treatment revolving around the sweat lodge sped up the death of the patient and added to the lethality.

In the *Jesuit Relations*, volume 19, the effect this had on the Jesuits and their Huron communities is discussed. The Huron knew these diseases came from the French but could not explain how as the Jesuits stated: “our sojourn in these quarters...were the sole cause of all their misfortunes and especially the sick...they cry aloud that the French must be massacred. These barbarians animate one another to that effect; the death of their nearest relatives takes away their reason, and increases their rage against us...Those who

had been nearest to us, had happened to be the most ruined by the diseases, and that the whole villages of those who had received us now appeared utterly exterminated...the same would be fate of all the others...if the course of this misfortune were not stopped by the massacre of those who were the cause of it.” The father noted that it was obvious that as their missionaries traveled about to the Algonquin, Huron, etc.: “no doubt we carried the trouble with us, since wherever we set foot, either death or disease followed us. It must be acknowledged that these poor people are in some sense excusable...where we were most welcome, where we baptized most people, there was in fact where they died the most.”<sup>1</sup> In 1639, a smallpox epidemic raged through the Huron and all of Canada with the Huron losing half of their population and other nations were also affected. An earlier disease epidemic in 1633 killed a large number of Northeastern Indians and Iroquois. Population estimates for the Mohawk show over 8,000 Pre-epidemic and a decline to 2,000 post-epidemic for a 75 percent decline.<sup>2</sup> In 1641, the Huron warned the Neutral as the Jesuits approached that the black robes had said: “I shall be here for so many years during which I shall cause many to die, and then I shall go elsewhere to do the same, until I have ruined the whole land.” They described the fathers carrying the disease to the next Indian village so these Huron encouraged the Neutral to reject or kill the Jesuits. This was directed chiefly at Father Brebauf who they said: “bred the malady in our own house; that we had caused every one among the Huron to die. Despite their denials, the Neutral drove the Jesuits out of their land.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 19:91.

<sup>2</sup> Dean Snow, “European Contact and Indian Depopulation in the Northeast: The Timing of the First Epidemics,” *Ethnohistory* 35, no. 1 (winter 1988): 15–33.

<sup>3</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 21: 209–211.



In 1648, it was noted at Tadoussac that many Indians coming from the hinterlands returned to their homes and brought diseases back. In their words, “disease seized upon them, and followed them into the very depths of their great woods, where it destroyed a great number of them.”<sup>4</sup>In addition, the arrival of the European brought firearms to North America and the Iroquois were among the first to feel the negative effects from their encounters with Champlain. The early firearms were relatively unwieldy and the Iroquois learned to adapt to a certain extent but they also explored avenues to procure their own firearms. The arrival of the Dutch in the area of present-day Albany, New York provided one source while the Susquehannock obtained firearms from the Swedes who settled on the Susquehanna River as they provided protection for the Swedish Colony. They were also trained in using firearms and possessed a swivel gun or small piece of artillery that was given to them. Around 1655, the colony of Virginia had a battle with the Iroquois in the mountains believed to be Black Minqua. They sent several hundred men with a personal cannon and few returned. Those who were not killed in battle were captured, tortured and eaten.<sup>5</sup>

As the Dutch, Swedes and French established their colonies in the Northeast, they began to establish trade relations with the local Indians and it was found that Beaver pelts and other animal skins were of value to the Europeans while the Indians were interested in many European trade goods especially, firearms, powder, steel hatchets, copper pots and clothes. Beaver pelts were in limited supply in New York so the Iroquois began to

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<sup>4</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 33:19.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Lindstrom, *Geographica Americae: With an Account of the Delaware Indians: Based on Surveys and Notes Made in 1654–1656*, trans. Amandus Johnson (Philadelphia: Swedish Colonial Society, 1925), 241–245.

extend their traditional hunting range to obtain Beaver pelts. As Beaver grew scarce in New York State and land along the Saint Lawrence River, the Iroquois began to range north and west where they came into more contact with the Huron in competition for the Beaver trade. The Five Nations attempted Diplomacy with the French and their Ottawa and Huron allies but the agreements were seldom observed. This led to increased conflict and competition between the Indian nations while some Indians discovered that it was easier to steal pelts than hunt them. The centralized location of the Iroquois enabled them to actively participate in piracy as the Mohawk and others were able to close down the Saint Lawrence River to Beaver trade from the Huron and Ottawa further west and north. There was also active theft of pelts along the southern shore of Lake Erie where small shipments of pelts were stolen.

These minor conflicts grew into major wars with time as the competition for trade intensified. The onset of what has been termed the Beaver Wars is considered to be the Mohawk-Mohican War that originated in 1624 around the Dutch trading center of Orange or Albany as it is now called. The war lasted several years until the Mohicans allowed the Iroquois direct access to the Dutch trade. Having proven their ability in battle, the Dutch attached themselves to the Mohawk and began to provide firearms to assist them in protecting their territory and taking pelts from other nations to bring to Albany instead of Montreal.

The Five Nations Iroquois were never on the best of terms with the Huron and low-level conflict intensified in the 1640s as the Huron grew weaker from the epidemics. The French understood the relationship of the Huron and Five Nations as stated in the *Jesuit Relations* in 1641: “We have very reason to believe that not long ago they all made

but one People, both Hurons and Iroquois, and those of the Neutral Nation; and that they came from one and the same family.”<sup>6</sup>

Between 1640 to 1660, the Five Nations adapted their practice of war to utilize firearms in a manner to fit in with the new economics of the fur trade and defend their land. Once again, the central location of the Five Nations proved to be an advantage as it allowed them access to multiple trade partners in the form of Swedes, Dutch, English and French. By the 1640s the Iroquois could obtain firearms in large numbers and came to dominate all the local Indians except the Susquehannock who were also well armed. The 1640s became the age of the Great Offensive, a time when the Five Nations coordinated their resources and focused firepower on individual neighboring nations. The Mohawk helped make it possible by obtaining a sufficient supply of firearms from Dutch traders. It was also noted that in 1642, the Neutral attacked the Fire Nation (Potawatomie) palisaded town in present-day Michigan, hacked through the log palisades and destroyed the town while killing hundreds and taking 800 prisoners.<sup>7</sup> The Iroquois also extended their raids to the east against French settlements. In 1642, they were at the gates of Montreal and no French inhabitant was safe. One priest remarked: “I would almost as soon be besieged by Goblins as by the Iroquois; the latter are hardly more visible than the former.”<sup>8</sup> As the situation worsened, Father Cramoisy described the Huron Country in 1643 as: “There was no less desolation throughout the country...captives were taken by the hundreds...This scourge of Heaven was all the more felt as it was accompanied by

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<sup>6</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 21:52.

<sup>7</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 27:25–27.

<sup>8</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 27:221.

famine.”<sup>9</sup> New France was desperate and the *Jesuit Relations*, volume 22, states: “If we do not have peace with these Barbarians or if we do not destroy them, the country will not be in a state of safety”<sup>10</sup>

In 1647 the Huron were negotiating a peace with the Onondaga and Cayuga along with the Susquehannock that would have had them combine into a larger confederacy. Father Ragueneau describes these efforts in the *Jesuit Relations*, volume 33, with: “Our Huron have made considerable advance in negotiations for Peace with the Onnontaerron (Onondaga) and there is some hope that two others of the hostile Nations will enter into the same treaty...Moreover, our Hurons have sent an embassy to the Andastoerannon (Susquehannock), people of New Sweden, their former allies, to solicit them to enter into a full Peace with them...Considerable assistance is expected from this, as well as a great relief for this country.”<sup>11</sup> The Seneca were not interested at the time and peace envoys to the Onondaga were ambushed and killed by the Mohawk. Although they had hopes of Diplomacy working to split the Five Nations and encourage others to join in Peace, in the end, it did not move forward. Had France taken advantage of this Diplomatic opening and established a confederacy of the various Iroquois-speaking Nations with gifts, it could have affected the ultimate outcome in North America. The territory controlled by these Indians would have extended across Canada to the western shore of Lake Huron, down the Ohio Valley and across New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

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<sup>9</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 27:63, 65.

<sup>10</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 22:43.

<sup>11</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 33:76–77.

In March 1648, 1,000 Mohawk and Seneca emerged from the snowy woods to attack and destroy the Huron villages of St Ignace and St. Louis. In 1649, they captured another large village and the Huron were dispersed. They killed or captured hundreds of Huron before withdrawing while the rest fled only to suffer a disease epidemic that killed hundreds of the survivors. Many more died from starvation that winter after losing their village and food stocks. After the second round of assaults on Huron towns, the rest dispersed further to the north and west joining other Iroquois and Algonquin Indians as they fled the Five Nations.<sup>12</sup> Many of the Huron surrendered immediately and agreed to join the Iroquois. Father Ragueneau in *Jesuits Relations* # 35 gives a moving summary of the fall of the Huron by describing them as: “they are a people wiped off the face of the earth.”<sup>13</sup> They were not wiped off the face of the earth as a number were captured and adopted into the Five Nations while many that dispersed joined other nations or eventually returned to join the Five Nations. The *Jesuit Relations*, volume 35, tells us that in 1650 after the defeat of the Petun, Many Huron had decided on: “taking their wives and children and throwing themselves into the arms of the enemy-among whom they have a great number of relatives who wish for them, and counsel them to make their escape as soon as possible from a desolated country, if they do not wish to perish beneath its ruins.”<sup>14</sup> The Huron had been France’s key ally but they suffered greatly from disease epidemics and Iroquois attacks to the point where they were totally overrun.

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<sup>12</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 34:123–37, 217.

<sup>13</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 35:199–205.

<sup>14</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 35:193.

Historians have attributed the success of the Iroquois mainly due to their having more guns but in analyzing Ragueneau's description of the battlefield, historian Kenneth Otterbein noted the Iroquois strategy of massing forces for the initial assault and then breaking into smaller teams in order to round up prisoners, scout for advancing Huron warriors and assess the next objective.<sup>15</sup> Dividing forces was a risky decision but the Huron never counterattacked in mass or they might have taken the day and the French soldiers living among the Huron, hid in their Fort and never offered assistance. In regards to the advantage of firearms, the flintlocks in use at the time were effective as the Iroquois used them in the initial assault and they then choose to close and fight hand to hand with their war clubs. Iroquois warriors always went out with a mixed force of archers and rifleman and all had a warclub and scalping knife. In this campaign and many of the following campaigns that made up of the Iroquois Wars of Conquest, they followed the same principles and demonstrated the ability to modify the strategy in regards to weapons, terrain and nature of the opponent.

Opposed to the strongpoints of the Iroquois, we see a Huron that should have been prepared for this attack. The Five Nations had taken months to approach the Huron towns yet no scouts were out. Support from the other Huron villages was spotty, too little and too late. The French military support failed them and many Huron simply ran away. The Iroquois strategy of collecting retreating Hurons to bolster their ranks lends credence to the theory that this campaign was as much meant to strengthen the Five Nations as well as eliminate a rival Indian Nation. The Seneca treated the Huron captives well and

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Otterbein, "Huron vs. Iroquois: A Case Study in Inter-tribal Warfare," *Ethnohistory* 26, no. 2 (spring 1979): 143–148.

some lived in their own village of Saint Michel and in time, attracted more Huron to come stay with them. As described by Father Cramoisy in 1656: “these Hurons live apart from the Iroquois, satisfied to be united with them in good feeling and friendship.”<sup>16</sup> By 1652, there was an informal peace between the Huron and Five Nations as both sides refused to fight their relations on the other side.

The Iroquois were also thought to be more culturally advanced with their practice of community councils and discussions that were able to think through new developments and reach answers on how to deal with the new European neighbors, disease epidemics and trade. This was proposed by Lewis Henry Morgan who based his view of the superior culture and ideology being based on balanced economy of hunting and agriculture, sedentary stable village relationships, and an organization of government that stood above any in North America. Morgan was also a proponent of cultural evolution and it was evident in how the Iroquois evolved to maintain their place in the world. The steel hatchet, copper pots along with firearms made profound changes in Iroquois life. The Iroquois also adopted captives freely as they always lost men in battle.<sup>17</sup>

At this time, the Neutral possibly with the assistance of the Seneca drove the Pottawatomie and other Algonquins out of lower Michigan and into Wisconsin.<sup>18</sup> The Neutral lived along the north shore of Lake Erie and when they received some guns and military support from the Seneca, they attacked the Fire Nation thought to be the Mascouten and Potawattomie and drove them out of Michigan north around the Lakes

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<sup>16</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 44:20.

<sup>17</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 43:265.

<sup>18</sup> Kellogg, ed., *Early Narratives of the Northwest*, 23.

and down into the Green Bay area. This coincided with the Huron and Ottawa pressing west to avoid the Iroquois onslaught. The crowding of Nations into unfamiliar territory led to intertribal conflict between the various Indian Nations who needed their space to hunt and grow crops.

The Iroquois onslaught continued with the Petun Nation the next for attack. At this point, many fled or chose to join the Five Nations. A number of the Petun fled to the Neutral Indians in Southern Ontario along the north shore of Lake Ontario and since the Seneca had just assisted the Neutral in chasing the Potawatomie out of Michigan, they offered the Neutral the option of joining them before they were attacked.<sup>19</sup> A number did but the attacks began in 1650 on those not surrendering and the final outcome was the same with the Neutral gone by mid-1651. Father Ragueneau observed and noted that: “Great was the carnage, especially among the old people and the children, who would not have been able to follow the Iroquois to the country. The number of captives was exceedingly large...This loss was very great, and entailed the complete ruin and desolation of the Neutral nation.”<sup>20</sup> Yet among all of the news of destruction, the *Jesuit Relations*, volume 36, in 1651 notes that: “The former inhabitants who remained in the villages...went of their own accord to a Tribe of their enemies, the Iroquois, and now live as peacefully with them as if they had never been at war.”<sup>21</sup> After this defeat of the Hurons in 1650, the Iroquois compelled the Neutrals at Detroit to come join them.<sup>22</sup> In

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<sup>19</sup> Emma Helen Blair, ed., *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 1:149–150.

<sup>20</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 36:176–177.

<sup>21</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 36:178.

<sup>22</sup> Blair, ed., *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley*, 1:149–150.



May, another band of Iroquois traveled to Whitefish Bay and “dealt a considerable blow.”

In 1654, the Onondaga and Seneca pursued peace with Canada as they were at war with both the Erie and the Susquhannock. The Mohawk were not in agreement so there was no general peace. As described in the *Jesuit Relations*, volume 41, this was an act of prudence as “they did not wish to have so many enemies on their hands at the same time.”<sup>23</sup> The Seneca had been attacked by the Erie with one Seneca village burned and a war party attacked on their way home from the Huron country.<sup>24</sup> The Erie (Cat Nation) are described as being very populous and were reinforced by Huron fleeing the Five Nations. The Iroquois added: “We are involved in new wars...for France we shall have only thoughts of Peace...We are going to wage war against the cat nation. The earth is trembling yonder, and here all is quiet.”<sup>25</sup> According to the *Jesuit Relations*, the Erie War started about 1652 after the Huron, Tionontati and Neutral Nations were defeated, dispersed or absorbed into the Five Nations.<sup>26</sup>

Some of these Indians fled south of Lake Erie to join the Erie Indians and the next step was the demand by the Seneca to surrender the refugees. In an early major battle with the Erie, a desperate daylong battle near Honeoye Lake, the Seneca prevailed although there were hundreds of casualties on each side. Most of the Erie were killed although some warriors ran west while others traveled south down the Allegheny River to the forks of the Ohio. According to Seneca legend, the Seneca pursued the Erie south

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<sup>23</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 41:217.

<sup>24</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 41:81, 117.

<sup>25</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 41:75.

<sup>26</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 41:81, 75.

where they collected on an island near the forks of the Ohio for protection. At this time, the Seneca fooled them by taking their same warriors and marching them in a circle along the river in order to make the Erie think that they had more warriors than they actually did. The Erie decided to retreat and paddled their canoes downriver never to return rather than face another battle with the Seneca.<sup>27</sup> This may be the source of the name of Crow Island near Aliquippa, PA which is also the site of an ancient Erie Village and Logstown at a later date. Erie were known as Kah Quah's to the Seneca which is also the word for Crow. The story of the Seneca-Erie conflict on an island in the Ohio river is related by the Seneca Chief William Patterson in the Draper Manuscripts as transcribed in "Notes of Border History-Taken on a Trip to the western part of Pennsylvania & adjoining parts of New York & Ohio from Jan. 30 to March 9, 1850." The ensuing war lasted three years before the Erie were gone by 1656. One major battle occurred in 1654 when Rique, the largest town fell, the inhabitants of the smaller towns fled or surrendered. The final assault was bloody with 2,000 killed or captured.<sup>28</sup> Some Erie fled to the Shawnee while others surrendered to the Five Nations and were absorbed into their ranks.

In 1654, the Iroquois launched a campaign towards Green Bay with limited success as they sent 600 warriors to oppose the 7,000 Indians collected there from multiple Indian nations. In 1656, the Iroquois stayed busy collecting wandering Huron refugees including those living right under the walls of Quebec who received no aid from the French Army. The remaining Huron, Ottawa and others continued to remain near

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<sup>27</sup> Lyman C. Draper, *Notes of Border History* (Salamanca: RAJ Publications, 2017), 92–93, The Gah-kwah War.

<sup>28</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 41:121; 42:178–179, 187–188, 191, 195; 45:209; 42:49,53; 44:153; 62:71.

Michilimackinac to escape from the Iroquois. The *Jesuit Relations* observed in 1657 that: “Iroquois communities now contain more Foreigners than natives of the country” seven nations lived among the Onondaga while the Seneca had eleven.<sup>29</sup> These wars served to not only weaken their enemies but to sustain their strength in number.

Father Hennepin gave his assessment at this time in regards to the Iroquois wars when he describes the policy of the Savage Iroquois as: “The Councils held continually by these Barbarians for ordering all Affairs, ought to be considered as the main Cause of their Preservation, and the fear all the Nations of North America are put in by them.”<sup>30</sup>

“Perhaps we were so humbled last year and reduced to so lowly a state as not to be hit by the thunder-bolts of the Iroquois, who have turned their arms elsewhere... They are going in pursuit of others, three and four hundred leagues from here, leaving no corner of these vast forests which they do not fill with terror and bloodshed.”<sup>31</sup>

In 1656, Father Francois le Mercier wrote: “ever since that first havoc, they have always pushed on their conquests, and have made themselves so redoubtable in this country that everything gives way before their arms. They had but to continue, to massacre the remainder of the French Colony, for they met with hardly any resistance either from the French or from the Savages, our Confederates.”<sup>32</sup> Once again, the Iroquois sent out warriors to collect the Erie refugees and move them close to the Seneca to settle and be at peace. In their travel west, the Seneca found some Erie living among the

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<sup>29</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 43:265.

<sup>30</sup> Louis Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America: Extending above Four Thousand Miles, between New France and New Mexico* (London: M. Bentley, 1698), 93.

<sup>31</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 47:139.

<sup>32</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 44, 55:59.

Shawnee in southwestern Ohio so in the 1660s the Seneca began attacks on the Shawnee and in 1669 Father Fremin described fall activities at one of the Seneca towns as the men assemble and divide into war and hunting parties of about 500 each to proceed in hunting in what used to be Huron country or attacking the Shawnee until they were gone.<sup>33</sup> From 1662, the *Jesuit Relations*, volume 47, in their discussion of “Divers Iroquois Wars” notes: “Leaving rather Westerly than Southerly, another band of Iroquois is going four hundred leagues from here in pursuit of a Nation whose only offense consists in its not being Iroquois. It is called Ontoagannha (Shawnee), signifying ‘the place where people cannot speak’ - because of their corrupt use of the Algonquin language.”<sup>34</sup>

In 1666, the Seneca signed a treaty of Peace with the French in response to the arrival of the Carignan Regiment and their campaign against the Mohawk. This was also meant to secure their northern border as they were preparing to attack the Susquehannocks to the south. They even requested aid from the French in this war with the Andaste or Guyandots as they were also known but it is not known whether France provided much support.<sup>35</sup>

In 1669, the Seneca warned two French missionaries that traveling the Ohio River “ran a great risk...of encountering the Antastoes, who would unquestionably break our heads.”<sup>36</sup> Returning by lake with an Iroquois, one French explorer described the Seneca guide’s fear of being captured by the Antastoes at the falls so they had to walk 50 leagues

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<sup>33</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 54:10–12, 117, 119.

<sup>34</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 47:144.

<sup>35</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:125, Ratification by the Senecas of the preceding Treaty.

<sup>36</sup> Kellogg, ed., *Early Narratives of the Northwest*, 176, Journal of Dollier and Galinee 1669.

by land on Lake Erie.<sup>37</sup> This leads to some confusion as the French explorers describe these Andastoes as raiding around Lake Erie and down the Ohio River. In 1662, the Susquehannocks were expecting 500 Black Minquas to show up to help them fight the Seneca and only 200 came. In addition, the Susquehannock requested that New Netherlands General Director Peter Stuyvesant: “not to neglect to provide them with ammunition of war.”<sup>38</sup> The Susquehannock showed an ability to negotiate with the colonies like the Five Nations did and at times they lobbied for support from New Sweden and Maryland. The Seneca also responded by negotiating peace with Maryland whereupon Maryland attacked the Susquehannock without any notice helping lead to their final capitulation. In 1669, Father Fremin reported from the Iroquois Missions that some of the Seneca towns like Gandougarae consisted of three different nations; the Neutral, Huron and Onnontioga with all living in peace together.

There is no other definitive primary source regarding their identity in regards to whether the Erie were the same as the Black Mingo and Kahquah. They would have occupied an extensive territory west along the southern shore of Lake Erie, south down the Ohio River into present-day West Virginia and to the crest of the mountains on the east. It is interesting to note that at the same time the Seneca had launched several attacks on the Susquehannock, it was observed that the Susquehannock assisted the Cayuga in conquering the Mattawoman who were Iroquois speaking Indians along and east of the Ohio River ranging south down the mountains to present-day West Virginia. These were

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<sup>37</sup> Kellogg, ed., *Early Narratives of the Northwest*, 168, The Journey of Dollier and Galinee 1669.

<sup>38</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 12:419, Letter William Beekman to Dir Stuyvesant.

most likely the same Indians called the Black Mingo or Massawomacks from the terminology of Virginia.<sup>39</sup> Smallpox hit the Susquehannock hard in 1671, the Iroquois destroyed their main fort in 1674 and by 1678 they were ruined.<sup>40</sup> In a 1673 Conference with Frontenac, the Iroquois expressed a fear of being crushed by the Andastes and requested French assistance<sup>41</sup> but the Susquehannock were soon to be conquered and dispersed by the Seneca with several hundred agreeing to join the Confederacy after their numbers were reduced by war and disease.

During his service in Wisconsin, Father Allouez wrote in 1670 of his visit to the Fox Indians (Outagamis) that: “These savages withdrew to escape the persecution of the Iroquois” and “they do not make war on the Iroquois although they often killed by them.” In meeting with Father Allouez, he was asked by the Fox: “Thou couldst cause to be restored to us our wives...stay the arms of the Iroquois, and speak to them of peace in our behalf for the future.”<sup>42</sup> It was also reported that Allouez had lived in a “Village of Miamis, Maskoutens, and Ochiakenens who have quitted their own nation to confederate themselves with the Iroquois against the Illinois. Father Hennepin provided some justification for the Iroquois attacks when he remarked: “I do not wonder that the Iroquois should talk of invading our allies; for they are every year provok’d” by being killed when they are out on peaceful hunts.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> William Hand Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1896), 15:329, 374, 382–384.

<sup>40</sup> Charles A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail or the Ventures and Adventures of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1911), 1:31–35, 47–52.

<sup>41</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:110–111.

<sup>42</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 54:223–4.

<sup>43</sup> Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country*, 183.

In regards to the Shawnee, Marquette and Jolliet set out in 1673 to reach the Mississippi and made some comments on the Shawnee. They noted one river flows from the lands of the East, where dwell the people called Chaouanons (Shawnee) in so great numbers that in one district there are as many as twenty-three villages, and fifteen in another, quite near one another. They are not at all warlike, and are the nations whom the Iroquois go so far to seek, and war against without any reason; and because these poor people cannot defend themselves, they allow themselves to be captured and taken like flocks of sheep; and innocent though they are, they nevertheless sometimes experience the barbarity of the Iroquois, who cruelly burn them.”<sup>44</sup>

1682 represents a high point with Iroquois aggression with Father de Lamberville describing raids against the Illinois where hundreds of the Illinois were killed and captured while other Iroquois attacked the Virginia Indian Nations and the Miami. Father Allouez on a mission to the Ilimouec (Illinois) describes their condition as: “They used to be a populous nation, divided into 10 large villages; but now they are reduced to two, continual wars with the Nadouessi (Sioux) on one side and the Iroquois on the other have well-nigh exterminated them.”<sup>45</sup> Upon meeting with the Miami, he was told: “Take pity on us; thou art a Manitou. The Nadouessious and the Iroquois are eating us. Take pity on us.”<sup>46</sup> At this low point for the French, Frontenac was recalled to France due to issues with the Jesuits and his inability to control the Iroquois. Subsequently, the Seneca made several assaults on Miami towns to push them west but they did not attack them with the

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<sup>44</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 59:145, Marquette’s First Voyage.

<sup>45</sup> Kellogg, ed., *Early Narratives of the Northwest*, 130.

<sup>46</sup> Kellogg, ed., *Early Narratives of the Northwest*, 155, Allouez in Wisconsin.

numbers and ferocity that they did to the Illinois. In 1682, Father de Lamberville adds that the Iroquois: “have become so arrogant through their military success that they consider themselves masters of the earth.” He also records that drunkenness was so prevalent that their villages resemble: “veritable images of hell.”<sup>47</sup>

In 1683, La Salle noted the Shawnee scattering in different directions to escape the Iroquois onslaught. He helped some of them move across the river to Fort St Louis (or Starved Rock) where he built up a community large enough to prevent an Iroquois attack. Miami Indians were also a major component of this community along with the local Illinois Indians who had suffered greatly from the Iroquois attacks. The Shawnee stayed at Starved Rock for 5 years to recover from the Iroquois and when the Miami left in 1688, the Shawnee left also. At a conference with the French at Cuyahoga in 1684, the Iroquois explained their anger with the Miami as being partly because their support in allowing some Shawnee to come back to the Ohio area. At this time, some of the Shawnee moved eastward and lived in towns in Pennsylvania and Ohio alongside their relations the Delaware where they lived under domination of the Iroquois Confederacy. In 1684, an Iroquois Chief Garangula told the Governor of Canada that the Iroquois had “knockt the Twihtwies (Miami) and Chictaghiks (Illinois) on the head because they hat cut down the Trees of Peace which were the limites of our Country...They brought the Satanas (Shawnee) into their Country to take part with them, and Arm’d them.”<sup>48</sup> At this time, the Seneca had also caught the French running firearms and ammunition to the western Indians to arm them to attack the Five Nations.

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<sup>47</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 62:17–18.

<sup>48</sup> Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations*, 55.



In 1680, the Seneca took in a larger number of Erie who had fled south. “Six hundred men, women, and children of the nation of the chats, near Virginia, surrendered voluntarily, for fear that they may be compelled to by force.”<sup>49</sup> The Maryland Council inquired of the trader Jacob Young where the Susquehannohs were now and found them spread among the Five Nations, in addition he was told: “another Nation called the black Mingoies are joined with the Sinnondowannes who are the right Sinniquos...the black Mingoies in their way comeing downe to the Sinniquos were pursued by some Southern Indians sett upon and routed several of them taken and bound till the Sinniquos came into their releife.”<sup>50</sup>

Beginning in the 1680s, the French were searching for strategies to contain the Iroquois as indicated in Jacques Duchesneau’s *Memoir on the Western Indians* written in 1681, he describes the French frustration with controlling the marauding Iroquois. “This is what happened a year ago when the Iroquois made an irruption into the country of the Illinois...To convey a correct idea of the present state of all those Indian Nations, it is necessary to explain the cause of the cruel war waged by the Iroquois for these three years past against the Illinois. The former, who are great warriors, and who pretend to subject all other nations to themselves, though they compose only...two thousand men at most, never want a pretext for commencing hostilities.”<sup>51</sup> He conceived a proposal to have France buy New York state so the Iroquois would lose the ally who supplies their war munitions. Other leaders in New France proposed conquering New York as it would

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<sup>49</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 62:71, De Lamberville, 1682.

<sup>50</sup> Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland*, 5, Council of Maryland, 1681–1685.

<sup>51</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:162.

be easier than defeating the Five Nations.<sup>52</sup> At this time, the Iroquois claimed all land below the Great Lakes to the Mississippi. Father de Lamberville reports from Onondaga in 1682 that the Seneca brought 600 captives from the Illinois and Miami. The Iroquois were at a peak of their power and they had no fear of the French or any Indians. He added: “Every year they profit by our losses; they annihilate our allies of whom they make Iroquois.”<sup>53</sup>

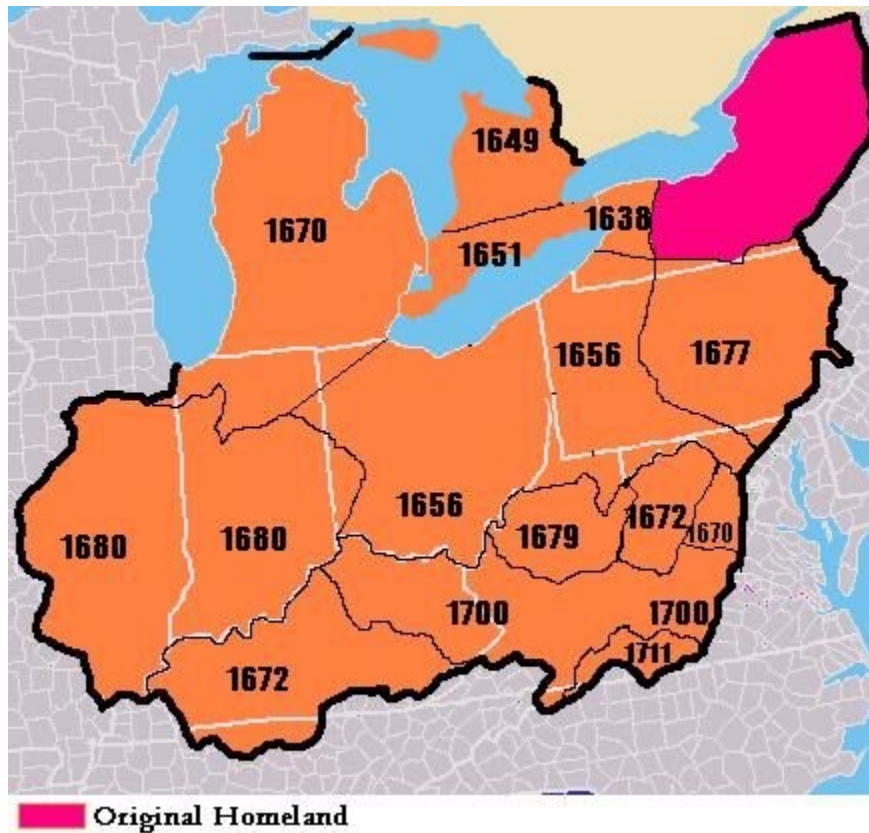
This represents the bulk of the wars that the Iroquois had against the Indian Nations bearing any importance on future events in the Ohio Valley. The wars had taken more than 50 years and left the Iroquois in a weakened state although they retained a number of captives from the defeated Indians. They had to travel longer distances to attack enemy nations and the rewards in plunder or captives were not as great as before. The wars were not over as the French took the lead in further conflict with the Iroquois that is described in the next chapter. Having cleared a vast buffer of land west of the Iroquois homeland, the Five nations preferred to act as middleman between the western nations and the French or English. By this time, the Five Nations had lost half of their warriors from the various wars but these were augmented by the Indian captives that were adopted after the wars. Entire towns of Huron came to the Seneca for adoption and were allowed to maintain their independent community like St, Marie. Despite the changing demographics, “the power that lay behind the Iroquois was not the tribal government as such, but the dynamic ideals and moral force of its social organization.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:165.

<sup>53</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 62:71, 153.

<sup>54</sup> Arthur Parker, *History of the Seneca Indians* (Port Washington: Ira Friedman, 1926), 50.



**Figure 4: Map depicting expansion of Iroquois Territory after the Iroquois Wars of Conquest ending approximately 1682**

The Map Above gives a rough timeline and approximation of the territory conquered but not held by the Iroquois. The French strategy in combatting Iroquois aggression directed towards their allies was collecting them in large enough groups that the Iroquois could not attack them. These centers were at Michilimakinac to the north, Green Bay to the NW and Fort Saint Louis on the Illinois River.

Father Lafitau stated that “War is a necessary exercise for the Iroquois, it is indispensable to them also because of one of their fundamental laws of being.”<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Joseph-François Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times*, 2 vols., ed. William N. Fenton and Elizabeth Moore (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974–1977), 98–99.

Hennepin added: “There is no Nation in America that dare resist the Iroquoise.”<sup>56</sup> In conclusion, I believe that the successful outcome of these wars should be considered as a measure of the Iroquois abilities of conducting war, avoiding war through diplomacy and attracting allies while intimidating potential enemies. What they lacked in raw numbers of warriors, they made up in diplomacy, planning and strategy. This series of conflicts did much to shape the nature of Northeastern North America along with the area of the Ohio Valley. Although some have criticized their actions, nobody can dispute their success.

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<sup>56</sup> Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country*, 86–88.

### **Chapter 3: The French-Iroquois War**

“I saw the enemy come out of their barricade, nearly 200 men, strong and robust to look at, coming toward us with a dignity and assurance that pleased me very much.”<sup>1</sup> So begins Samuel de Champlain’s first encounter with the Five Nations when he accompanied a war party of Huron and Montagnais up the Richelieu River in 1609 to attack the Mohawk near their towns. He stepped forward to shoot several Chiefs with his arquebus while the rest ran away, having never seen this weapon before. In September 1615, Champlain with a dozen French soldiers and 500 Hurons attacked another Iroquois town thought to be Onondaga. After a day-long battle, they were forced to withdraw without capturing the town and suffering many casualties. Champlain himself was struck by Indian arrows and the two allies left angry with each other for their failure to achieve victory.<sup>2</sup> Champlain did not attempt another military campaign during his time in New France. Although Champlain was hero for a day among his Indian allies after the first battle, he started a conflict that would engulf New France for over fifty years before a tentative peace was reached in the 1660s that did not last since the enmity never disappeared from the Iroquois side until the final defeat of the French in 1759.

Champlain noted that all the Indian nations that he met feared and hated the Iroquois, so he judged it to be sound policy to maintain the animosity. He felt that France could partner with the Indian Nations in spreading Christianity, trading furs and fighting the Iroquois. It was a triple alliance of soldier, priest, and trader. He arrived at this

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel de Champlain, *The Voyages and Explorations of Samuel de Champlain, 1604–1616*, trans. Annie Nettleton Bourne, 2 vols. (New York: Allerton Book, 1922), 1:211.

<sup>2</sup> Champlain, *Voyages and Explorations*, 1:294.

strategy without truly understanding the enemy that he was lining up against, and he also failed to understand the shifting alliances that these nations had experienced for hundreds of years. In 1619, Champlain wrote that “it was very necessary to assist them” when explaining his attacks on the Iroquois in favor of the Ottawa and Huron.<sup>3</sup> Although he started a war with the Iroquois, the Montagnais became a bigger thorn in his side and his favored Huron could run hot and cold. After giving up on conquering the Iroquois with his small colony, Champlain tried to maintain peace on the Saint Lawrence River so that France could operate a profitable colony although there was a constant threat of attack from the Iroquois.

Despite the gloom among the French with the knowledge that the Iroquois could destroy them at any time, they were somewhat assured that an all-out assault was never mounted as viewed in this letter from Quebec: “I do not know why you show so much fear of the Iroquois on our account. If they came as far as Quebec, it would indicate that the whole country is lost.”<sup>4</sup> Champlain tried to keep expanding New France while English pirates roaming around the mouth of the Saint Lawrence were a constant threat in 1628. In 1630, English pirates led by Kirke with a crew featuring a number of French Huguenots laid siege on New France and Champlain was forced to surrender and return to France. In subsequent treaty talks, England returned New France to the French King. Champlain was able to return but he passed away in 1635 with a stronger, more stable

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel de Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 6 vols., ed. Henry Percival Biggar, et al. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1922–1936), 3:31–32.

<sup>4</sup> Marie de l’Incarnation, *Lettres de la révérende mère Marie de l’Incarnation* (née Marie Guyard), 2 vols., ed. Pierre-François Richaudeau (Paris: H. Casterman, 1876), 2:213.

New France. The death of Champlain marked an end of western exploration for a time as the Iroquois Wars would make all travel in the region hazardous.

Since Champlain started the war with the Iroquois in 1609 and 1615, the French were blocked from the Great Lakes unless they took the Ottawa River route north to Georgian Bay for half a century. In 1641, the Dutch Traders in Albany began trading firearms with the Mohawk for beaver pelts and the Iroquois began to become more aggressive. They felt a personal attachment to the firearms which were at first the old match lock musket and later the more efficient flintlock musket. It served as a force multiplier for the already formidable Iroquois and they began to put it to use against both the French and their Indian allies. The French also became aware of the effect of their presence on the native communities due to virgin soil epidemics where the Indians lacked resistance to endemic European diseases like small pox. One Jesuit Father noted: "Since we have published the law of Jesus Christ in these regions, plagues have rushed in as in a throng. Contagious diseases, war, famine...wherever we set foot, death came in with us!...The Iroquois, our mortal enemies, do not believe in God...yet they prosper."<sup>5</sup>

Iroquois aggression towards New France was somewhat sporadic and they could have destroyed the colony at any time in the early years, but they pursued a dual track of diplomacy with an occasional raid. In 1645 Cardinal Richelieu sent one company of French Troops that settled things down for some time. Abbé Ferland wrote: "It is important to make allies of the Hurons who were both numerous and powerful and quite able to cope with the Iroquois, the only enemy among the native tribes to be feared by the

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<sup>5</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 33:35.

French.”<sup>6</sup> The French had long cast an eye upon the territories of the Iroquois which were much more fertile and temperate than the region they occupied north of the Saint Lawrence. In addition, the position of the Iroquois along the flank of New France, which they could assail at will, rendered the latter indefensible. Father Vimont sent a Father back to France to request military support and wrote in 1642 that: “danger will not be averted from our Colony, until the Hiroquois are either won over or exterminated...the Hiroquois, the real scourge of our newborn Church...who have sworn a cruel war against our French.”<sup>7</sup>

We have discussed the opportunity for Peace that presented in 1644 when the Susquehannock, some Huron and the Onondaga proposed a confederation with each other and the French to control the fur trade. The Andastes (Susquehannock) encouraged this proposed peace with the Five Nations and the Hurons and they had agreement with the Oneida, Onondaga, and Cayuga, but the Mohawk and Seneca were not interested in this arrangement and they began planning an invasion of the Huron country. In the words of one Jesuit Father, “But after all, our hopes rest in God; for the treachery of those people does not allow us to rely in any way upon their words, and makes us dread as great a misfortune during those treaties of peace as in the midst of war.”<sup>8</sup> Had the French seized this opportunity to unite the Five Nations, Huron and Susquehannock, the rest of the Iroquois-speaking Nations would have fallen in line and France would have controlled a huge swath of territory down to Chesapeake Bay, New York State and Ohio. The failure

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<sup>6</sup> Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Ferland, *Cours d'histoire du Canada*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Quebec: N. S. Hardy, 1882), 1:264.

<sup>7</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 22:35.

<sup>8</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 33:71–73.



to capitalize, however, brought on more misery in the colony as Montreal was under constant siege while New France consisted of less than 1,000 inhabitants which the Iroquois kept reducing.

In 1653, the Iroquois suffered a military setback around the Great Lakes in Michigan and then spoke of peace with the French. This eased the pressure on the colony, although the Iroquois remained a constant threat as voiced by Father Le Mercier in 1657: “Carrying the light of the Faith to them, although their sole design hitherto has been to extinguish it, that is, we go to establish ourselves among the Iroquois. I think that, in mentioning those Barbarians, I say all that can be said; for their name alone shows the risk which we run and the glory which will accrue to God from the execution of that design...those oppressors have made Martyrs of it Pastors, and Saints of most of its members...God...opens the door to his Preachers, that they might go and plant the faith in the very heart of his enemies, triumph over their barbarity...and bring them into the fold of Jesus Christ...when we were so weak...They had to but continue, to massacre the remainder of the French Colony, for they met with hardly any resistance either from the French or from the Savages.”<sup>9</sup> In the *Jesuit Relations*, Lalemant makes cogent observations of the status of New France in 1660. The Battle of Long Sault had just occurred where sixty French and Indians tried to hold off six hundred Iroquois who were approaching Montreal. All the French and most of the Indians were killed, but they gave enough of a battle that the Iroquois returned home rather than continuing on to attack the helpless inhabitants. Lalemant writes: “But everywhere, too, we find the Iroquois, who,

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<sup>9</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 44:57–59.

like an obtrusive phantom, besets us in all places.” He writes of a colony that is doing well: “But the warfare of the Iroquois thwarts all our pleasures and is the sole affliction of new France, which is in danger of becoming utterly devastated...to tell the truth, nothing is so easy for these barbarians as to subject all our settlements to fire and massacre whenever they choose...Moreover in their method of warfare the Iroquois are so stealthy in their approach, so swift in their execution, and so expeditious in their retreat that one commonly learns of their departure before gaining any knowledge of their arrival. They come like foxes...They attack like lions...They take flight like birds, disappearing before they have really appeared. It is a kind of miracle that the Iroquois, although able to destroy us so easily, have not yet done so; or, rather, it is a providence of God.”<sup>10</sup>

New France received a new neighbor when the Duke of York, brother of King Charles II of England who had a large interest in the British Royal African Company, seized a Dutch Port in Africa and England followed with sending four ships to seize New Amsterdam in 1664. When the Dutch leaders asked for the local population to support them in the defense of their colonies, they said that they would prefer the English. Pieter Stuyvesant was forced to surrender without a fight and was recalled to Amsterdam. The arrival of the English brought pause to Iroquois aggressive actions as the Dutch had been willing providers of firearms and ammunition for the Iroquois military campaigns in exchange for furs.

In 1663, Louis XIV took personal control over New France and in 1665, Daniel de Rémy de Courcelle was appointed Governor of New France while Colbert appointed

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<sup>10</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 45:192–198.

Jean Talon as Intendant of New France. He sailed to Canada with the Marquis de Tracy and the regiment of Carignan-Salières along with a number of settlers and tradesman, horses, etc. Intendant Talon wrote Courcelle informing him that “The King having sent to Canada a Regiment of twelve hundred men, and regular troops commanded by brave officers, with orders to fight that barbarous Nation, by which the establishment of the French Colony is so much retarded...treaties of Peace made with those Infidels are broken on the first opportunity that presents itself to them to obtain an advantage over the French.”<sup>11</sup> Tracy left Quebec with 600 French, 600 Canadians and 100 Indians to attack the Mohawk villages. The Mohawk had emptied their towns before the French arrived, but the French burned the towns down and destroyed food stocks. They followed up with building a fort on the Sorel River and encouraging strategic housing so settlers could defend each other rather than remain scattered.

Following the Tracy campaign, the Mohawk and Oneida came to terms with the French and a period of peace ensued. Along with the Peace Treaty, the Five Nations requested military aid to help them fight their southern neighbor, the Andaste or Susquehannock who they identified as the last threat to the Five Nations. After the Iroquois were humbled by the Carignan Regiment in 1666, the Lakes opened up and the French began to explore the Ohio and Detroit Rivers.

The French had been dominated and humiliated by the Five Nations since the days of Champlain’s attacks on the Iroquois and his false claim of subduing them. Hundreds of Frenchmen had been killed, yet Louis XIV could often take a disinterested

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<sup>11</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:52.

view of Canada and was not willing to support a substantial military presence which would have earned respect immediately. Due to their centralized location and their ability to wage war, the Iroquois were the greatest threat to New France. At any time, they could invade Montreal and Quebec and destroy it or they could stop the flow of commerce from the west into Montreal which was the lifeblood of New France. However, it did not take long for Louis XIV to get distracted by issues in Europe and New France began to unravel in the next decade once the Iroquois were done clearing out their southern border neighbors and began to raid to the west where France's trade allies lived.

In 1670, Intendent Jean Talon devised a plan for France to extend its colony west to the Great Lakes and south down the Ohio River and Mississippi River to tie in with La Louisiane and encircle the English colonies on the Atlantic seaboard. This strategy began to put the Ohio Valley into focus while to the English, the Ohio Valley was just the natural logical westward extension of their colonies along the Atlantic. Talon also informed the King that the Iroquois were now "more insolent by the retirement of the Troops" who returned to France.<sup>12</sup>

Beyond the toll in loss of French inhabitants and Indian allies, the Iroquois cost the French in trade as the colony was never able to support itself or bring riches to France. Intendent Talon reported in 1670 that "the Iroquois threaten a rupture, I perceive that they ruin the trade of the French; hunt for Beavers in the country of the Indians who have placed themselves under the King's protection...the English and the Dutch attract by means of the Iroquois over twelve hundred thousand livres of Beaver. As all this

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<sup>12</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:65, Talon to the King, October 10, 1670.

Beaver is trapped by the Iroquois in countries subject to the King...the Iroquois has not forgotten its arrogance...if it do not at present wage war against the French Colony, it is because it has on its hands the Andastogues, a tribe border on New Sweden, well adapted to war.”<sup>13</sup>

The westward extension for the French began in 1671 when the French Officer Saint-Lusson acting on orders from Intendent Talon, claimed possession of Michilimackinac, a trading center for French traders in the upper Great Lakes where a number of French had settled in with the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. This was a simple end run around the Iroquois presence in the heart of the Northeast and their expansion into the Ohio Valley would prove to be a little more problematic. Governor Frontenac traveled to Lake Ontario to block the Iroquois truce with the Ottawa to facilitate trade with the English and Dutch. He realized the need for western trading posts although he also: “found himself without troops, without money, without ammunition...arriving in a country...almost an entire stranger.” He did understand the need for forceful action.<sup>14</sup> The period of 1670–1700 was a period of the French, Ottawa and Huron negotiating a truce with the Iroquois with the various interests pursuing war and peace at different times.

The Iroquois broke the peace with New France when it became obvious that France was arming the western Indian Nations hostile to the Five Nations. As one Seneca Chief asked in 1671, “For whom does Onnontio take us?...everyday they enter Nations

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<sup>13</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:63–66, Talon to the King November 10, 1670.

<sup>14</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:95–96, Journal of Frontenac’s Voyage to Lake Ontario in 1673.

which have been hostile to us, which set out to make war on us.”<sup>15</sup> By 1675, a flood of muskets began to arrive in Canada as France decided to arm its Indian allies to combat the Iroquois and English. The Iroquois had other plans as they became aware of the French running guns and powder to the Illinois Indians and attacked them in 1681. The Frenchman Tonti who was there was stabbed while observing the Iroquois kill hundreds and carry off hundreds more prisoners. On their way back to the Seneca towns, they attacked the Miami and burned another town. Upon their return news was received that 600 “Cat” or Erie Indians had given notice that they wanted to leave Virginia and return to the Five Nations to bolster their numbers.<sup>16</sup> In 1682, Father de Lamberville wrote: “the weapons of the Iroquois makes them very proud, brave and enterprising. Last year they Brought 700 Illinois captives...They bring prisoners from all parts and thereby increase their numbers. They are beginning to attack some of our allies called the Oumiamis.”<sup>17</sup> He added a month later that: “The brunt of the war is to fall on the Illinois...the Oumiamis will be swept away, and perhaps some other people...Every year they profit by our losses; they annihilate our allies, of whom they make Iroquois...they will all together fall upon Canada to overwhelm it in a single Campaign.”<sup>18</sup> In Duchesneau’s *Memoir on the Western Indians* of 1681, we see discussion of the Iroquois war on the western Indian nations which they traveled across Ohio to attack. To explain the cause of

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<sup>15</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 54:263–265.

<sup>16</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 62:71, Letter of Father Jean de Lamberville, Onondaga, August 25, 1682.

<sup>17</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 62:55–91, Letter of Father Jean de Lamberville respecting the Iroquois mission at Onnontague, August 25, 1682.

<sup>18</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 62:151–153, Lamberville to Frontenac September 20, 1682.

this, he described the “cruel war waged by the Iroquois against the Illinois. The former, who are great warriors, who pretend to subject all other nations to themselves” even though they can only muster two thousand warriors.<sup>19</sup> He proceeded to describe the Iroquois campaigns against the Illinois which resulted in “The victory achieved by the Iroquois rendered them so insolent.” He summarized his position that given the circumstances, the French policy towards the Iroquois is to either “make them our friends or to destroy them” although he also suggests purchasing New York from the English.<sup>20</sup> Father Hennepin observed this behavior and noted that Father Allouez was living near a village of Miami and Maskoutens who had been offered a confederacy with the Iroquois to attack the Illinois but rejected it after French pressure. Furthermore, he noted that the Miami had killed several Iroquois hunters and remarked that “I do not wonder that the Iroquois should talk of invading our allies; for they are every Year provok’d and several Iroquois have been killed.”<sup>21</sup> Frontenac met with the Ottawa in August 1682 and they said: “they consider themselves dead and pray him to have pity on them; for the Iroquois kill them,” while a Miami added: “they likewise were daily slaughtered by the Iroquois.”<sup>22</sup>

Tonti and La Salle worked together to build Fort St Louis to protect the Miami, Illinois and Shawnee refugees from the Iroquois onslaught. It worked as its size

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<sup>19</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:162, Duchesneau’s *Memoir on the Western Indians*, October 13, 1681.

<sup>20</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:165.

<sup>21</sup> Louis Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America*, 2 vols., ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903), 2:634.

<sup>22</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:176, Frontenac Conference with the Ottawa.

consisting of over 300 lodges, served to blunt the next Iroquois attack so they were unable to overrun the entire camp while killing hundreds as they had previously done. Unfortunately, as soon as the Iroquois returned east again across Ohio, the Miami and Illinois had a battle with each other while breaking up the camp. In July 1682, Governor Frontenac was recalled back to France due to inability to get along with religious leaders and control the Iroquois.

In 1682, Antoine Lefebvre de La Barre was sent from France to replace Frontenac and tasked to “prevent the violence of the Iroquois against the French...keep the Savages at peace among themselves and prevent the Iroquois making war on the Illinois and other tribes.”<sup>23</sup> When La Barre arrived in New France, he quickly acquired a sense of the colony which he shared with de Seignelay in a memo dated November 4, 1683. He described the Iroquois as the “bravest, strongest and shrewdest in all North America, have twenty years ago subjugated all their neighbors.”<sup>24</sup>

He met with the Iroquois Chiefs and became appalled by their level of insolence and decided that they would only respect the sword. He notified Louis XIV and told him that “I cannot refuse to your country of Canada, and your faithful subjects, to throw myself, with unequal forces, against the foe, while at the same time begging your aid for a poor, unhappy people on the point of falling victims to a nation of barbarians.”<sup>25</sup> La Barre made his case for assistance against the Iroquois when he told France, “We shall

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<sup>23</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:167.

<sup>24</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:201, La Barre to Seignelay, November 4, 1683.

<sup>25</sup> Francis Parkman, *Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV* (Boston: Little Brown, 1898), 92, La Barre au Roy, 5 June, 1684.



lose half our trade and all our reputation, if we do not oppose these haughty conquerors.”<sup>26</sup> La Barre continued, “I found the country on the eve of a war forced by the Iroquois and in condition of succumbing to it.”<sup>27</sup> La Barre had no qualms about telling France that “the failure of all aid from France” had discouraged their Indian allies and given heart to the Iroquois who helped encourage trade with the English which required peace with the Five Nations.<sup>28</sup>

Fort Frontenac was abandoned by La Salle in 1682 and La Barre dismissed him, claiming that he “has been bold enough to give you intelligence of a false discovery...in order to try and build up an imaginary kingdom for himself... All the people who bring me news of him abandon him...”<sup>29</sup> When he seized Fort Frontenac from La Salle, La Barre noted that French traders were taking furs south to the English traders for better prices and trade goods that the Indians preferred.<sup>30</sup> This infuriated both the King and French traders in Quebec who were losing their share of the business. Meanwhile, La Salle accused La Barre of seizing his property along with the furs to make a profit for himself and his local trading partners. La Barre followed with arresting some of La Salle's associates and told the Iroquois in Conference that they were free to kill La Salle if they found him.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Parkman, *Count Frontenac*, 84, La Barre au Seignelay, 1682.

<sup>27</sup> Parkman, *Count Frontenac*, 84, La Barre to Seignelay, Quebec, 1682.

<sup>28</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:195, Conference on Iroquois, October, 1682.

<sup>29</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:204.

<sup>30</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:214, La Salle against La Barre.

<sup>31</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:215.

La Salle escaped the Iroquois and wrote a memoir explaining his version of the facts and extolling the advantages of a “house at the mouth of the Niagara river, the most important on the whole lake...the situation of this fort is very advantageous...the peltries of the English pass by this lake...It is still of great importance to arrest in that direction the pretensions of the English, who have approached there through Pennsylvania, the extremity of which abuts almost on the Iroquois country.”<sup>32</sup> In this document, la Salle lays out the future French strategy for the Ohio Country. He was way ahead of his time as the French strategy remained a scattered and uneven effort for another seventy years. La Barre was also found to have hanged a French settler whose only crime was wanting to move south to the English colonies, leading Colbert to admonish him: “how a man like you, acquainted with the laws of the Kingdom, could have desired to assume unto himself a power of life and death in cases not military, and on which his Majesty has not yet pronounced.”<sup>33</sup> A law was passed at this time prohibiting moving south to the English colonies

La Barre was tasked to maintain a profitable trade with the Indians, keep the Iroquois under control and maintain good relations with the Church officials. In October 1682, Governor La Barre, Intendant Meules, various bishops, priests, and traders met to discuss policy with the Iroquois saying, “the object of their enterprize, which is to destroy all the Nations in alliance with us...they may attack us isolated and ruin the colony...the failure of all aid from France had begun to create contempt for us among the said

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<sup>32</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:217–218, Memoir of la Salle to Seignelay regarding La Barre, 1684.

<sup>33</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:221, Seignelay to La Barre April 10, 1684.

Iroquois, who believed that we were abandoned by the great Onontio.”<sup>34</sup> La Barre followed with a demand for guns and ammunition, “without which the country is lost. It is absolutely necessary to attack the said Senecas or abandon the country.”<sup>35</sup>

The Iroquois continued to rob canoes on the way west to the Western Indians with trade goods as they found them running guns and powder to enemies of the Iroquois, especially the Illinois against whom the Iroquois were launching repeated assaults. There is an interesting exchange between Governor Dongan of New York and La Barre of New France who wrote, “the unexpected attack on Fort Saint Louis and Sieur de la Salle and the plunder of seven French canoes...both Kings desire that we should live in close Union and Fraternity together...grant me the I make to forbid those selling any Arms, Powder or Lead to the Iroquois who attacked us.” La Barre followed in July with notice that “advise you of the vengeance which I was about to wreak for the insult inflicted on the Christian name by the Senecas and Cayugas.”<sup>36</sup>

First La Barre met with the Iroquois and asked them why they were attacking the Illinois and the response back was “because they deserve to die.” La Barre had no answer to this and the Iroquois were given implied consent to wreak havoc on the Illinois and the French traders who were supplying them with guns and ammunition. When pressed by La Barre for his loyalty in 1684, the Iroquois Chief Garangula replied, “We are born free. We neither depend upon Yonnondio (France) nor Corlaer (English). We may go where

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<sup>34</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:195.

<sup>35</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:197.

<sup>36</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:447–450, La Barre to Dongan, June 15, July 25, 1684.

we please. If your allies be your slaves, use them as such.”<sup>37</sup> This drove La Barre to decide an invasion of the Seneca was the only reasonable alternative and he requested additional troops and aid from France. La Barre pushed his plans for invasion while criticism came from all corners including Louis XIV, who described it as a “grave misfortune for the colony of New France...even should you prosecute it with advantage...it will no less cause the ruin of the colony, the people of which cannot subsist in the continual alarm they will be of an attack from the savages.”<sup>38</sup> La Barre reminded the English that he aimed to “repress an insolent nation who would not spare the English if they could succeed in having nothing further to fear from the French.”<sup>39</sup> La Barre also sought to divide the Confederacy by talking peace with the Onondaga.

As he left on his campaign, De Meulles wrote to Seignelay on July 8, 1684 that “the war we are obliged to wage against the Iroquois, the sworn enemies of this colony...they stated that they were going to War only to preserve the Bever of five or six merchants of Quebec who monopolize all the trade. In a word, My Lord, this war has been determined on in the General’s cabinet, with six of the richest merchants of the country. I do not perceive any disposition in the Governor to make war on those savages...he will negotiate peace with them, and make a fool of the people, of the Intendant, and of his Majesty...he sacrifices everything to his interests. He take with him de la Chesnaye, who is the richest merchant of this city and his sole counsellor...the

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<sup>37</sup> Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations*, 51–55.

<sup>38</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:232, Louis XIV to La Barre, July 31, 1684.

<sup>39</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:67, 69, La Barre to Dongan, June 15, 1684, also July 24.

General departed yesterday...with the man named la Chesnaye, which appeared very extraordinary to the Bishop...it is a mere deception...and conclude what shall be to the advantage of their own trade. The General has undertaken the war without consulting anyone in the country but the merchants...He will also conclude peace by the same council...nobody has ever heard of a subject undertaking war and peace without consulting Military men and those of most influence in the colony.”<sup>40</sup>

La Barre began immediately to plan an attack on the Seneca to punish them for another raid on the Miami where they had killed a number and taken 500 prisoners at a loss to them of two men. As he collected an army, New York Governor Dongan provided arms and powder to the Seneca while noting in 1684 that “The Five Nations are the most warlike people in America, and are a bulwark between us and the French and all the other Indians.”<sup>41</sup> Finding himself out of options, La Barre collected a force of over 2,000 to attack the Seneca towns and left Montreal on July 26, 1684 while hundreds of French Canadians and allied Indians approached from the west. A battle never took place as the French forces camped in a swampy area on the south shore of Lake Ontario and his forces became gravely ill in a matter of days while they waited for their western contingent to catch up. Faced with this dilemma, La Barre sent an envoy to make peace with the Iroquois who had been watching his camp and knew their predicament. When the Iroquois delegation came to his camp, they were amazed at the sickly French Army camped there, and the Onondaga took the lead in the peace initiative which La Barre

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<sup>40</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:230–232, de Meules to Colbert, July 8, 230.

<sup>41</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:393, Dongan to Report to Com of Trade, February 22, 1687.

touted as a success, including clause 13 which stated, “Take heed in firing at the Illinois, not to strike the French whom you meet on your path.”<sup>42</sup> The entire cause of this campaign was to punish the Iroquois for attacking their Illinois allies near the Mississippi River and he had just told them that this was acceptable behavior. La Barre wrote, “I concluded with the Senecas a peace, which apparently will be of some durability, and as honorable as possibly can be with Savages.”<sup>43</sup> However he was surrounded by critics including his Intendant Meules who wrote of his Army of 1800 men who sat 10 days at Montreal, 14 days at Fort Frontenac and the same at La Famine where they camped next to a swamp and became ill. In his words, “This peace, My Lord, has astonished all the officers...What seemed a wonder in the country is that one individual, a subject of the Majesty like others, should of his own will made war and peace...You will see he abandons the Illinois...he consents to their slaughter...and left La Famine the moment the peace was concluded...The worse of this affair is...the Outawas and other Savages who came to our aid, will hereafter entertain no respect for us, and will regard us as a people without courage and without resolution.”<sup>44</sup>

Father de Lamberville who was stationed with the Onondaga, remarked: “I do not believe that you will derive any advantage this year from the war...the whole of the Iroquois will prosecute it in Canada. The Iroquois believes that he will destroy the Colony in case of war...a false alarm that the Iroquois were coming, had reached

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<sup>42</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:238.

<sup>43</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:244, La Barre to Seignelay, October 7, 1684.

<sup>44</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:244–249, de Meulles to de Seignelay, October 10, 1684.

Montreal, where there was nothing but horror, and flight and weeping.”<sup>45</sup> The King told Intendant de Meulles, “I have reason to be dissatisfied with the treaty concluded between Sieur de la Barre and the Iroquois. His abandonment of the Illinois has seriously displeased me, and has determined me to recall him.”<sup>46</sup> This failure led to a feeling of disgust on the part of the French allied Indians who had traveled hundreds of miles for the battle only to return to their towns. Furthermore, La Barre failed to protect their western allies and the Seneca assault on the Illinois intensified while La Barre was recalled to France in 1685 as a failure.

La Barre was replaced by the Marquis Denonville on March 10, 1685 who had had an extensive discussion with Marquis de Seignelay, the son of Colbert, regarding France’s plans for expansion in North America. Among his points were, “War with the Iroquois is inevitable, and if we do not make it against them, they will declare it after they will have done all in their power to rid themselves of the Indians who are friends of the French...they have sent a war party against the Illinois and other tribes, allies of the French...The English will sell their powder much cheaper than the French.”<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, the Seneca were negotiating with the Ottawa to allow them to trade with the English in their country. This was unacceptable to the French who knew that friendly trade between the Ottawa and the English under Iroquois oversight would cost them an important ally, so they had to renew the hostility between the tribal groups.

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<sup>45</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:260–261, de Lamberville to La Barre, October 9, 1684.

<sup>46</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:269, Louis XIV to de Meulles.

<sup>47</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:273–279, Denonville to Seignelay, November 12, 1685.

In his *Memoir on the State of Canada*, Denonville notes, “The Iroquois are the most formidable; they are the most powerful by reason of the facility they possess of procuring arms from the English...The Senecas being the strongest are the most insolent...A permanent peace with the Iroquois would be of more benefit to the Colony than a proclamation of war...Meanwhile, we shall lose no time in putting ourselves in a condition to repel any insults the Iroquois may offer the Colony, which would suffer seriously were we overpowered...The most certain safeguard against the English of New York would be to purchase it from the King of England...We would thus, be masters of the Iroquois without a war.”<sup>48</sup> He also included trade statistics from the Beaver trade which shows a reduction from 95,000 pounds in 1683 to 23,000 pounds in 1685 as the Iroquois seized furs coming into Montreal or diverted beaver trade to the English at Albany. As discussions continued, Denonville opined that “The whole world, here is convinced that the progress of the Faith among the Indians depends absolutely on humiliating the Iroquois.”<sup>49</sup>

New York Governor Dongan tried to lobby Denonville to let the Indians sort out their difference without interference from the French and English but Denonville was called to support their western allies who were losing badly as the Iroquois could dismantle them one by one. During the period when England had a Catholic King and New York had a Catholic Governor, diplomatic efforts between the two Nations took precedence over the Iroquois and the Five Nations began to suffer from loss of support

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<sup>48</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:280–287, Memoir of Denonville, November 12, 1685.

<sup>49</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:290, Denonville to de Seigneley, May 8, 1686.



militarily. With this, Denonville felt encouraged to launch an assault on the Seneca without fearing any English interference. Other than provide some lead and powder to the Five Nations, Dongan stepped aside while this French invasion of Seneca country took place. Dongan relayed to the Seneca that he had received word from Virginia that a number of their warriors were there while Denonville prepared his forces. “In ye name of Corlaer, yt he will give you all ye assistance he can in case you are attacked on ys Side of ye lake...he declared that at the head of James River, was about 300 hundred Seneca’s and they had taken a resolution to destroy all our Neighbouring Indyans...first to destroy all the out plantacons of the English.”<sup>50</sup>

The level of respect for the French was so low among the Indian Nations that both the Ottawa and Huron were making peace overtures to the Seneca and Denonville had to organize an invasion to increase the level of animosity among the Indian groups. Many Ottawa did not participate in the following Denonville campaign against the Seneca as expressed by one leader: “We are all brothers, who ought to form only one body, and possess but one and the same spirit. The French invite us to go to war against the Iroquois; they wish to use us in order to make us their slaves...Let us leave them to act alone; they will not succeed in defeating the Iroquois; this the means for being always our own masters.”<sup>51</sup> One of Denonville’s stated reasons for pursuing this campaign was “in order to reestablish the Frech reputation which was destroyed among the entire of the

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<sup>50</sup> Laurence Leder, ed, *The Livingston Indian Record* (Gettysburg, PA: The Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956), 125, Nathaniel Bacon to Howard, July 2, 1687.

<sup>51</sup> Claude-Charles Le Roy Bacqueville de La Potherie, *Histoire de l’Amerique septentrionale*, in *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley*, 2 vols., ed. Emma Helen Blair (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 2:22–24, 52.

Indian Nations...the French name was disgraced...I believe that everything is in good order and promises well.”<sup>52</sup>

The July 1687 Denonville campaign into Seneca country violated the 1686 Treaty of Neutrality although France claimed they owned the Five Nations and their land and furthermore, this raid was in retaliation for Seneca raids on French citizens. In June 1686, Denonville repeated La Barre’s previous assault on the Seneca towns and this time the timing was better. The French began to assemble their Army from the east and west. This Army landed at Irondequoit and was ambushed by a force of several hundred Seneca at Boughton Hill near the Seneca town of Ganondagon. Initially, the Ottawa and French troops ran but then collected themselves and pushed forward. Realizing the numbers against them, the Seneca withdrew to the woods where they were not pursued. The towns and food supplies were all destroyed and the French returned to their home bases with minimal damage to the Seneca.<sup>53</sup> The Army destroyed over 400,000 bushels of corn while the Indian allies began to leave as soon as the battle was over. After losing his Indian allies, Denonville was forced to return quickly back to Montreal.

A description of the battle is provided by several Christian Iroquois who supported the French against the Seneca. Following the Denonville Campaign against the Seneca in 1687, these Christian Mohawk were captured and interrogated regarding their participation. They were both asked if they were not ashamed “to leave his owne Country and to goe to Canada and fight with the French against his owne friends relations and

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<sup>52</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:336.

<sup>53</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:286.

neighbours.”<sup>54</sup> They responded that they were forced to go with 150 of their relations from Montreal. They were fired upon by several hundred Senecas who withdrew after noting the force of several thousand advancing towards them. At the onset of the battle, the Ottawa and many other French Indians ran away but the Christian Mohawk held their line and the oncoming French Army was steady enough to keep pushing forward until the Seneca withdrew. This was the only battle and it resulted in about twenty killed on each side. They then advanced on several burned towns and the French cut down and burned all the Indian corn which the Indians refused to do, considering it work unbecoming a warrior. Finally, they were asked why they did not return to their Mohawk towns. Their answer was because of religion and the drunken Indians at Saratoga disturbed them.<sup>55</sup>

Before the battle, Denonville asked Father de Lamberville to assemble some Iroquois Chiefs to meet with Denonville peacefully on the word of the Christian Governor who would observe the law of nations. After arranging the conference, Denonville had the Chiefs put in irons and transported to France where most died. Champigny told Seignelay that Denonville reported that he was sending 50 Iroquois taken in the vicinity of Fort Frontenac to France to serve on the king’s ships.<sup>56</sup> At this point, de Lamberville understood that the Denonville was using him to “betray the Iroquois” and he had to flee to save his life.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:431, Examination of Kakariall, an Indian Prisoner, August 31, 1687.

<sup>55</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:433–436.

<sup>56</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:332.

<sup>57</sup> Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 64:247.

In his after-battle report to Seignelay, Denonville stated: “We have, assuredly, humbled the Senecas to a considerable degree, and seriously lowered their pride and raised the courage of their Indian enemies”<sup>58</sup> Another view of this campaign comes from Father de Lamberville who provides an account of Denonville’s account against the Iroquois in a way that somewhat deviates from the Governor. He finds that “After many years of peace with the Iroquois, who were beginning to become Christians, some people desired war...the French came to surprise them. In vain; the savages were found to be ready.” He met with Denonville in Quebec who assured him that: “the Iroquois would not beat him as they had his predecessors...that he knew how to make war.”<sup>59</sup>

Following this the Iroquois went back to war against the French and the English were soon to follow. De Lamberville goes on to state that following the empty victory of the Denonville campaign against the Seneca where he burned their cornfields while casualties were limited on both sides: “from the end of 1687, the Iroquois injured our colony at various places through the murder and captivity of many Frenchmen.” He adds that only “very special protection of God has been shining upon this poor Canada, which still exists. The Iroquois have desolated a 3<sup>rd</sup> of it. It is to be hoped that such cruel wars will end in new France when God shall give rest to Europe.”<sup>60</sup>

Following the Denonville campaign and its minimal results, Iroquois attacks on the French increased in frequency and France rolled out another Treaty of Neutrality in December 1687. In 1688, a warrant authorizing Governor Dongan to protect the Five

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<sup>58</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:341.

<sup>59</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 64:241, Letter by de Lamberville.

<sup>60</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 64:259.

Nations arrived in New York stating, “We have thought fit to own the five nations...and resolve to protect them as such.”<sup>61</sup> In 1688, France directed Denonville to make peace and use Diplomacy after their attack accomplished little. Dongan then met with the Iroquois and told them about the negotiations. “I desire you to lay down the hatchet so that you can take it up again easily when there is need. The King, my master has forbidden me to furnish you with arms and ammunition in case you continue to make war on the French; but do not allow this prohibition to alarm you. If the French reject these conditions which I have proposed to them, you shall want nothing necessary to do justice to you...My advice to you now is to keep well on your guard for some new treachery on the part of your enemies, and secretly make your preparations to burst down on them by Lake Champlain and Catarocony when you are obliged to renew the war.”<sup>62</sup>

In discussing strategies to strengthen their foothold in North America in 1687, Intendant Marquis de Seignelay (Colbert) wrote: “The English have begun by the most powerful and best disciplined Indians of all America, whom they have excited entirely against us by their avowed protection...War is likewise necessary for the establishment of the Religion, which will never spread itself there except by the destruction of the Iroquois.”<sup>63</sup> Governor Dongan wrote Father de Lamberville in 1687 that “I am sorry that our Indians are soe troublesome to the Indians of Cannida but I am informed from Christians that it is the custom of those people, that what country they conquer belongs to

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<sup>61</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:503, Warrant authorizing Governor Dongan to protect the Five Nations, James II, November 10, 1687.

<sup>62</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:390, 533.

<sup>63</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:319, Memoir on the State of Canada, January, 1687.

them as their own.”<sup>64</sup> Governor Dongan met with the Iroquois and made demands on their behavior. They agreed and swore that “We will fight the French as long we have a man left.”<sup>65</sup> After Denonville complained to Louis XIV about Dongan’s supporting the Iroquois with war materials, Dongan was removed from his position by the Catholic King of England and Edmund Andros was named New York Governor.

After Denonville left the Seneca Country, he sent a small force led by the Marquis de Vaudreuil and Louis-Hector de Callières to rebuild the fort at Niagara to supply the western Indians and hem in the Seneca.<sup>66</sup> In reestablishing this French post, they gave recognition to La Salle and the French settlers who stayed there briefly before the Seneca became disenchanted and ran them off in 1675 after burning down the post. However, the 100-man French garrison left at Fort Niagara slowly died of starvation over the winter as their supplies did not hold out and Iroquois surrounded the perimeter preventing them from hunting for food.<sup>67</sup> By spring, a dozen men were rescued of the original 100 man garrison by a French allied Indian nation hunting party and escorted to Montreal.

The Five Nations had to deal with issues on their southern border at this time after England experienced the 1688 Glorious Revolution. The pro-French, Catholic English King James II was overthrown and replaced by William of Orange who was staunchly anti-French and Iroquois resistance was reenergized with weapons and powder from New

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<sup>64</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:464.

<sup>65</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 3:438–442, Dongan’s propositions to the Five Nations; Answer of the Five Nations.

<sup>66</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:416, Plan for the Termination of the Iroquois War, 1688.

<sup>67</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:396, Letters from Canada, 1688.

York. Shortly thereafter, 1,500 Iroquois attacked Montreal in 1689 and burned and pillaged for ten miles up and down the river while the French military would not come out of their Fort to defend the inhabitants who were killed and taken prisoner. A total of 150 French were killed along with several hundred captured. Following the Lachine Massacre, La Potherie describes the scene: “the open country was laid waste; the ground was everywhere covered in corpses, and the Iroquois carried away six-score captives, most of whom were burned.” The French Army stayed in their fort and afterwards, he stated that “these fifteen hundred warriors have cut to pieces more than six thousand men” in their country.<sup>68</sup>

This action in retaliation to the Denonville campaign shook New France to its core and brought the Ottawa and Huron to visit the Seneca again to discuss peace among the nations. The Seneca responded and terms included a boundary between their hunting grounds at the strait between Lake Erie and Huron.<sup>69</sup> France responded by closing their trading forts at Niagara and Frontenac. A non-productive discussion of peace began without much immediacy and the small military engagements continued. Iroquois demands for peace were the return of the Chiefs sent to France; the return of the Christian Iroquois to New York; Forts Niagara and Catarocouy (Frontenac) were to be destroyed; everything taken from the Seneca should be restored. Following this disaster, Denonville was recalled to France as another failure and the Louis XIV sent Frontenac back in 1689 to resolve the situation. Father Carheil told him in 1690, “we are at last reduced to the condition... This is not the success promised them by embassies and peace Conferences,

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<sup>68</sup> La Potherie, *Histoire de l’Amerique septentrionale*, 2:42–43.

<sup>69</sup> La Potherie, *Histoire de l’Amerique septentrionale*, 2:95–96.

but it is that which they Feared...after their departure from Montreal, where they had just seen the Iroquois triumph throughout the whole Campaign, during which he was allowed to do as he pleases...they have resolved to regain the Friendship and alliance of our enemy, by means of an Embassy which they are sending to the sonnontouans...For the result of that embassy can only be to bring at once both the Iroquois and the Fleming—the Iroquois as the master in war; the Fleming as the master in trade and in commerce...it is too late.”<sup>70</sup>

The 1680s was also a time of major changes in France and their position in Europe and the world. The decision by Louis XIV to revoke the Edict of Nantes in October 1685 that made the Protestant faith illegal again in France led to a diaspora of over 200,000 French citizens who scattered across Europe with many moving to Holland and England. A number of these Huguenots made up the merchant class in France including those who processed Beaver pelts into hats which were popular in Europe for a time. The negative effects of this action were multiple as these Huguenots who would have been proud to serve in the French Army suddenly found themselves rejected by their homeland and moved to other countries and would serve in those armies opposing France in future European wars. In addition, the economic impact of losing their business acumen and manufacturing skills led the beaver trade to collapse as pelts accumulated in French warehouses and New France stopped trading with their Indian allies for Beaver pelts. The economic effects of this loss of jobs and revenue helped worsen the debt in

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<sup>70</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 64:23–39, Father Carheil to Frontenac, September 17, 1690.



France which was saddled with paying for multiple European wars and the construction expense of the Palace of Versailles.

Louis XIV became enmeshed in the War of the League of Augsburg or the Nine Years War in 1688, and suddenly England joined the coalition against France rather than as ally. In 1689, the French returned to their idea of capturing New York to isolate the Iroquois but they failed to get their forces marshalled at the right time and had to settle on several small raids on communities in the northeast with mixed results. With the return of Frontenac in 1689, he found 400 of the marines had been killed by the Iroquois or died of disease in the last two years.<sup>71</sup> Even worse, the French had grown used to their steady diet of defeat. Their situation was described by Carheil in 1691 as: “they had no alternative than to make terms with an enemy against whom we were no longer in a position to defend them.”<sup>72</sup> Callières understood that the recent Glorious Revolution in England would change the face of American affairs and it became necessary to adopt entirely new measures to secure Canada against the great dangers with which it was now threatened.<sup>73</sup> On his return, Frontenac found consternation among the people, the troops were dejected and the people were still terrified by the burning of their homes at La Chine while the Bishop wrote that “he cannot describe the terror they have spread among the people and the soldiers.”<sup>74</sup> Following the sacking of La Chine, the French found their

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<sup>71</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 10:207, Frontenac to Seignelay, Quebec, November 12, 1689.

<sup>72</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 64:22–39, Carheil to Frontenac among the Ottawa.

<sup>73</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:404, Callières to Seignelay (Colbert), January 1689.

<sup>74</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:435, Summary of Intelligence from Canada, 1689, 1690.

upper Indian allies withdrawn with their: “minds full of terror and distrust.” They saw nothing but destruction with burnt houses and farms, their people killed or taken and the countryside “utterly ruined.”<sup>75</sup> The Ottawa and Hurons traveled to the Seneca and began more serious peace talks as they saw nothing but weakness from the French who could not even defend their towns.

The return of Frontenac brought on a new phase of smaller attacks on Iroquois hunting parties in their hunting grounds of Ohio and Ontario. Unsure of how to proceed, Frontenac launched a campaign of *la petite guerre* using his native allies to degrade the Iroquois ability to wage war and save his army. Nine hundred Iroquois attacked the island of Montreal again in 1691 and spread out in the countryside bringing death and destruction. New France suffered the loss of another 100 troops and inhabitants.<sup>76</sup> French morale was at a low in 1691 when a large force of Indians and English approached Canada again as part of King Williams War when word was received that a disease epidemic broke out in the camp that eventually killed several hundred Iroquois and tributary Indians before the remaining Indians left to return to their towns while bringing the disease home with them.<sup>77</sup> The French marked it up as a tremendous victory while it was principally due to the smallpox that followed the English army. This also caused the French to plan the capture of Boston or New York so they could cut off the supply of war materials to the Iroquois. In their words: “This expedition would be so much more useful as by protecting Canada against the continued incursions of the English and Iroquois who

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<sup>75</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:463.

<sup>76</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:22–39, Carheil to Frontenac among the Ottawa, December.

<sup>77</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:490.

have combined to destroy it, 'twould secure for his Majesty a fine and fruitful country...if we do not attack the English, we shall languish and perish eventually in consequence of their frequent attacks, and the burnings of parties of Iroquois.”<sup>78</sup> Despite this, the Iroquois of the Sault (Caughnawauga) began truce talks with the Iroquois and told the French that they were tired of fighting their brothers. Frontenac had to rely more on the western Indians to harass the Iroquois in minor engagements as they came east to trade. French Canada was in desperate straits again as de Champigny reported to Pontchartrain on May 10, 1691, that only three of the ten ships that sailed from France managed to arrive in Canada with the rest sunk or captured by the English. He followed with notice that “we are not in a condition to go with force of arms to the Iroquois” with their only option being making presents to the Ottawa, Miami and other Indian allies to continue harassing raids on the Iroquois when possible.<sup>79</sup>

1692 brought some relief when thirteen ships made it up the Saint Lawrence to bring food and war munitions including firearms, powder and lead. Frontenac rushed much of this to their western allies to retain their allegiance and they brought a large shipment of furs for trade. Unless the Iroquois sent out large parties of over 200 warriors, they stood the risk of being overwhelmed and killed by the Algonquins and Hurons roaming around their towns. Although Frontenac talked peace with the Iroquois, he armed and encouraged the French Indian allies who were attacking the Iroquois. Beyond the Iroquois campaign, the British Naval Blockade was starting to limit supplies to Montreal again. Again, Champigny requested more troops as 500 men had been lost in

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<sup>78</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:493.

<sup>79</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:502.

war and the King promised some if the war in Europe started to go better. The Iroquois did not make large raids to the west any longer but 800 fell on the island of Montreal again in 1692 and burned houses and killed inhabitants although it was not as severe as the earlier La Chine Massacre. As Champigny noted: “it is not to flatter ourselves any longer with the hope of peace.” In follow-up, Champigny reported to the Minister that “I am reduced to the necessity of having the leaden gutters and weights melted in order to be run into bullets.”<sup>80</sup>

The situation in Europe did not go better but Frontenac decided the best plan was to attempt a larger attack again before all their strength was gone. Many changes began in 1696 when Pontchartrain observed that the Iroquois War seems to be too much based on trade and commerce. The Iroquois were alienating the Ottawa, Huron and Miami as they were able to open trade with them to the English who paid better prices for furs. The King responded ordering the closing of trading posts in the west except Saint Louis on the Mississippi. Frontenac ignored these wishes and dragged his feet on closing forts as he sought a way to subdue the Iroquois threat. He felt the need to maintain direct involvement with the western tribes to keep their friendship and loyalty. The fleet arrived at Quebec three months later while Montreal was still occupied by Iroquois who: “never acted with so much obstinacy, having taken and killed many Frenchmen and committed great havoc throughout...They surprised and routed our Militia...we shall need early assistance in the spring.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:502.

<sup>81</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:503, Champigny to Pontchartrain.

Once again, Frontenac proposed to France that they capture New York: “as the most assured means of terminating this war and of utterly reducing the Iroquois.”<sup>82</sup> By the end of the year, Canada reported the: “remarkable diminution in a country that is sparsely peopled” and their 1300 troops had been reduced by one half from war and disease with “More than 2,000 men...have been lost in Canada since the War” and “this Colony unable to resist any new attack by the English unless promptly aided by his Majesty.”<sup>83</sup> At this time, the Christian Iroquois grew more persistent in their request for peace with the Iroquois. Dismayed by this Louis XIV ordered the cessation of paying bounties for every Indian killed. This had been 10 ecus per scalp, 20 ecus for prisoner and half that for women.<sup>84</sup>

This stalemate persisted until 1695 when the Huron and sometimes the Ottawa discussed truce with the Iroquois so they could trade with the English for better prices for their furs. Realizing that the French were losing the Peace, they decided to escalate the war again. The Western Indians were tiring of battles with the Iroquois while the French talked Peace with them, the Huron negotiated a truce with the Iroquois and word came of 1200 Fox Indian warriors wanting to join the Seneca.<sup>85</sup> Both the Huron and Fox Indians already had villages of their people living among the Seneca and kept in communication. In May 1696, Louis XIV wrote Frontenac to question the defection of the Indian allies for better trade prospects through the English and Iroquois. Frontenac was given the option

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<sup>82</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:505, Frontenac to Pontchartrain.

<sup>83</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:508.

<sup>84</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:573, Louis XIV to Frontenac, May 8, 1694.

<sup>85</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:633.

to pursue one more military campaign as the French King informed him that: “there is no appearance of his being able to support for a long time the expense to which the Canada war subjects him.” He also remarked that: “The defection of the allies must have given them sufficiently to understand what little reliance can be placed on those Indians, whenever their interest will lead the latter to break with the French.”<sup>86</sup>

Frontenac’s assault on the Onondaga in 1696, had similar results to the French burning of the Seneca town by Denonville. The *Jesuit Relations* describes the campaign against the Onondaga with 2,200 men in the campaign including 500 Indians, chiefly Hurons, Christian Iroquois and Abenakis with a minimal participation by the western Indian Nations. In his message to the King, Frontenac describes his great victory over the Onondagas, “the master of the other Iroquois Nations” and “the terror of all the Indians of this country.” In addition, he stated that: “to add further to the brilliancy of the affair.”<sup>87</sup> Once again, the *Jesuit Relations* in volume 65 offers a different account stating that during: “the Expedition which has Cost the King 50,000 ecu...The French captured only an old man 80 years of age, who was almost blind, also a lame old woman.”<sup>88</sup> The French were attacked on their way home while a number of subsequent Iroquois attacks on French settlements began again with 20 or 30 persons killed or captured with their farms burned and their cattle slaughtered.

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<sup>86</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:638, Louis XIV to Frontenac, May 26, 1696.

<sup>87</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:639, Frontenac to Louis XIV.

<sup>88</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 65:27–29, Canadian Affairs in 1696.

By 1696, Louis XIV was running out of funds and tiring of war as he was losing in Europe. He ordered the western fur trading posts closed again and Frontenac was directed to make peace with the Iroquois, even, if necessary, without including the western allies of France; that is, he was authorized by Louis XIV to pursue the course that had discredited and imperiled the colony under the rule of Denonville.<sup>89</sup> Once again, the French considered an attack on Orange or Albany as a way of subduing the Iroquois since it represented their supply line for munitions of war.<sup>90</sup> When France sought to curtail fur trading with the Western Indians and close their trading posts, they reconsidered as they understood these relationships were vital to retaining their loyalty in battle with the Iroquois or English. Cutting trade would force these Indian nations to work with the Iroquois and trade with the English. In the words of Pontchartrain, “The best means of keeping the Upper Nations divided and at war with the Iroquois, is for the French not to disturb the former in their trade.”<sup>91</sup> He also informed Frontenac that the results of his campaign against the Onondaga had “not been commensurate with your expectations.”

Frontenac learned that the Sioux had attacked the Miami twice killing over 3,000 while the Chippewa also attacked them, and the Ottawa were threatening.<sup>92</sup> Meanwhile the Miami were seeking support from the Huron and considering moving towards the

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<sup>89</sup> Parkman, *Count Frontenac*, 441, *Mémoire du Roy pour Frontenac et Champigny*, Mai 26, 1696.

<sup>90</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:660, 1697.

<sup>91</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:662, Pontchartrain to Frontenac, April 28, 1697.

<sup>92</sup> *Historical Collections: Collections and Researches made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 40 vols. (Lansing: Robert Smith Printing, 1876–1929), 33:173–174, The Cadillac Papers.

English while they also attacked French traders. The Huron played both sides of the fence with some favoring the Iroquois and English while others stayed with the French and ambushed a Seneca Hunting party west of Lake Erie killing about Fifty.<sup>93</sup> Frontenac heard of the shortage of trade goods and war materials while French traders were disappearing due to lack of trade goods and poor market conditions for beaver pelts. He tried to keep the focus on the Iroquois stating: “I am pleased with the blow you have inflicted on the Iroquois.”<sup>94</sup>

The wars between the western Indian Nations continued and a famine spread across Canada along with a mutiny of the French traders who were being told to curtail their business with the Indians. Frontenac scheduled a conference with the Western Indians where the Ottawa spoke first and told Frontenac: “Father! Formerly you furnished us powder and iron to conquer our enemies but now we are in want of everything...in order to fight those whom we have just destroyed. They have powder and iron.” The Chief of the Pottawatomie added: “the French come to visit us no more. if the French quit us, this is the last time we shall come to talk with you.”<sup>95</sup> To this, Frontenac addressed the Indians: “A Father loveth his children, and is very glad to see them. You see I love war; the campaign I made last year against the Iroquois is proof of it...turn your Tomahawk only toward the land of the Iroquois...I always had you supplied with powder and iron. I continue still disposed to supply you...I am always laboring to annihilate the Iroquois and am meditating his destruction. The Iroquois who is in much

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<sup>93</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:672.

<sup>94</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Document Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:674–675, Frontenac meets with western Indians, 1697.

<sup>95</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:672–673.



greater want of powder and iron than you.”<sup>96</sup> Although his response to the Indians was contrary to guidance from Louis XIV, he was not willing to abandon his Indian allies until he was forced to do so. While the English told the Iroquois that the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick that concluded the Nine Years War included them, Frontenac continued to arm and encourage their Indian allies to attack the Iroquois.

In 1698, Pontchartrain notified Frontenac that: “The King having given peace to Europe” while he sought an agreement with English for peace with the Iroquois. He also added that while this was worked out, the English were not to give “any aid to the Iroquois for the purpose of waging war against us.” They were further notified that their Indian allies were to remain at peace also as they worked out the details of the Peace in North America.<sup>97</sup>

The Ottawa responded with attacking an Onondaga hunting party near Quinte and Frontenac’s response in an address to the western Nations was: “I do not lay aside the Tomahawk against the Iroquois. On the contrary, I am determined to strike them harder than ever. Always distrust the Iroquois.”<sup>98</sup> The directive of the king did not take effect as Frontenac chose to maneuver for an opportunity to deliver a decisive blow against the Five Nations. In spite of all the evils that attended the forest posts, it would have been a mistake to abandon them as Champigny saw the necessity of compromise. Even Fort Frontenac was retained after repeated directions to abandon it. The policy of the governor

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<sup>96</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:674–675.

<sup>97</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:677, Pontchartrain to Frontenac, March, 1698.

<sup>98</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:683, Frontenac to the Ottawa in Quebec, July 1798.

prevailed; the colony returned to its normal methods of growth, and so continued to the end. Again Frontenac was advised that: “You know too well the history of Canada not to be aware that the war we have sustained for so many years against the Iroquois with so much care and expense, arises only from the desire of the late M’ de la Barre to carry on trade with the most distant Nations...To these considerations must be added the sacrileges, impieties and abominations perpetrated by the French with the Indians. All these reasons will induce you, no doubt to execute strictly the orders which have been sent to you on this subject.”<sup>99</sup>

Now came the question of peace with the Iroquois, to whose mercy Frontenac was authorized to leave his western allies. He was the last man to accept such permission. Since the burning of Onondaga, the Iroquois negotiations with the western tribes had been broken off, and several battles had occurred. This was what Frontenac wanted, but at the same time it promised him fresh trouble; for, while he was determined to prevent the Iroquois from making peace with the allies without his authority, he was equally determined to compel them to do so. There must be peace, though not till he could control its conditions.

Coming out of the War of Grand Alliance, France had been humbled militarily, had run out of international friends and was on the verge of bankruptcy again when Louis XIV was forced to curb his ambitions in North America. France and England met in 1698 respecting the Iroquois and Frontenac was informed that the English had agreed to withhold arms and powder to the Iroquois.

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<sup>99</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:678, Pontchartrain to Count de Frontenac, May 21, 1698.

Frontenac continued to ignore the guidance to seek a peaceful resolution as he realized that most of the Iroquois had no interest or trust in peace with him. He was reminded of the notice of peace between the Kings of England and France in 1698 by the newly arrived New York Governor Bellomont who brought the news from England. The Iroquois were told that they were now at peace, so a band of Onondaga hunters moved north to the area of Quinte where they were attacked by some Ottawa and their Chief Black Kettle was killed. This blow disrupted the Onondaga peace efforts and in a subsequent meeting with Frontenac, he told the Onondaga, “it merely depends on me to conclude peace for myself alone.”<sup>100</sup> He then proceeded to arm the Ottawa and told them to attack the Iroquois again. The Earl of Bellomont had a meeting with the Iroquois and heard of their attempts at peace and unprovoked attacks whereupon he sent Peter Schuyler and several other representatives from Albany to meet with Frontenac on account of the Iroquois. As Frontenac had threatened to attack the Onondaga again, Schuyler informed Frontenac that they would not allow “the Iroquois to be treated as enemies” and that he had provided them with sufficient arms and powder to defend themselves in addition to the promise of regular troops if needed. Frontenac continued his argument regarding the Iroquois in that: “We are their Masters, and will conduct them back ourselves when it pleaseth us.”<sup>101</sup> At this point, Governor Bellomont became more forceful with Frontenac telling him: “the hostilities of your people towards our Indians before the last war, were the principal cause of the king’s declaring war against France...I am astonished why you wish to undertake to continue the War with our

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<sup>100</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:685.

<sup>101</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:698.

Indians since it is a manifest infraction of the Treaty...I have given orders...in case they be attacked to give no quarter to Frenchmen or Indians...If you do not cause acts of hostility on your side to cease, you will be held responsible for any consequences which may follow, and I shall leave the world to judge who will be most in the wrong, you or I; you for having recommenced the war, I for defending our Indians against your hostilities.”<sup>102</sup> Frontenac remained unfazed and answered: “am I determined to pursue, unflinchingly, my course.”<sup>103</sup> He regarded this as an issue between a “Father and his Children” and “entirely distinct from the treaties of Peace and Friendship mutually concluded by the Kings our Master.” At this point, Louis XIV interceded to tell Frontenac: “In order that matters may not proceed to acts of hostility...I have agreed with my brother the King of England that in case acts of hostility be commenced they shall cease on one side and the other on the instant receipt of this letter...the Five Nations shall remain undisturbed.”<sup>104</sup> He repeated his instructions to Callières telling him to: “cease hostility on both sides to prevent the continuation of disputes and oblige them to remain at peace.”<sup>105</sup>

Before this was received in Canada, Frontenac passed away and Callières was named to succeed him and fulfill the King’s wishes for peace in Canada with the Five Nations and the English. His orders were: “cessation of all acts of hostility between the

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<sup>102</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:692, Bellomont to Frontenac, August 13, 1698.

<sup>103</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:694.

<sup>104</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:697, Louis XIV to Frontenac, March, 1699.

<sup>105</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:698, Louis XIV to Callières, April 27, 1699.

two nations respecting the Iroquois, uniting the forces of New France with those of New England in obliging these Indians to remain at peace, and to leave the other Nations, our allies, undisturbed. His Majesty does not doubt but that will be productive of tranquility throughout the whole country, and recommends Chevalier de Callières to conform himself exactly thereunto on his part...no further War expenses are to be incurred.”<sup>106</sup>

The English understood that the death of Frontenac opened the door for diplomatic process to end the conflict. With the death of Frontenac, the Iroquois notified the English that they were discussing Peace with the French. New York Governor Bellomont wrote: “the Indians are very much disturbed...which proceeds I find from two reasons chiefly, their own decrease in number...and the weakness of our garrisons, which make us contemptible in their eyes...we shall intirely loose the Five Nations of Indians unlesse an effectuall and speedy course be taken to retrieve their affection.”<sup>107</sup> In a conference between the Five Nations and New York in May 1699, the Iroquois responded to Governor Bellomont’s message that sought to limit their diplomacy with the French in Canada and other issues. Led by the speaker, Dekanissore, they welcomed the newly arrived Governor Bellomont and informed him that in this time of supposed peace: “we sustain great damage daily by the farr Indians, which is all done by the instigation of the French.” He added that “if any Indians doe us harm in our hunting we are to repell force with force, which we will doe, but withal desire your assistance of Arms and Ammunition...therefore pray that some ammunition may be delivered us...You say that

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<sup>106</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:700, Louis XIV to Callières and Champigny.

<sup>107</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:487, Earl of Bellomont to the Lords of Trade, April 13, 1699.

wee five nations are the King of England's subjects...if the French should make a warr upon us...lett us have assistance in reality and not be deluded with falsehoods as we have been formerly."<sup>108</sup>

The French had a set of bad choices in regards to dealing with the Iroquois. They launched several invasions that amounted to little and did not want to enter a war with both the Iroquois and English at the same time. They knew that if they made peace, the Ottawa and many western Indian nations would take their furs to Albany through the country of their new friends the Iroquois. In communication to Pontchartrain, Callières stated in 1700, "I hope the peace with the Iroquois may serve to settle advantageously for the King...their neutrality might be secured."<sup>109</sup> Diplomacy progressed to the point where Louis XIV wrote Callières to remark, "His Majesty has been quite pleased to learn that the Iroquois have not committed any act of hostility. He is persuaded that on being notified, as they are, of agreement on the part of the English to unite their forces with those of the French to oblige them to remain at peace...this cessation of hostilities must be henceforth regarded as a Peace."<sup>110</sup>

The English were aware of the effects of the warfare on the Five Nations and their Indian trade when after recognizing the death of Frontenac in 1698, they tried to discourage the Iroquois from making peace with the French while they told them to stop fighting with the French Indians and make peace. They refused to supply the Iroquois

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<sup>108</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:564, Answer of the Five Nations to the Earl of Bellomont's Message, May 9, 1699.

<sup>109</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:713, Callières to Pontchartrain, October 16, 1700.

<sup>110</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:704, Louis XIV to Callières, May 5, 1700.

with enough powder and lead to go to war. In Council with Col. Schuyler from New York in 1698, the Iroquois were told, “That this governmt hath always extended their care and protection over them, that on ye contrary ye French have always been perfidius to them, and they speake of peace they had war in their hearts...”<sup>111</sup> This was followed by Robert Livingston noting: “trade of Albany which formerly was very considerable both in regard to advancemt of his Majesties revenue...is palpably gone to decay...insomuch that the Inhabitants are much impoverished and discouraged to continue their trade. The occasion of all which difficulties and defects of trade I humbly conceive to proceed from ye French’s instigation of the far Indians to be in a continuall war with our Five Nations of Indians and threatening them if they should hunt on the other side of the Lake they would be destroyed by the French Indians.”<sup>112</sup> Due to this problem of trade, Governor Bellomont encouraged the Five Nations to make a peace with the other Indian nations so they could restore the previous trade. In summing up the Iroquois predicament, he added, “’Tis an easy matter to discern what the French have in view; when our Five Nations are destroyed, then will they engage those numerous Western Nations against us.”<sup>113</sup>

Recognizing the stalemate he was in and prompted by their two main allies the Christian Iroquois and Hurons, Callières followed up on Iroquois calls for Peace and pursued a lasting Peace. Dekannisore from Onondaga made several trips to Montreal to discuss Peace and when England tried to discourage peace with the French and promised

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<sup>111</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:499, Assembly of NY to Schuyler.

<sup>112</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:500.

<sup>113</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:505.

protection, Dekannisore reminded them that: “[We] gott no assistance [from the English] and that makes us afraid what to doe.”<sup>114</sup>

On August 29, 1700, New York Governor Bellomont advised the Chiefs of the Five Nations that: “You must needs be sensible that the Dowangnhaes, Twichtwicks, Ottawa, & Dionondades and other remote Indians are vastly more numerous than you Five Nations, and that by their continuall warring upon you they will in a few years totally destroy you. I should therefore think it prudence and good policy in you to try all possible means to fix a trade and correspondence with all those nations by which meanes you would reconcile them to your selves.”<sup>115</sup> New York then presented a gift of firearms, lead and gunpowder to the Five Nations to help defend themselves.

During a conference with Callières and the Iroquois in September, they stated that they were attacked by the Far Nations and had 200 men ready to go out and attack when they remembered that they are supposed to be in a general peace.<sup>116</sup> Callières said that if any blow be struck, to tell him and he would have satisfaction done. He thanked them for not retaliating for the attack and promised a council in Spring to end the war officially. During the Colonel Romer visit to Onondaga on September 3, 1700, the Seneca notified the Governor that “they are now sending a good body of men to fall upon these nations and take revenge on them.” Romer responded that: “Children Sinnekes, it is now all over peace. Who will go to warr against the Waganhaes must first acquaint me with it.” In

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<sup>114</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:893, Schuyler’s Visit to Onondaga, June 19, 1701.

<sup>115</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:735, Colonel Peter Schuyler, NY with Iroquois Chiefs.

<sup>116</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:717–718, Conference between Callières and the Iroquois September 1700.



October 1700, the Earl of Bellomont informed the London Board of Trade that the Seneca had launched an attack on the Huron and Ottawa for killing several Iroquois while they were on a peaceful hunt. Despite trying to end the attacks, the English blamed the French and warned they were not to be trusted.<sup>117</sup> They also responded by imploring the Seneca to live at peace as they planted the Tree of Peace at Onondaga. At this time, the Huron and Christian Iroquois acknowledged their understanding that a general peace was now in effect and preparations began for the final ceremony and exchange of prisoners. Bellomont added that some of the French traders would like to come to trade at Albany with their Indians but they were prevented by the ongoing conflict. The Albany merchants were suffering and hoped for a renewal of trade.<sup>118</sup> The English wanted peace to open trade with the Farr Nations but they did not want the Five Nations under control or in league with the French. At this time, the Five Nations entered into a series of intense negotiations with both the French and English which culminated in the Great Peace of 1701 and the Treaty of Nanfan.

In July 1701, a set of Five Nations Chiefs met with New York Governor Nanfan to negotiate a Peace with the English concurrently with Peace with the French. Governor Nanfan opened with: "I am glad to see you here and your number is soe much increased...if I had known you had been soe numerous, the present would have been more considerable; I shall conclude with a caution that you be careful, none of your

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<sup>117</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:768, Bellomont to the Lords of Trade.

<sup>118</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:798, 739, Romer's visit to Onondaga, September 1700.

people be deluded by the French.”<sup>119</sup> He added: “You may be assured not only of the favour and protection of the great King of England my Master, our great King William is, whose wisdom and conduct is admired in Europe as well as here in America. He will support you against all his and your Enemies. The King has sent you some choice arms and ammunition which shall be now given you. We do also bemoan the blood you lost last war with French.” The Five Nations answered with: “Wee doe give and render up all that land where the Beaver hunting is which wee won with the sword eighty years ago. Pray let goods be sold as cheap as formerly. If a war should break out between us and the French, wee desire you to be ready to assist and defend us. The French priests have been the ruine of our Country.” The actual land that the English was to protect for the: “free hunting for us and the descendants from us the Five nations for ever” was an area from the top of the lower Michigan to the NW, south down the Maumee River to the Mississippi and east to the Allegheny Mountains and up to the Saint Lawrence River.<sup>120</sup> Through the negotiations, the Five Nations asserted their independence and neutrality by signing treaties with both European powers.

In a feat of diplomatic skill, two sets of Iroquois Chiefs met with both the French and English separately to hammer out agreements for peace and security while attaining a position of independence and neutrality between the two powers who were becoming more determined on conflict in North America. Dekanissore took the lead with the Iroquois Chiefs meeting with the officials of New France in Montreal. The Great Peace of 1701 was a true compromise between the Iroquois and the French. The Iroquois settled

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<sup>119</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:903–904.

<sup>120</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:896–910.

with claiming the land south of Lake Erie and east of Detroit and the Maumee River while giving up other land to the north of little value to them with the decline in the Beaver trade. They maintained the prime hunting area of Ohio. Over 90 years, the two sides had fought but with Peace in Europe, France in a state of near-bankruptcy and the English telling the Iroquois that they would not support any more wars at that time, there was no valid reason to continue with the endless war.

La Potherie summed up the French view when he wrote: “It is a strange thing that three or four thousand souls can make tremble a whole new world...New France is often desolated by their wars, and they are feared through a space of more than fifteen hundred leagues of the country of our allies.”<sup>121</sup> Even ten years after the Great Peace of 1701, Vaudreuil admitted that the Iroquois “were more to be feared” than all the English colonies.<sup>122</sup> In the end, two rational governments concluded there was no justification for continuing a war with little to gain.

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<sup>121</sup> La Potherie, *Histoire de l’Amerique Septentrionale*; Anthony F. C. Wallace, “Origins of Iroquois Neutrality: The Grand Settlement of 1701,” *Pennsylvania History* 24, no. 3 (July 1757), 223–235.

<sup>122</sup> Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 426.

## Chapter 4: The Quiet Time

Following the Great Peace of 1701, there was a quiet time in Iroquois country when they could rest somewhat while the world moved around them. They pursued neutrality between France and England and did not get involved in Confederacy business much as there was not a lot of coordination. By the Peace of 1701, Callières pledged to act as arbiter in any conflict regarding the various Indian nations in saying: “if it happens that one of my children struck another, the one who was attacked should not take revenge, but he should come to me.”<sup>1</sup> The Huron took the opportunity to move to Detroit immediately while Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac followed from his post at Michilimackinac. At this time, Father Carheil from Michilimakinac made some observations on the French activities in the west. He criticizes the establishment of the post at Detroit saying that the local tribes were not interested since it was too close to the Iroquois. He stated: “they no longer look upon Detroit in any other light than That of an Enemy’s country, where they can have no Wish to dwell” as their original thought was this post was meant to aid the destruction of the Iroquois so “they peaceably enjoy all the lands in his Country.” Carheil is probably speaking for the remaining Indians at Michillimakinac as some had fled their homeland of Michigan to avoid the Iroquois war parties. It is important to realize that this Jesuit was once assigned to the Cayuga and they had him removed.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:722, Peace between the French and Indians.

<sup>2</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 65:251–253, Father Carheil, 1702.

The Iroquois agreed to remain east of the Detroit area although they also claimed the isthmus between Lakes Huron and Erie while the French asked for permission to build a trading post at Detroit. As the Five Nations had already agreed to allow the Huron to move to the area of Detroit to be closer to their relations living with the Iroquois, they agreed to the French post. In establishing Detroit, Cadillac brought together several tribes in order to “keep the Iroquois in awe. It is right that you should be informed that, more than fifty years ago, the Iroquois drove most of the tribes by force of arms to the end of Lake Superior, that is, five hundred leagues to the north of this post. It appears, therefore, that God has raised me up like another Moses, to go and deliver this people from its captivity...to bring it back to the land of its fathers...What does Montreal complain of concerning the post of Detroit since it was an abandoned country, the possession of which had remained with the Iroquois...I succeeded in making them turn their arms against the Iroquois, on whom we had declared war, perhaps unjustly, on false statements which had been made to the court. The way must first be cleared towards the Iroquois, the very memory of whom must be wiped out.”<sup>3</sup> This report to the Governor of New France indicates that the establishment of the new Fort at Detroit was questioned and that Cadillac continued to stoke fear and hatred towards the Iroquois even after the Great Peace of 1701.

The land south and west of the Seneca became a productive hunting land where Iroquois hunting parties and the occasional war party passed through. One prescient letter

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<sup>3</sup> *Historical Collections: Collections and Researches made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 33:169–170, The Cadillac Papers, Report of Detroit 1703 by La Mothe Cadillac.

from Sir William Penn after his return to England to James Logan, the Secretary of the Pennsylvania stated: “send what thou canst by Guy—bear and buck skins for they bear an advance...bears more especially ...I could have sold them almost for what I would.”<sup>4</sup> As the Ohio Iroquois were mostly young hunters, they led a more transient life and efforts to start traditional villages were not pursued. Firearms made the hunters more efficient and as they were now hunting for deer hides, they soon reduced the game population near their towns to the point where they had to move on. Corn grew well in the fertile fields of Ohio also but the societal structure was not always there to support an established agrarian village lifestyle. These western Seneca also developed a more independent attitude and political viewpoint separate from the traditional central fire at Onondaga.

In 1702, the Wyandot and Miami traveled to Albany, New York in order to meet with Colonel Schuyler to set up a trade arrangement and to ask for an improved trail at the Oneida Carrying Place that connected the Mohawk River and Lake Ontario through Woods Creek. Schuyler was very welcoming to both and promised improvements to the trail and a guarantee of good treatment from the Five Nations since they were now in the heart of Iroquois country.<sup>5</sup> This arrangement served to distance these nations from the French sphere of influence and insured good relations with the Five Nations. In his Report of Detroit in 1703, Cadillac mentioned their Indian allies had been at war with the Sioux and he had negotiated a truce despite the fact that the Sioux had approached the

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<sup>4</sup> William Penn, et al., *Correspondence between William Penn and James Logan, Secretary of the Province of Pennsylvania, and Others, 1700–1750: From the Original Letters in Possession of the Logan Family*, 2 vols., ed. Edward Armstrong (Philadelphia: Historical society of Pennsylvania, 1870–1872), 1:73, 171, William Penn to James Logan, November 4, 1701.

<sup>5</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 4:979–981.

Miami for peace talks and then slaughtered 3,000 Miami. The Ottawa were also uneasy about being so close to the Iroquois.<sup>6</sup>

As of May 30, 1703, Louis XIV seemed happy with Detroit although he understood that some were afraid that the Iroquois would attack it.<sup>7</sup> “It is certain that you have nothing so important in the present state of affairs as the maintenance of peace with the Iroquois and other Indian nations and his majesty will approve all measures you will adopt to that end; but it will be always necessary that you effect it with the dignity suitable to yourself and without evincing any fear to them.”<sup>8</sup> The French were also concerned about the Huron and their interest in pursuing an alliance with the Seneca and Miami in order to get access to the English traders who could provide better deals than the French could. In his subsequent conference with the Five Nations, Vaudreuil agreed to maintain Black Gowns (Jesuits) with the Seneca and Onondoga, station Joncaire with the Seneca and assured them that the French and Seneca: “will do everything to preserve this peace.”<sup>9</sup> The Joncaires were important ambassadors and their connection to the Seneca ran deep while Niagara became a pivotal location for the future of New France.

The Quiet time is a relative term as there was still some conflict but no widespread wars. Callières and Vaudreuil continued to pressure the Ottawa to behave and when they attacked some Iroquois trading at Fort Frontenac in 1705, the Iroquois

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<sup>6</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 65:22, 223, 252–254, 1702, Carheil to Callières.

<sup>7</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:742.

<sup>8</sup> *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 21 vols. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1902), 16:228–229, Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil, June 6, 1706.

<sup>9</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:746–747, Conference between Vaudreuil and the Indians, November 14, 1703.

threatened to go back to war. To satisfy the Iroquois demands for restitution, the Ottawa promised to capture some Sioux and bring them to the Iroquois to replace the men lost during this attack at a time of peace.<sup>10</sup> Two years later, the Ottawa had still not delivered the captives and the Iroquois approached Vaudreuil with the request to: “Abandon the Outaouas to us, and hold us back no longer, our warriors are ready.”<sup>11</sup> The French then delivered some Iroquois captives and some of the Sioux promised them by the Ottawas but they had to return the next year and retrieve more to complete the exchange even though the Seneca never forgave the insult. Louis XIV agreed to send a canoe to collect the captives in 1707 and escort them to the Seneca. With another English war looming on the horizon, New France wanted to maintain a good relationship with both the Iroquois and the Ottawa, the two major Indian powers in the northeast.

Vaudreuil preferred to remain the middleman to make sure the job was done and he did not want the former adversaries becoming too friendly although the Lake Indians were not happy with the French trying to look out for the Iroquois suddenly when they had been their mortal enemy for 90 years. Vaudreuil was implored to maintain good relations among the Indian nations to preserve the colony although this was difficult as the same correspondence refers to Fox Indian battles, the Ottawa attacking Fort Detroit and killing Frenchmen while they also attacked the Miami Indians. The king remarked that he: “would be very glad could the giving presents to the Indians be dispensed with,

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<sup>10</sup> Brett Rushforth, “‘A Little Flesh We Offer You’: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (October 2003), 796.

<sup>11</sup> *Historical Collections: Collections and Researches made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 33:285–286, Talk of Vaudreuil with the Sonnotouans, August 25, 1706.



as it creates an immense expense which it is necessary to avoid; renders them lazy besides, and causes them to regard presents... as their due.”<sup>12</sup>

In May 1715, Longeuil and Joncaire visited the Five Nations and remarked that “they had never found them so haughty. They had been joined by savages coming from Carolina with whom they amount to about 3000 men bearing arms.”<sup>13</sup> The Iroquois had refused to assist in large numbers in what became the First Fox War although they agreed to sell 300 minots of corn to the French at Detroit and Michilimackinac who had suffered several bad harvests. Joncaire and Vaudreuil negotiated the sale shortly after the Seneca had raided the Illinois, killed several and taken some prisoner whom they refused to turn over to the French which was a break in the Great Peace of 1701. The French were uncertain if the Seneca intended to renew a wider war but they let it pass and the Illinois did not retaliate.<sup>14</sup>

The 1713 Treaty of Utrecht between France and England addressed the Ohio Valley and the Iroquois were discussed within the agreement stating that they would be obedient to both the English and French King. The final Article 15 states: “Let the subjects of France inhabiting Canada and others afflict with no impediments or molestation in future the five Nations of Cantons of Indians subject to the power of Great Britain as well as the remaining natives of America joined to them in friendship. The natives of those same regions will approach at their pleasure the British and French

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<sup>12</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:809, Louis XIV to Vaudreuil, June 30, 1707.

<sup>13</sup> *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 16:315.

<sup>14</sup> *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 16:314.

colonies for the purpose of encouraging trade back and forth without the molestation or impediment of British or French subjects.”<sup>15</sup>

Pennsylvania Traders began moving up and down the Allegheny River by 1715 as far as Lake Erie and west to Sandusky. Following the Great Peace of 1701, many Seneca and their tributary tribes drifted west in small hunting bands and formed semi-permanent towns often at the same site as previous Erie towns as they were close to trails, waterways, cleared agricultural land and offered good hunting. These towns became known as Logstown, Kuskuskies, Aliquippa’s Town, Crowtown and others while the Iroquois Confederacy also sent leaders to the Area to supervise tributary tribes such as the Shawnee and Delaware who began to migrate west into Ohio. These included Tanachrison (Half King), Scaryouady, and Old Belt of Wampum (White Thunder). They reported back to the Confederacy Chiefs at Onondaga but also met independently with the representatives from Pennsylvania like Conrad Weiser and George Croghan.

Disease epidemics continued to sweep through the Five Nations and the Ohio Indians beginning in 1716 and Pennsylvania became aware of new diseases being brought from Europe so: “An Act to prevent Sickly Vessels coming into this government” passed in Philadelphia following word of plague and pestilence.<sup>16</sup> Pennsylvania also planned to meet with Virginia to discuss peace and understanding with their Indian neighbors as they told the Iroquois: “I do assure you, the Governour of Virginia is a great and good man; He loves the Indians as his Children and so protects

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<sup>15</sup> Treaty of Utrecht, 1713, Article 15,

<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/utrecht.htm>

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 16 vols. (Philadelphia: J. Severns, 1860), 3:112.

and defends them.”<sup>17</sup>At this same council, the Iroquois complained of the unfair trade at Albany and sought to open the market to Pennsylvania traders as the Iroquois Chief Ghesaont remarked to the Pennsylvania Governor in 1721: “they once had clear sky at Albany but now all was overcast as they could no longer trade there.”<sup>18</sup>

Alexander Spotswood became Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1710 and he became a proponent of strategic planning for Virginia that would ultimately affect Ohio and the future of the colonies. He arrived as a British bureaucratic whose mission was to collect taxes and maintain order. Early in his time of service, he noted the damage done to North Carolina by the 1714 Tuscarora War and for a time, Virginia feared that the Seneca would travel south to support the Tuscarora. He then observed the damage done in South Carolina by the Yamasee War and although, Virginia had now reduced any threat from the local Indians, he was aware that France was expanding its settlement in the west to the Great Lakes and south to Louisiana. In a letter to Whitehall, he stated that the “British Plantations are in a manner surrounded.”<sup>19</sup>

As beaver pelts became more difficult to obtain, they also lost market value in Europe while deer hides were in demand. For this reason, Indian hunters from a number of nations descended on the Ohio valley which was a prime deer hunting area. A competent Indian hunter could kill 100 deer or more in a season, although there was

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<sup>17</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 3:127, William Keith to Five Nations at Conestogoe Council, July 8, 1721.

<sup>18</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 3:131, Ghesaont to Pennsylvania Governor at Philadelphia council with Five Nations, July 20, 1721.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander Spotswood, *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood*, 2 vols., ed. R. A. Brock (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1882–1885), 1:296, Spotswood to Board of Trade, August 14, 1718.

tremendous waste since little of this went to feeding people and much was left as spoils to feed the bears and wolves. Decimating the deer herds resulted in hunger the Indians had never seen. This resulted in wandering hunting camps made of small family or tribal groups and included hunters from different nations. Deer hides could be brought into Niagara and wandering traders also traveled out to the Indian towns. Events in Europe spurred the movement of Indian hunters into Ohio as the cattle disease Rinderpest, an acute and highly contagious cattle disease which existed in Europe for centuries, came in epidemic waves. A severe form began to show in 1710 and raged in the period of 1709–1720.<sup>20</sup> Deer hides became valuable to substitute for leather from cattle and Pennsylvania traders were able to carry them back over the mountains from the Ohio Valley.

From the beginning of his tenure, Virginia Governor Spotswood understood the limits of Virginia as the high ridge of the Blue Ridge Mountains but in 1716, he learned of a pass through the mountains and launched an expedition to the northwest Piedmont where he discovered the Shenandoah Valley, claiming it for England. He was accompanied by some militia and land speculators of which Virginia had an abundance. Spotswood came to realize that he worked in a colony controlled by wealthy land owners and speculators such as the Lees, Washingtons and others. Furthermore, their influence extended back to England where politicians also played the game of real estate speculation. The twin influences of greed as described as Land Hunger combined with ensuring the security of his colony from the French and French Indian attacks brought him to focus on the future of Virginia directed to the west and specifically the northwest.

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<sup>20</sup> John Broad, “Cattle Plague in Eighteenth-Century England,” *Agricultural History Review* 31, no. 2 (1983): 104–115.

The land was there for the taking and he just had to get there before the French did. In regards to the Indians living there, he assumed that they would disappear with the advance of civilization as they did in Virginia. In 1720, Spotswood decided to become a Virginian and softened his tenor in enforcing the Kings laws while he pursued land speculation. In pursuing this course, Spotswood arranged a meeting with the Iroquois to resolve issues of passage through Virginia and limits to each other's territory. In 1722, Virginia entered into a Treaty with the Five Nations whereby, the Iroquois agreed to route their war parties to the west of the crest of the mountains away from Virginia and Virginia agreed that their western boundary was set at the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains or the setting sun which Virginia later came to interpret as the Pacific Ocean.<sup>21</sup> Pennsylvania also sent the French Trader Le Tort to explore the Ohio Country and he described a Seneca town on the Ohio River run by Queen Aliquippa as "a great resort of the Iroquois." It was not a large town but served as a supply and rest stop for Indian hunters and war parties traveling south and west.<sup>22</sup>

Niagara remained a focus for the French due to its strategic location. Marquis de Vaudreuil observed in May 25, 1725: "Should the Iroquois refuse to listen to M de Longueuil's proposals and declare openly for the English...and oppose the construction of our barks and of the house at Niagara, the Upper country trade must be absolutely

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<sup>21</sup> Peter Wraxall, *An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs Contained in Four Folio Volumes: Transacted in the Colony of New York, from the Year 1678 to the Year 1751*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), 141, Spotswood to the Five Nations.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 135 vols. (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns, 1852–1935), 1:301, the Examination of James Le Tort, Indian Trader, 1731.

abandoned and we must anticipate the seizure of all the posts we have in that quarter.”<sup>23</sup>

It was announced on June 10, 1725 that: “Sieur de Jonquiere...told him that the Iroquois would not prevent the construction of our two barks, nor oppose the establishment at Niagara, only requiring that no stone fort should be erected there.”<sup>24</sup> This Fort came to control much of the fur trade and provided a flood of trade and gifts to Iroquois country as it also marked the Seneca country as a center of trade, diplomacy and intelligence as the two European powers sought to keep track of the other’s movements. However, the Fort did not stop English traders from coming west and offering better trade deals than the French could match. In 1730, the Fox Indians were involved in another war with the French and their allied Indians in Wisconsin. Realizing their treacherous situation, the Fox reached out to the Seneca to take them in and possibly protect them on their march east.<sup>25</sup> To preserve their status of neutrality the Seneca agreed to take them in as they already had a village of Fox Indians living among them but they would not travel west to provide any military support. Unfortunately, the Fox were surrounded by the French and allied Indians and killed on the prairies of central Illinois with few being spared. As the Pennsylvania proprietary powers began to wane, a wave of immigrants began to hit Philadelphia with the bulk of them palatinate Germans and Scots-Irish. The decision was made by the Board of Trade to settle the Palatine Germans: “Whereby they will be a good barrier between her Majesty’s Subjects and the French & their Indians.”<sup>26</sup>In 1732, due to

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<sup>23</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:951.

<sup>24</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9: 951.

<sup>25</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 5:911–912.

<sup>26</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 5:88, Board of Trade respecting the Palatines, August 30, 1709.

settler encroachment on their Pennsylvania land where the Shawnee and Delaware were living, the Iroquois told them to either defend the land or move west. The Shawnee complained to Governor Gordon of Pennsylvania: “About nine years agoe the 5 nations told us...we did nott Do well to Setle there...3 years affore, the 5 nations came and Said our Land is goeing to bee taken from us...Therefore, you Shawanese Look back toward Ohio, The place from whence you Came, and Return thitherward”<sup>27</sup> The displaced Shawnee and Delaware had to move into mountainous western Pennsylvania or kept traveling west into the Ohio Valley. Some Shawnee moved west to settle with the French at Detroit in pursuit of better hunting and to get away from the settlers and Iroquois. In 1737, Conrad Weiser noted when he entered an Indian village near Shamokin where everybody was starving and felt that the Creator was resolved to destroy the Indians. One elder told them: “You inquire after the cause why game has become scarce. I will tell you. You kill it for the sake of skins, which you give for strong liquor and drown your senses, and kill one another...If you will do good and cease from your sins, I will bring them back; and if not, I will destroy you from off the earth.”<sup>28</sup> Hunting for the Ohio Indians took on a more commercial aspect rather than the traditional subsistence model.

Detroit continued to suffer from intertribal conflict as the Cadillac Papers of 1738 show a somewhat different spin than the initial reports: “We are losing a lot of trade to the English around Niagara and need to make better allies of the Shawnee as they “hate and fear the fierce temper of the Iroquois...while we can count on the Huron for All the

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<sup>27</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1:329, Message Shawnee Chiefs to Gov. Gordon, 1732.

<sup>28</sup> Conrad Weiser, *Narrative of a Journey to Onondago*, Conrad Weiser (Philadelphia: John Pennington, 1853), 17.

savages-who are guided exclusively by feeling of the Hurons, who may be regarded as the bravest, the most civilized and the most trustworthy tribe in this country, and the irreconcilable enemies of the Iroquois-seem most devoted to our interests.”<sup>29</sup> Shortly thereafter, in 1738, A quarrel arose between the Ottawa and the Huron with the Huron deciding not to continue with France’s southern military campaigns against the Chickasaw. The Huron claimed that the Ottawa had threatened to attack them so they must leave Detroit. The French were concerned that they will move to the Seneca as Father de la Richardie laments: “the Iroquois were taking advantage of the fears of the Hurons to attract them.” The Huron said that the Ottawa were destroying their corn fields and the French could not settle the dispute.<sup>30</sup>

With the Onset of the War of Austrian Succession in 1740, there was increased attention placed on the Ohio Valley, initially by the French and then by the colony of Virginia. The War of Austrian Succession took place mainly in Europe between 1740–1748 with a campaign of diplomatic maneuvering among the Ohio Indians while the English put a lockdown on French shipping to Canada. The Royal Navy proved its worth as France was blockaded much of the war which ended in the Treaty of Versailles. This was also a time of aggressive outreach to the Indians by the Pennsylvania traders who always had a vast supply of trade goods and far better prices than the French could afford. The Iroquois leveraged their friendship with the English to maintain positive

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<sup>29</sup> *Historical Collections: Collections and Researches made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 12:192.

<sup>30</sup> *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 279, Memorandum of the Affair of the Huron of Detroit.



relations with the neighboring Indians like the Wyandot who brought the Miami into the English sphere of influence.

Beauharnois noted on October 10, 1743 that a colony of hunters had developed around the White River (Cuyahoga) with approximately six hundred hunters from about eight different Indian Nations but predominantly Five Nations and Wyandot. He remarked that the Iroquois hunting camp around the White (Cuyahoga) River in Ohio requested a trader as they had lots of deer hides and needed powder and lead so a<sup>31</sup>French trader named Saguin set up as a trader there in 1742 while George Croghan gradually tried to move in from Pennsylvania with better prices and more consistent trade goods. Also in July 1743, three Janondadee (Tionontati) Chiefs traveled to Albany from the western end of Lake Erie to remind the Five Nations of their covenant between them and the Five Nations and they wanted to know what all was involved in this agreement. They presented the belt that had been presented at the time. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs answered that this was made 40 years ago when they returned to the Ohio to be close to their Iroquois relations. It represented an everlasting Peace and open road for communication, trade and protection.<sup>32</sup>

In fall of 1744, George Croghan expanded his trade near the mouth of the Cuyahoga River while offering competition to the French traders for deer hides. Croghan prospered and began to send traders down the Ohio and west on Lake Erie to trade with the Wyandot at Sandusky. Angered by this loss of trade, the French asked the Ottawa to

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<sup>31</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:1099, Abstract of dispatch of Messrs de Beauharnois and Hocquart of October 10, 1743.

<sup>32</sup> Wraxall, *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs*, 230–231.

attack the English traders. By this time, England and France were at war again and French Indian allies attempted to attack Croghan at his post in April 1745. The Seneca came to his defense, giving him adequate time to pack up all his pelts and return to Pennsylvania.

In 1744, one of the more important Treaty sessions between the Five Nations and Pennsylvania occurred at Lancaster with other Indians and the colony of Virginia also in attendance. The New York Governor commented that: “the Six Nations and the Shawonese are far from being on Good Terms.”<sup>33</sup> while a Five Nations Chief reminded everybody that: “but as to what lies beyond the Mountains, we conquered the Nations residing there.”<sup>34</sup> Virginia had reimagined their colonial charter and made their case for claiming all the Ohio lands as their colonial land extended all the way west to the “Great sea.” However, the Iroquois did not agree.<sup>35</sup> In conclusion, the Iroquois Chief Cannasatego advised the English to follow the Iroquois example. “Our wise forefathers established union and amity between the five nations; this has made us formidable; this has given us great weight and authority with our neighboring Nations. We are a powerful Confederacy; and by your observing the same Methods our wise Forefathers have taken, you will acquire such Strength and Power’ therefore whatever befalls you, never fall out with one another.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 4:739.

<sup>34</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 4:712.

<sup>35</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 4:717.

<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736–1762* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1938), x.

In 1745 a village of Huron led by Nicholas left Detroit to move to Sandusky to get closer to the Seneca and away from the Ottawa and French. Due to their ties to both the Ohio Country and the Iroquois, they enjoyed a position of power and leadership among the other Indian nations that filtered into the vacuum that was the Ohio Country. George Croghan returned as King George's War progressed and was even more busy by the winter of 1746 because the English blockade of New France was cutting off the source of French trade goods that the Indians wanted. In 1745, the English captured the French fortress at Louisbourg further limiting supplies arriving at Quebec and this was felt in the Indian trade in little time. Although this conflict ended quickly and Louisbourg was given back to the French in 1748, Canada's vulnerability was apparent in North America and their Native allies in Ohio and the Lakes made note of France's weakness. According to the 1746 Report of Boisherbert on Indian Affairs: "Our domiciliated Indians refuse us their assistance, not being willing to strike those who have killed us...as the Iroquois are most feared and respected by all the nations as well as the Hurons, they possess a great ascendancy over all the rest."<sup>37</sup> He further adds the English are fomenting this conspiracy through gifts to the Indians and questions the future of New France when he stated: "The French are in the midst of an immense forest, which is intersected by a great river St. Lawrence. When ascending those rivers that are very rapid, 'tis necessary to go close to the shore. The enemy, lying in ambush in the woods, can easily defeat us."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:83–84, Report of Boisherbert on Indian Affairs, 1747.

<sup>38</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 83–84.

The naval shortcomings and resulting shortage of French trade goods provided an opportunity for both the Five Nations and English to increase their presence and prominence in the region. At this time, Iroquois centers of influence remained in the Cuyahoga Valley and around the forks of the Ohio but the Iroquois were able to bolster ties between the Miami and the Pennsylvania traders to support anti-French sentiment. George Croghan wrote to Richard Peters in 1747 that: “Those Ingans ware always in the French Intrest till now, Butt this Spring, almost all the Ingans in the Woods, have declared against ye French...Ingans are pretty much Led by Any Thing that will Tend to their own self Intrest.”<sup>39</sup>

By 1747, Pennsylvania Governor Richard Peters began to recognize the independence and the strength of the Ohio Indian nations and began dealing directly with them rather than the New York Confederacy Chiefs. In 1747, the Ohio Nations returned to Philadelphia and asked for assistance as the French were beginning to come in numbers down the Ohio River. In the 1747 meeting at Lancaster, the Ohio Iroquois led by Scarouady expressed frustration with the lack of leadership coming from the traditional Iroquois Chiefs at Onondaga.

Nevertheless, a collection of Ohio Indian leaders traveled to Philadelphia to state their case for arms and powder to defend themselves from the French and their Indian allies. The resulting 1747 Treaty with the Ohio Indians only had 10 Indians present but the meaning of the relationship was more important for it represented a breakthrough in diplomacy for the Ohio Nations and Pennsylvania. The leader was Scarayouady and he

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<sup>39</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1:742, Croghan to Peters, May 26, 1747.

planned to start a council fire for all Indians on the Ohio in the spring stating: “Brethren, We...are warriors, living in Ohio and address you on behalf of ourselves, and the rest of the Warriors of the Six Nations.<sup>40</sup> Messengers were sent by all the English to Onondogo to tell us that the French had begun the War on the Land in the Indian Countries...and they now desired...the Indians would take up their Hatchet, but they were still denied by the old Men at the Fire at Onondogo...At last the Warriors and Captains consulted together and resolved to take up the English Hatchet against the will of their old people, and to lay their old people aside, as of no Use but in Time of Peace.”<sup>41</sup>

The Council Response was: “Brethren Warriors of the Six Nations, we are always glad to see our Brethren, and are particularly pleased at this critical time...You are sensible of the constant Friendship this Government has always shewn to the Indians of the Six Nations...You live in small tribes at a distance from one another, separate, you will be easily overcome; united, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to hurt you. The English have defeated the French Navy at Sea so it will not be long and they will be gone...We have provided a present of goods.”<sup>42</sup> Conrad Weiser in his 1748 Conference at Logstown speech noted: “Brethren, “You have of late settled the River of Ohio for the sake of Hunting and our Traders followed you. You are now become a People of Note, & are grown very numerous of late Years, & there is no doubt some wise Men among you, it therefore becomes you to Act the part of wise men, & for the future be more regular

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<sup>40</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 5:14

<sup>41</sup> Franklin, *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin*, 103–104, Treaty Between the President and Council of the Province of Pennsylvania and the Indians of Ohio, November 13, 1747.

<sup>42</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:149.

than You have been for some Years past, when only a few Young Hunters lived here.” He informed the Indians that the War of Austrian Succession was ended and there was now peace between the French and English. Several Iroquois leaders spoke to him to confirm their support for England by saying: “We will let you know if we hear anything from the French, be it against us or yourself. You will have Peace.”<sup>43</sup>

As the Wyandot became established at Sandusky, they connected with the Seneca and opened trade with the English. Some French traders passing through their town were murdered in 1747 and the Seneca and Wyandot were blamed for this action. To avoid retaliation, Nicholas moved his village closer to the Iroquois at Cuyahoga and then to the hunting grounds around the Muskingum River where they established the town of Coshocton before returning to their permanent home of Sandusky. In 1747, the French made note of the source of some of the Indian attacks on their traders in Ohio as shown in this correspondence to the French Minister dated November 2, 1747: “Monseigneur – Your Grace has been informed that the Hurons of Detroit and the Yrocois at the Outlet of La Riviere Blanche have killed some Frenchmen at Sandoske. I had predicted to you the Revolt and unfaithfulness of the Savages of the Country around Detroit...the evil there was to Fear for the upper countries from the English Traders who were allowed to Establish themselves at la Riviere Blanche.”<sup>44</sup> France also made it clear that they were pursuing the Ohio Valley land as represented in the notes on Occurrences in Canada during the year 1747–1748, General Vaudreuil mentions that Nicolas’ Band of Hurons

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<sup>43</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:356–358.

<sup>44</sup> *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 17:474–477, Memoir of Raymond to the French Minister dated November 2, 1747.

continued to be hostile and had been supplied by the English with powder and lead. The Cayuga informed the French that: “the Hurons had sent word to the 5 Nations that owing to their small number, they considered themselves no longer Hurons but Iroquois, since the greater portion of their village were children of the Iroquois. Should this be so, Sieur Joncaire thinks that the Beautiful River will be the route which they will proceed to join the village of the Five Nations.”<sup>45</sup> France realized that they were losing the battle for hearts and minds in the Ohio Valley as they could never match the prices and selection of the English traders so they chose to ignore the previous agreements of open access to both sides and moved to rob and kill English traders who did not leave the area. At the same time, Big Kettle one of the Seneca Chiefs on the Ohio contacted Pennsylvania in 1749 to encourage their traders as the French were not able to adequately supply their needs. The Marquis de La Galissonière observed on February 23, 1748: “The Chaouanon Savages after residing a long while at Detroit left to go settle in the direction of the Belle Riviere due to quarrels with other Indians and lack of trade goods. “They have been joined by a considerable number of savages of all nations, forming a sort of Republic dominated by some Iroquois of the Five Nations who form part of it.”<sup>46</sup> Even though the war never came to Ohio, it did result in a realignment of both Indian and European interests.” The Ohio Iroquois were not interested in hearing from the “old men at Onondaga” and appealed for arms to defend themselves and their land. They desired to

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<sup>45</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:146, Journal of Occurrences in Canada during the year 1747–1748.

<sup>46</sup> *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 18:12, French minister to La Galissonière, dated February 23, 1748.

“kindle a fire in the Ohio and to invite all the Indians at a considerable distance” to come unify as warriors.<sup>47</sup>

As the race for the Ohio Country heated up, British King George II awarded 200,000 acres to the Ohio Company of Virginia in response to a petition from a group of wealthy landowners in Virginia that came to be known as the Ohio Land Company of Virginia. Principal members including the wealthy families like the Lees, Fairfax’s and Washington’s.<sup>48</sup> They were asked to settle 100 families and build a fort at the forks of the Ohio within 7 years. The original charter for Virginia was drawn to run to the northwest from the Atlantic coast and would have extended across most of Canada and west to the Pacific Ocean. The hurdle to overcome was that the land was still owned and occupied by the Ohio Indians and therefore, Virginia began the process of separating the Indians from their land. Their first task was determining who controlled the Ohio land and they approached the Onondaga Central Council who claimed the land by right of Conquest and the Ohio Indians who actually lived there. Gifts were provided and conferences took place without definitive results. The loss of Chief Canassatego was a blow to the influence of the Onondaga as his replacement would not negotiate with the English and had little standing with the Ohio Indians. This led Virginia to work directly with the Ohio Indians to try to advance their objective of taking their 200,000 acres from the Indians. In the Logstown Treaty, Andrew Montour maintained the point that Virginia had no right to

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<sup>47</sup> Franklin, *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin*, 103–114, Mingo Delegation, November 15, 1747.

<sup>48</sup> George Mercer, *George Mercer Papers*, ed. Lois Mulkearn (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1954), 1–2, Proceedings of the Ohio Company, 1747–1751.



build a Fort at the forks of the Ohio and the Iroquois had not sold any land west of the crest of the mountains in 1744.<sup>49</sup>

At the end of King George's War, Virginia began making serious plans to take Ohio land and the Indians became aware. Although he claimed to be visiting the Indians for benevolent, Christian interests, Christopher Gist was one of these explorers and land speculators. Conrad Weiser told Governor Hamilton in 1749 that two sons of the deceased Shickelmy told him: "the Indians are very uneasy about the white people's settling beyond the endless mountains on Joniady...that Country is their only Hunting Ground for dears."<sup>50</sup> George Croghan followed with news that Mr. Cresap had spread word in the fall of 1748 that the Virginians planned to extend a trading post to the Ohio and they would supply trade goods cheaper than the Pennsylvania traders. The Indian response as voiced by George Croghan was: "the Indians dos nott like to hear of there Lands being Setled over Allegany Mountain, & in particular by ye Virginians."<sup>51</sup> The English traders helped organize the 1748 Treaty of Logstown with the Ohio Indian Nations, principally the Iroquois or Mingo, Shawnee and Delaware. Associated with this was the inclusion of the Wyandot into the League of Friendship with the Five Nations and Pennsylvania.

In September 1748, the Ohio Indians were informed that France and England had made peace again which meant little to the Indians. Once shipping opened up, France

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<sup>49</sup> Paul Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1964), Weiser to Taylor, 148–149.

<sup>50</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2:24, Conrad Weiser to Governor Hamilton, April 22, 1749.

<sup>51</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2:31, George Croghan to John Hamilton, July 8, 1749.

became more aggressive in their western expansion. France made it clear that they were pursuing the Ohio Valley land although French strategy also reflected the reality that: “we must not flatter ourselves that our Continental Colonies (Canada and Louisiana) can ever compete in wealth with the adjoining English Colonies”<sup>52</sup> They did emphasize the importance of strengthening the middle around the Illinois to tie the two ends together.

Meanwhile the Pennsylvania governor noted that: “You cannot be insensible that Numbers of the Six Nations have of late left their old habitations and settled on the Branches of the Mississippi, and are coming more numerous there than in the Countries they left, at which both the French and the Council at Onondago are not a little alarmed.”<sup>53</sup> In a subsequent meeting, Canassatego reminded Pennsylvania that: “We are a frontier country between your enemy and you, so that we have been your guard, & things have been managed so well as to keep the War from your doors.”<sup>54</sup> Sir William Johnson also warned NY that the Iroquois were being drawn to the French and that the French were very active among the Ohio Indians and that the latter were “double the Number of the Five Nations.”<sup>55</sup> In June 1750 the Seneca Chief Broken Kettle spoke of the Ohio Council saying: We are now become a stronger Body...and have got many to join us, and are becoming a great Body, and desire to be taken notice of as such.”<sup>56</sup> New York took

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<sup>52</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:134, La Galissonière to Maurepas, September 1, 1748.

<sup>53</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:463–464, James Hamilton to George Clinton, September 20, 1750.

<sup>54</sup> Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 16 vols. (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns, 1851–1853), 5:400, Canassatego to Hamilton, Philadelphia, August 16, 1749.

<sup>55</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 6:599–600, Johnson to Clinton, September 25, 1750.

<sup>56</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:439.

notice and in 1750 the Five Nations Chiefs stated: “Indians on Ohio had no right to sell any Land” but that “the Ohio Indians lived on a good Hunting Place and were in a manner only gone to hunt there.”<sup>57</sup> De Noyans wrote a letter to NY Governor informing him that “The number of Indians who have settled on this river increases every day; since hunting there is abundant; while on their other hand, at their former homes, there is no more game. The Indian is never provoked by seeing merchandise abundant where he lives, knowing that it will enable him to buy cheaper.”<sup>58</sup>

Starting in 1749, the French began to stockpile supplies at Detroit and Indians began to gather for war. The French sent Celeron de Blainville down the Ohio River with 300 French troops, Indian allies and gifts but his reception was not especially warm. During the journey of Celeron, Father Bonnecamps reported visiting a number of Iroquois towns along with others and most towns had a mix of tribal affiliations. He found the formerly Iroquois town of Logstown to be a gathering of Mingo, Shawnee, Delaware, Caughnawaga and other nations which he described as: “This assemblage forms a very bad village, which tempted by the cheap market which the English offered, were drawn into a very bad disposition for us.”<sup>59</sup> As the French traders could not compete with the English Traders they were concentrated near their Indian allies at Detroit and Michilimackinac. Celeron found some resident English traders at Logstown that he sent back over the mountains as France had now claimed the Ohio Valley. The French reported a cold reception from the Shawnee at their next town on the Scioto. Bonnecamps

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<sup>57</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:439, 478–480.

<sup>58</sup> Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail*, 1:317.

<sup>59</sup> Mary Carson Darlington, *Fort Pitt and Letters from the Frontier* (Pittsburg: J. R. Weldin & Co, 1892), 35, Expedition of Celeron to the Ohio Country in 1749.

commented in 1749 that the English traders were well established in the Ohio Valley and “under protection of a crowd of savages...whose number increases every day.” On his return Father Bonnecamps remarked: “This Beautiful River – so little known to the French, and, unfortunately too well known to the English.”<sup>60</sup> The French made their case stating: “The River Ohio, otherwise called the Beautiful river, and its tributaries belong indisputably, by virtue of its discovery by Sieur de la Salle. They [the English] pretend only that the Iroquois are masters of them...the Onontagues asserted in their speech, that these lands are the property of the Five Nations...the English consider these lands as forming part of their possessions, and the Iroquois as subjects of Great Britain. These savages claim to be and in fact are independent of all nations and their lands belong to them.”<sup>61</sup>

By 1749, the situation became worse with settlers crowding onto Indian lands in western Pennsylvania as more arrived in Philadelphia. For reasons of Geography, Philadelphia became a firehose of settlers coming into middle America and most of this migration became directed due west across the Ohio. In 1750, Pennsylvania began aggressively moving squatters off Indian lands in order to retain the good will of the Indians. A 1750 Letter from Pennsylvania Governor Hamilton to New York Governor Clinton cautioned him to handle the Indians carefully as the Ohio Indians were now more powerful than the Six Nations as divided as they were. If so, “Circumstances ’tis not probably we shall retain the Six Nations at Onondago long for when these are stripp’d of

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<sup>60</sup> Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 59:182–185.

<sup>61</sup> *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 18:17–24, Joncaire to Duquesne, 1749.

their Allies and of these Westward Indians, they will be despised, or to avoid Contempt go over to the French with the other Indians.”<sup>62</sup> Conrad Weiser told the Five Nations that the Governor of Virginia would give his presents to the Iroquois in Ohio as they were all related and he would not travel to Albany. Meanwhile, the Chiefs at Onondago were insistent that no money should go to the Ohio Indians as: “they were but Hunters and no Counsellors or Chief Men and they had no right to receive Presents that were due to the Six Nations.”<sup>63</sup>

It was obvious that the New York Iroquois were in decline while Ohio represented a growing and more assertive Iroquois presence in the region. Richard Peters noted in 1750 that “many Indians have left their towns among the Six Nations and gone and settled to the westward of the branches of the Ohio.” Saying the Ohio tribes made a “formidable body, not less than fifteen hundred.”<sup>64</sup> When Seneca Chief Broken Kettle attended an Indian Conference at George Croghan’s house in June 1750 with Mr. Peters from Pennsylvania, he asked why all the squatters were appearing on his way down the Allegheny and if the land was sold why did no money come to the Five Nations people in Ohio. He also spoke of an invitation from Thomas Cresap to trade with him for a better deal from the Virginia traders along with gifts to the Five Nations Chiefs who were Broken Kettle, The Stone and Seneca George.”<sup>65</sup> Andrew Montour had just returned from

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<sup>62</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:463–464, Governor Hamilton to Governor Clinton, September 20, 1750.

<sup>63</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:478, Iroquois Chief to Hamilton in Philadelphia, October 11, 1750.

<sup>64</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:463, Governor Hamilton to Governor Clinton, 1750.

<sup>65</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:438–440.

meeting with the Five Nations Chiefs at Onondaga who stated: “the Request inserted in George Croghan’s Journal...to erect a strong Trading House in their Country...have been misunderstood or misrepresented by the Person to who the Governor confided for the Management of that Treaty.”<sup>66</sup>

In September 1750, the Miami brought a Message to the Governor of Pennsylvania “We the Twightwees who are now one with you...that there Traders who we desire to see amongst us...we are yet young and unexperienced, you the six Nations are our elder brothers...We therefore put ourselves under your care. Our Father Onontio has kept us poor and blind.”<sup>67</sup> They were seeking both trade and military support to hold off the French and their allied Indians. They were offered trade but no military support appeared when the Ottawa and French attacked the Miami village of La Desmoiselle in 1752.

The 1751 Council at Logstown was planned to confirm the land sale to the Ohio Land Company but the Onondaga Chiefs did not show and the Ohio Iroquois led by Tanachrison refused to accept the Virginia interpretation and left it up to Onondaga.<sup>68</sup> The Five Nations Chiefs had already denied the Virginia definition of the boundary of the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 and maintained their understanding that Virginia ended at the crest of the Mountains while Virginia claimed that their western border was now actually the western sea. By 1752, the influence of Pennsylvania in the Ohio valley was on the

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<sup>66</sup> Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 5:547, Isaac Norris to Governor Hamilton, August 21, 1751.

<sup>67</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series, 6:83–84, Message of Miamis, September 20, 1750.

<sup>68</sup> Mercer, *George Mercer Papers*, 281.

wane when they declined to consider building a fort at the forks of the Ohio because the Indians were not all in favor. In 1752, France began acting more forceful with the destruction of the Miami town of Pickawillany led by the pro-English Chief Old Britain or La Desmoiselle. Virginia stepped up with some gifts of guns and powder but the situation was confused enough for a Virginia trader to remark: “the Indians are in such confusion that there is no knowing who to trust.”<sup>69</sup> Thus begins the ascendancy of William Johnson and a re-energized Six Nations which began to drift away from neutrality into the English sphere of influence. The focus on the Ohio and the west continued.

The Ohio Company of Virginia pursued the 1752 Logstown Treaty because the Five Nations did not accept their interpretation of the 1744 Treaty of Lancaster. The Five Nations had signed a Treaty of Land cession to Virginia for the land extending to the setting sun which they said meant the crest of the Adirondack Mountains. In their way of conflating the truth, the Virginians claimed this meant the Mississippi River or even the western Sea. By bringing a few gifts to the Indians at Logstown, they tried to get the Indians living there to accept their version with little success. They told the Ohio Indians that the King of England had given them that land and they told them that the Five nations had sold the land to the King of England yet the Ohio Indians remained skeptical. Virginia also claimed the right to build a Fort at the forks of the Ohio (present day Pittsburgh). The Iroquois view remained that Virginia could not extend west past the mountains. In 1752, Virginia tried to pressure Tanachrison, the Half-King to consent to

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<sup>69</sup> Christopher Gist, *Christopher Gist's Journals*, ed. William M. Darlington (Pittsburgh: J. R. Weldin, 1893), 1:192, William Trent to Hamilton, April 10, 1753.

the Fort at the forks and he refused and told them the final answer should come from Onondaga. Tanachrison stated: “we never understood...that the lands then sold were to extend further to the sunsetting than the hill on the other side the allagany hill so that we cannot give you a further answer.<sup>70</sup>You told us the French design to cheat us out of our lands.”

In February 1752, the Virginia Assembly passed an act promoting settlement on the Mississippi with a ten-year exemption from taxes. It was titled “An Act for encouraging persons to settle on the waters of the Mississippi” and read: “Whereas it will be a means of cultivating a good correspondence with the neighboring Indians.” and was intended to add to security to the colony of Virginia.<sup>71</sup> The Act designed to lure settlers to the west promised tax exemptions for 10 years. Governor Dinwiddie followed with an award of 200,000 acres of land on the Ohio to those Virginians who signed up in the militia to keep the French out of the Ohio Valley. At this time, George Croghan shifted his allegiance to Virginia and began to focus on land speculation along with trading

Du Quesne received instructions from the French minister on May 15, 1752: “Monsieur de Lajonquiere had reported a plan for driving the English away from the river. The English may pretend that by the treaty of Utrecht, we are obliged to allow the savages to trade with them. The River Ohio, otherwise called the Beautiful River belong incontestably to France, They were discovered by Lasalle. The Iroquois have no such rights. It is of the highest importance that the progress of English pretensions and

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<sup>70</sup> Mercer, *George Mercer Papers*, 281, Logstown Council, 1752.

<sup>71</sup> Henry Read McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, 13 vols. (Richmond, VA: Library Board, Virginia State Library, 1905–1915), 8:xiii.



encroachments in that direction be checked or they would cut out communications between the two colonies of Canada and Louisiana. you must keep these two principal objects in view, drive the English away from our land and make our savages understand that we have nothing against them. Such are the King's instructions as to your conduct." He also discussed French policy with the Indian nations stating that the original policy had been to encourage wars between the various Indian nations but now in their reduced and weakened state, it was "more useful that the French perform between them the part of protectors and pacificators."<sup>72</sup>

In 1752, we get a snapshot of the French situation from a de Longueuil letter to de Rouille which he sums up as: "all the Nations appear to take sides against us...Joncaire reports that the Indians of the Beautiful River are all English...the crops have also failed...the small-pox commits ravages...Twere desirable that it should break out and spread generally, throughout the localities inhabited by our rebels. It would be fully as good as an army."<sup>73</sup> This was a trying time for France in North America as the Naval Blockade during the previous war had deprived them of trade goods for their Indian allies as well as food and supplies for the French inhabitants. He continues with: "I lay before your eyes the blood of the French...of which you are the powerful protector...the love I feel for my country combine to inspire me with just sentiments of vengeance. No remedy for our evils would have been more effectual than to drive the English from our lands."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:242–244.

<sup>73</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:245–251, de Longueuil to de Rouille, 21, April, 1752.

<sup>74</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:251 251.

So here we see the storm clouds gather over the Ohio Valley while the Ohio Indians and Pennsylvania can only look on. Yet in 1753, Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie writes to the Pennsylvania Governor: “The Indians of the Six Nations, last year at Log’s Town gave up these Lands to this Colony...I have often mentioned to the Ohio Company Your Proprietors Inclinations to support their settling the Lands granted them by his Majesty.”<sup>75</sup> Dinwiddie followed with: “The Ind’s having given us full Power and Property to settle all the lands this side of the Ohio. I conceive that the Treaty fully establishes the British Right to those Lands.”<sup>76</sup> This was contradicted again in June 1753 by Andrew Montour who was told by the Six Nation Chiefs that: “they were against both English and French building Forts and settling Lands at Ohio...they did not like the Virginians and Pennsylvanians making Treaties with these (Ohio) Indians whom they called Hunters, and young and giddy Men.”<sup>77</sup> In closing, Montour brought a message from the Chiefs thanking them for: “your kind intentions towards them.” In saying this, the Confederacy Chiefs seemed to write off their relations in Ohio when they advised Pennsylvania: “they are a great way from us” and that Pennsylvania was better suited to supply: “our young men at Ohio.”<sup>78</sup> They added: “they stand in need of your advice...it is an hunting country they live in, and we would have it reserved for this use only, and

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<sup>75</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:630–631, Dinwiddie to Hamilton.

<sup>76</sup> Robert Dinwiddie, *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, 2 vols., ed. Robert A. Brock (Richmond: The Virginia Historical Society, 1883–1884), 1:22–23, Dinwiddie to Captains Cresap and Trent, February 10, 1753.

<sup>77</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:635.

<sup>78</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:637, Montour to Hamilton, July 31, 1753.

desire that no settlements be made there, tho' you may trade there and so may the French.”<sup>79</sup>

As the stand-off at the Ohio River intensified, some Delaware asked Christopher Gist in March 1752, “where the Indians land lay, for that the French claimed all the land on one side of the river Ohio and the English on the other side.”<sup>80</sup> The Ohio Iroquois were also angry that Onondaga continued to sell land where they lived without any notice or sharing in the compensation received. Pennsylvania noticed this break while Sir William Johnson remarked that Iroquois: “fame and power may in some measure exceed the reality.”<sup>81</sup> He added: “It grieves me sorely to find the road hither so grown up with weeds for want of being used & your fire almost expiring at Onondaga, where it was agreed by the wisdom of our Ancestors that it should never be extinguished: You know it was a saying among us that when the Fire was out here, you would be no longer a people.”<sup>82</sup>

As the French Army began to enter the Ohio Valley in 1753, Governor Duquesne wrote to the Minister stating: “I keep the Five Nations much embarrassed... and the only step they have taken has been to send the Ladies (*Dames*) of their Council to Sieur Marin to inquire of him...whether he was marching with hatchet uplifted. The Commander answered them that his orders were to use it only in case he encountered opposition to my

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<sup>79</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:637, Andrew Montour to Governor of Pennsylvania from the Chiefs at Onondaga, June 22, 1753.

<sup>80</sup> Gist, *Christopher Gist's Journals*, 78.

<sup>81</sup> William Johnson, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 14 vols., ed. Alexander Flick (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921–1965), 9:127, Johnson to Clinton, March 12, 1754.

<sup>82</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 6:810, Conference between Colonel Johnson and the Mohawks, July 26, 1753.

will, that my intention was to support and assist them in their necessities, and to drive away the evil spirits that encompassed them and disturbed the earth. They answered that they would not meddle with my affairs, and that they would look quietly on. This Nation, which possesses a superior government to all others, allowed itself to be dazzled by continual presents, and did not perceive the English are hemming it in, so that if it did not shake off this yoke, 'twill soon be enslaved. I shall lead them to make this reflection.”<sup>83</sup>

At the 1753 Treaty at Carlisle held with Penn and the Ohio Indians, Scarouady was the speaker for the Ohio Indians and spoke of the interaction with the oncoming French Army coming down the Ohio River. He complained about the aggressive French presence coming into the Ohio valley as they had just attacked a village of Miami Indians and threatened the Shawnee who requested firearms and powder to defend themselves. He closed the conference on the French presence by stating: “We do not know his intent; because he speaks with two Tongues. We desire that Pennsylvania and Virginia would at present forbear settling on our lands, over the Allegheny Hills.”<sup>84</sup> He further admonished them that “Your Traders now bring scarce any Thing but Rum...The Rum ruins us...We desire it may be forbidden”<sup>85</sup> The Governor of Pennsylvania noted this and remarked that the Six Nations were now a: “People who are not at present in a Condition to defend themselves, and who besides are starving for want of the Necessaries of Life.”<sup>86</sup> Also at

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<sup>83</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:255–257, Duquesne to the Minister, August 20, 1753.

<sup>84</sup> Franklin, *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin*, 130, A Treaty held with the Ohio Indians at Carlisle, in October, 1753.

<sup>85</sup> Franklin, *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin*, 130, A Treaty held with the Ohio Indians at Carlisle in October 1753, speech of Scarouady.

<sup>86</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:609.

Carlisle, Pennsylvania inquired about the Fort at the forks of the Ohio and George Croghan's response was; "the Indians had now forbid the Virginians building the Fort at Monongahela. They would defend the country themselves and drive off the French, provided they might be supplied with Powder and Lead."<sup>87</sup> In a final meeting at Winchester which the Five Nations refused to attend, the Ohio Iroquois refused to support the Virginia argument for ownership of the land despite being showered with gifts and promises of good relations. Shortly thereafter, the French military began appearing on their march south along the Allegheny River. Virginia never attained title for the land to be given to the Ohio Land Company of Virginia and the war swept up all pretense of this attempted fraudulent land grab. In the end, the Ohio Iroquois acquiesced to the construction of a strong house for trading and with the encouragement of Pennsylvania and London, Captain Trent brought some gifts for the Ohio Indians in 1754 along with tools to begin the construction of a fort at the forks of the Ohio.

In 1754, Croghan reported to Pennsylvania Governor that: "ye Ohio Indians Does Nott No what to think, they imagine this Government Doing Nothing...that ye Virginians and ye French Intend to Divide ye Land of Ohio between them." He further added in regards to the loyalties of the Ohio Indians, they would do as they saw proper and: "will act for themselves att this time without Consulting ye Onondago Council."<sup>88</sup>

The 1754 Albany Congress gave the colonies a chance to meet and discuss the French encroachment into the Ohio Valley and how they would respond. They invited the

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<sup>87</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 36 vols. to date, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959–<2018>), 5:64–66, Memorandum: Preliminary Conference with the Indians, September 26, 1753.

<sup>88</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2:144, Croghan to Governor, 1754.

Iroquois as they had always been the principal defense against the French. They were not willing to take the lead and one Iroquois leader stated: “The Governor of Virginia and the Governor of Canada are both quarrelling about Lands which belong to Us; And such a Quarrel as this may end in our Destruction.”<sup>89</sup> They added: “You are numerous and strong-we are few and weak... the Clouds hang heavy over us.”<sup>90</sup> This conference gave the involved colonies a chance to discuss a shared responsibility for a common defense and formation of an Indian policy centered around the Iroquois. Many comments were made during this conference including: “the French Affairs relative to this Continent are under one direction; the Colonies being in a divided disunited State; there has been a very great Neglect of the Affairs of the Iroquois; they are supplied with Rum by the Traders in vast and almost incredible Quantities; the Purchases of Lands by private Persons for trifling Considerations; the granting of vast Tracts of Land to private persons and that the trade with the said Indians be well regulated.”<sup>91</sup> In the meeting of the colonies, they acknowledged the neglect and mistreatment shown the Indians including the Five Nations but Pennsylvania did not miss the opportunity to make another sizeable land purchase from the Five Nations while Connecticut pursued a fraudulent land deal. The conference accomplished little else and adjourned without a united plan to oppose the French.

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<sup>89</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:80.

<sup>90</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:78–81, Meeting of Six Nations with the Governor of Pennsylvania and NY Council, July 2, 1754.

<sup>91</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:103–110, 1754 Albany Conference.

## Chapter 5: Seven Years War

Coming out of the War of Austrian Secession that ended in 1748, France and England were at a point where the French Army could still command respect on the battlefields of Europe but their Navy usually came in second place in the open ocean. The effect that this had on Canada was pronounced as the inability to send supplies and trade goods by ship brought suffering to the inhabitants and their Indian allies changed their trade alliances to the English. Marquis Duquesne was appointed Governor of New France in 1752 and was committed to establishing a strong French presence in the Ohio Region. In his words: “we are on the verge of losing if I do not make this hasty but indispensable effort.”<sup>1</sup> Late in 1752, Duquesne and Francois Bigot set out to build a series of forts down the Ohio River to connect to the Mississippi and La Louisiane. They felt that Canada’s value was more strategic rather than commercial and the Ohio Region Forts would help tie Canada with their land in Louisiana along with their forts in the Great Lakes and on the Mississippi. It would also hem the English into the Atlantic seaboard. Marquis Duquesne declared the land on the Ohio River (Belle Riviere) belonged to the French and that they would settle it.<sup>2</sup> In February of 1753, 250 men were sent from Niagara to set up an advance camp for the actual 2,000-man invasion force to arrive that summer.

Many Seneca were already employed by the French at Niagara and offered to assist in the transportation of supplies. Their first stop for construction of a fort was at

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<sup>1</sup> Claude-Pierre Pécaudy Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, ed. Fernand Grenier (Quebec: Presses Universitaires Laval, 1952), 22, Duquesne to Contrecoeur, October 18, 1752.

<sup>2</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, Duquesne to Contrecoeur, April 14, 1753, 39.

Presque Isle and then Le Boeuf, which were to be the first two of four Forts ending with Fort Duquesne at the forks of the Ohio. Despite offers of assistance from the Seneca, Marin used his troops for most of the heavy labor and they began to suffer from overwork and hunger as the food stocks began to be reduced with little else coming west from Montreal. Besides hunger and disease, relations with the Indians were generally positive until they began to approach the forks of the Ohio. Joncaire told Duquesne: “there is perfect quiet along the Belle Riviere on the part of his Indians.”<sup>3</sup> This was the case until the French began showing up in numbers at Logstown near their final destination of the Forks of the Ohio. They ran into the Seneca half-king or ambassador to the Ohio Indian Nations who told the French to leave their Indian land. In a subsequent Indian council, he made his case for the Ohio Iroquois opposing the French although this differed from the Five Nations proper who chose neutrality in this situation.

In May 1753, William Trent traveled into the Ohio Valley to meet with the Ohio Indian leaders. Speaking for the Ohio Land Company of Virginia, he told them that they: “look’d upon the Ohio lands to belong to them the Indians, and if the French attempted to settle them or build any Forts, the Virginians would supply them with Arms and Ammunition.” The Iroquois discussed this for a day and Tanachrison came back with: “[if the French came] peaceably they would receive them as Friends but if they came as Enemies they would treat them as such.” He recommended that the English traders should leave and left the matter of arms and powder under consideration.<sup>4</sup> As this

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<sup>3</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, Duquesne to Contrecoeur, March 19, 1753, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 5:614–615, William Trent conference, May 25, 1753.



meeting was taking place, Duquesne reported that “everything is trembling at the march of our troops” toward the Ohio.<sup>5</sup>

Along with planning the invasion, France did their outreach to the Indian Nations as the Seneca at Niagara continued to help move supplies. Once the French Army was observed in Lake Ontario traveling to their campaign in the Ohio Valley, the colonies were warned by the Iroquois and British. The French forces were met by some Seneca Clan mothers in June, 1753 to see what their intent was. Duquesne reported to France that they informed the ladies that they were there to support and assist. Their commander Marin was told by Governor Duquesne that: “There is an appearance that you will be the Angel of Peace of the Belle Riviere.”<sup>6</sup> As the Five Nations were divided into pro-French and pro-English factions, they maintained their position of neutrality and stood by to see what developed. Although the colonies were all opposed to the French invasion, they were at a loss of how to respond and who would take the lead. The Pennsylvania Assembly wrote their Governor: “Tho the Alliance between the Crown of Great-Britain and the Six Nations, and the Protection and Assistance they expect to receive, in Virtue of that Alliance, is more immediately under the Direction of the Government of New-York...we have the Misfortune to differ in Sentiments with our Proprietaries in the Part they ought to bear in these expenses.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, Duquesne to Contrecoeur, June 1, 1753, 267.

<sup>6</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, Duquesne to Marin, July 10, 1753, 278.

<sup>7</sup> Pennsylvania Assembly: Reply to the Governor, May 31, 1753, “Pennsylvania Assembly: Reply to the Governor, 31 May 1753,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-04-02-0180>.

Virginia stepped up to lead due to its interest in the Ohio Valley land east of the mountains and a young George Washington was named to travel out to represent the English. Washington traveled into the Ohio country accompanied by Christopher Gist and an escort of Iroquois. Half King or Tanachrison accompanied him to Venango to tell the French to leave the Ohio River but they were scoffed at. As related in *The Journal of George Washington in 1754*, Tanachrison, the Iroquois leader in the Ohio Valley related how he approached the French forces entering the area. “It is you that are Disturbers in this land by coming and building your Towns, and taking it away unknown to us, and by force...the Great Being above allow’d it to be a Place of Residence for us...I desire you to withdraw.”<sup>8</sup> Marin, the French Commander dismissed the Indians rudely and told them that the French discovered the Ohio Valley and were there before the Indians. Meanwhile, George Washington delivered a letter to the French informing them that: “The Lands upon the River Ohio...are notoriously known to be the Property of the Crown of Great Britain.”<sup>9</sup>

In a subsequent council held with the Seneca from Belle Riviere on Sept. 2, 1753 the French were told: “My father, these are the warriors and not chiefs who come to bid you good-day. We come from Belle Riviere to see you. The river where we are belongs to us warriors; the chiefs who are engaged in business are not its masters. It is a road for warriors and not for these chiefs...we stop you and beg you to have them cease setting up the establishments you want to make. All the nations have always called upon us not to

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<sup>8</sup> George Washington, *The Journal of Major George Washington, Sent by the Hon. Robert Dinwiddie, Esq.* (Williamsburg, VA: William Hunter, 1754), 7.

<sup>9</sup> Washington, *The Journal of Major George Washington*, 25.

allow it.” Marin’s response included: “the Belle Riviere belongs unquestionably to the King, since Mr. de La Salle took possession of it when it was inhabited by the Chauonons (Shawnee) against whom the Iroquois made war incessantly, and who have always been our friends...I despise all the stupid things you said. I know they come only from you, that all the warriors and chieftains of the Belle Riviere think better than you.”<sup>10</sup>

Tanachrison was well-known to the French and could work with them at times and several Ohio Iroquois stood with Tanachrison while most stood back in the presence of the French army. The French were a little concerned about the opposition from Tanachrison but they had bigger problems to contend with as their army began to die off from disease and overwork. Furthermore, drought continued to reduce stream flows so the French were not able to move their equipment to the forks of the Ohio before the onset of winter. By fall of 1753, the robust French Army of 2,000 men had been reduced to 800 men capable of fighting and food was insufficient so half were sent back to Montreal for the winter. The French Army was still dependent on food from Montreal while they had productive farmland to the west in the Illinois country and the forests offered an abundance of berries, animals, fish, etc. Marin, the French Commander was seriously ill and was told to return to Montreal to recover but he declined and stated that he wanted to stay with his men and die if that is what was intended for him. With the close of the season, the local Iroquois and Loups sent a message to Joncaire marking their disappointment with the progress of the campaign and their sadness for the deaths of the French soldiers saying: “My father, we do not doubt at all the sorrow you must feel at not

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<sup>10</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, Seneca speaking to Marin, September 2, 1753, 67.

being able to go among your children to comfort them. The master of life disposes of all of us. He calls, whenever he wishes...the winter is long...The Loups and we, men of the Five Nations who will only do good, we pray that you do likewise...The elders have recommended us to listen to you...Thus my father, take courage.”<sup>11</sup>

After Tanachrison gave the customary three warnings to the French to leave the Ohio Valley, they were ignored by the French and he received no support from the local Shawnee or Delaware. George Washington wrote Governor Dinwiddie in 1754 to update him on the Ohio Valley stating that the French had asked the Wyandot and Miami to assist them in the defense of the Ohio River and they relayed this through the Seneca Chief Big Kettle reassuring him that they remained with the Six Nations and English.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile there were a number of tribal conferences as the French forces began to arrive in the Ohio Valley in greater numbers. The Ohio Nations followed the lead of the Five Nations and stayed non-committal at first to see who had the upper hand. The French promised to return the land to the Shawnee who they felt rightfully owned it. The Iroquois did not represent power in the matter which led Pennsylvania Governor Hamilton to describe them as:” from a people who are not at present in a condition to defend themselves and who besides are starving.”<sup>13</sup> In January, 1754, Duquesne wrote Contrecoeur stating: “Although I have no reason to presume that either the English or the savages have any desire to oppose by overt force our taking possession of a site which

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<sup>11</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, 95–96, Joncaire to Marin, October 19, 1753.

<sup>12</sup> Dinwiddie, *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, 1:191–193, George Washington to Dinwiddie.

<sup>13</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 5:631, May, 1753.

belongs to us, prudence and wise precaution demand that...you hasten your advance and go construct Fort Duquesne.”<sup>14</sup>

As this campaign progressed, Duquesne told Contrecoeur on April 15, 1754: “I hear reports from everywhere that this year’s move has greatly impressed the savages. They are savages like the others and, consequently, they will die of fear when they see the King’s soldiers march to their village.”<sup>15</sup> As the steps to war began George Croghan noted in 1754 that: “the whole of ye Ohio Indians Does Nott no what to think, they imagine by this Government Doing Nothing towards ye Expedition that ye Virginians and ye French Intend to divide ye Land of Ohio between them. Ye Ohio Indians...will act for themselves att this time without Consulting ye Onondago Counsel.”<sup>16</sup> The Five Nations continued to advise the Ohio Indians to follow their lead and remain neutral while the situation developed. In 1754, some Iroquois Chiefs traveled to Montreal to meet with Duquesne who told them: “Know you not the difference there is between the King of France, and the British King? Go and examine the forts which our king has erected; you will see that the land beyond their walls is still a hunting ground. Our forts have been set up, not as a curb upon the tribes but to be useful for your trade with us. While no sooner do the British enter upon possession of your lands, than the game deserts them. The forest falls below their blows, the soil is bared, and hardly will you find a bush

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<sup>14</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, 120, Duquesne to Contrecoeur, January 27, 1754.

<sup>15</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, 133, Duquesne to Contrecoeur, April 15, 1754.

<sup>16</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2:144, George Croghan to Governor, May 14, 1754.

left upon your own domains to shelter you by night.”<sup>17</sup> This served to keep the Five Nations neutral for the time although the Mohawk were always with the English.

By May 1754, Fort Duquesne was well on the way to being built when word came of approaching English and Contrecoeur sent thirty-five men under Jumonville to warn them away from the Ohio Valley. It was George Washington again who was warned by his Seneca scouts that these Frenchmen approached them Southeast of Fort Duquesne. At what is today known as Jumonville Glen, the Mingo discovered the French party, alerted Washington and they had them surrounded by dawn. Action started with Washington firing into the waking French. They ran away and into the Iroquois who held them from escaping except one.<sup>18</sup> This differs from the Washington account on who fired first but all agree that the Iroquois did not take part in the shooting. According to the Journal of George Washington; “I had 75 men to oppose 50 French marching towards us when the Seneca told us where they were camped. I set out with 40 men that night and found the Seneca near daybreak. They showed them where the small band of French were sleeping and he made the decision to surround and attack them. After firing on them for 15 minutes, they killed 10 and took about 20 prisoners with one wounded and one escaping. Jumonville was one of those shot to death and the others stated that they were on a diplomatic mission to tell the English to leave the French land.” After hearing this the French sent 300 men under Villiers who was Jumonville’s brother to attack George Washington’s force.

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<sup>17</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:269, Secret Conference held at Montreal, October 23, 1754.

<sup>18</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, 147, Contrecoeur to Duquesne, June 2, 1754.

On June 3, 1754, Washington wrote Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia informing him of affairs with the Ohio Indians. The French had contacted the Ohio Indians to solicit their support in the coming war and a Seneca Chief Big Kettle met with Tanachrison and: “assur’d him with their good Intentions of assisting the Six Nations and their Brother’s the English agt the French and that they only waited to see us begin.” Washington further adds: “If the whole Detacht of the French behave with no more Risolution than this chose Party did I flatter myself we shall have no gt trouble in driving them to Montreal... We just finish’d a small palisaded Fort in which with my small Number’s I shall not fear the attack of 500 Men.”<sup>19</sup> When George Washington met with the Ohio Valley Iroquois in 1754, they told him that the French had said the English would kill them and take their land. Washington’s response was: “The English, your true brothers, are too generous to think that one might ever act in this way towards the Six Nations, their faithful allies...they have sent an army to maintain your rights, to restore you to the possession of your lands...we have no doubt that the rest of your brothers will join with us to fight the common enemy. Those who do not join will be responsible for all the consequences. It is the Six Nations who are principally interested in this war. It is for them that we fight, and I should despair if I did them the least harm. It is in order to assist you and protect you that we fight.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> George Washington, *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, 10 vols., ed. W. W. Abbot, Dorothy Twohig, and Philander D. Chase (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983–1995), 1:122–126, George Washington to Robert Dinwiddie, June 3, 1754.

<sup>20</sup> Donald Kent, “Contrecœur’s Copy of George Washington’s Journal for 1754,” *Pennsylvania History* 19, no. 1 (January 1952): 1–32.

Realizing the site was a bad choice, the Indians deserted Washington and he was left to face the French who were able to easily fire into the fort from the cover of the forest since George Washington did not provide enough clearing to serve as a free fire zone. In military terms, a free fire zone is defined as a zone of open land where attackers would be vulnerable to fire from an entrenched position. The French led by Villiers started firing into the fort and within two days, Washington surrendered his position and left the Ohio Valley without his journal which the French found. Within the surrender agreement, was the statement that George Washington killed Jumonville which he did not understand as he did not speak French and his interpreter was a Dutchman who seemingly did not catch this admission of guilt. By this time, Washington had lost most of his Indian support as a result of his actions and decision-making. The French version of the Jumonville story differs sharply from the official Virginia recollection. The French were surrounded by English and savages when the English began shooting. They stopped and Jumonville read his message for the Americans to leave the valley when the English led by Washington began shooting again. The Indians protested and by the time the firing stopped, Jumonville was dead and the remaining French were taken prisoner. Lacratelle confirms this in his account describing the assassination of Jumonville the French emissary. He blamed George Washington for not being able to restrain his men at this critical moment. Upon hearing this account, Governor Dinwiddie stated: "George Washington denies ever hearing the message over the shooting, however Governor Dinwiddie also added: "The protection due to messengers of peace is so universally acknowledged and the sacredness of their character are so inviolably preserved, that even



the most barbarous nations their persons are safe and unhurt.”<sup>21</sup> In a subsequent report to the British Board of Trade, Virginia Governor Dinwiddie blamed the battle on the Indians as he realized that an international incident had occurred.

After the debacle at Fort Necessity where the Indians had abandoned Colonel Washington and his men, Tanachrison described George Washington as: “a good natured man but had no experience...commanding the Indians like slaves and he did by no means take Advice from the Indians...was always driving them on to fight by his Directions.”<sup>22</sup> As the war began to unfold, the defeat of Washington at Fort Necessity made the English look weak. William Johnson wrote in 1754: “The Unlucky Defeat of our Troops commanded by Major Washington gave me utmost concern...This will not only animate the French and their Indians, but stagger the resolution inclined to us, if not effectually draw them from our interest. I wish Washington had acted with prudence and circumspection requisite in an officer of his Rank.”<sup>23</sup>

After his surrender George Washington left in defeat and he left his journal behind that described his campaign up to that time. This was found by the French and forwarded up to Governor Duquesne who was able to make a number of observations after it was translated into French. On George Washington, he wrote: “There is nothing more unworthy, lower, or even blacker than the opinions and the way of thinking of this Washington! It would have been a pleasure to read his outrageous journal to him right

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<sup>21</sup> Dinwiddie, *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, 2:228.

<sup>22</sup> Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 6:150–152, Journal of Conrad Weiser, 1754.

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 1:410.

under his nose”<sup>24</sup> In reading about Washington and the Five Nations: “I have Washington’s journal which let me see that they (Five Nations) are most untrustworthy people in the world...in spite of myself, I am treating them better than they deserve.”<sup>25</sup> He continued with: “The Five Nations want to remain neutral even on the Belle Riviere which we seized in the most brilliant manner in the world...these rascally Sonontoands (Seneca) and Nontagues (Onondaga), who are everlasting cheats and not worth the pestilent nuisance, would no longer be needed.”<sup>26</sup> Even though the Seneca at Niagara had been wary but accepting he continued to be concerned about their many counsels and discussions among the Five Nations and the Ohio Indians. In March 1755, Scarayuoady followed with another brilliant summation of the Iroquois position on the situation: “Brother, the French and the English are quarrelling about our lands and want to engage Us in their Quarrel, but why should We meddle on either side; the English, you see, buy our lands from us piece after piece, and tho’ they pay us for it and so get it from us with or consent, yet what they give us is soon spent and gone and were much straitened for want of our lands; The French take Whole Country’s from us by Force never asking for our consent and between the both we shall in a little time have no lands...We ...have come to a full resolution and are determined to stand neuters and let the French and English fight it out together, and the more they destroy one another the better.”<sup>27</sup> The Iroquois were unimpressed by Virginia’s show of force in the Ohio Valley and Scarouady

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<sup>24</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papier Contrecoeur*, 185, September 8, 1754.

<sup>25</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papier Contrecoeur*, 193, Duquesne to Contrecoeur, October 17, 1754.

<sup>26</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papier Contrecoeur*, 157, Duquesne to Contrecoeur, June 20, 1754.

<sup>27</sup> Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 6:343, Scarrooyady at Philadelphia Council, March 31, 1755.

burned down Logstown and moved east after the encounter at Jumonville glen. Of those that stayed on the Ohio, White Mingo, Guyasuta and Tahaoadoris (said to be Joncaire's son) stayed in the Ohio Valley and supported the French.

Contrecoeur continued to exude good intentions to the Seneca saying on June 16, 1755: "for several years, your Father has only been seeking the means by which to bring peace to this land."<sup>28</sup> By this time, New France was beginning to experience supply problems as the line of supply from Montreal to the Ohio Valley was not well-established and France had not established adequate transport up the Mississippi River from Louisiana when winter weather closed the Saint Lawrence River to transport even if the French ships could avoid capture by the English Navy or pirates. This lack of supply for the French forces led to a concurrent shortage of Indian trade goods causing them to question their support for the French. By July La Chauvignrie informed Contrecoeur that: "the Five Nations were holding council every day and that there were many things in motion...there were many another nation who wished to take sides with the English...I am at my wit's end, Sir, in the matter of supplies."<sup>29</sup>

General George Braddock left England in January, 1755 with a force of 3,000 men and a plan to take Fort Duquesne, Niagara and then sweep through Crown Point to Acadia. Once he landed, General Braddock proved to be less than an ideal guest as he treated both the Indian auxiliaries and the American militia under the command of George Washington with behavior bordering on contempt. Feeling that it would be a

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<sup>28</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, 221, Contrecoeur Speech to the Seneca, June 16, 1755.

<sup>29</sup> Contrecoeur, *Papiers Contrecoeur*, 238, La Chauvignrie to Contrecoeur, July 18, 1754.

simple matter to capture Fort Pitt, sweep through Detroit and on to Niagara before winter set in, Braddock took a force of 1,300 men and set off on a flying column towards Fort Pitt while Major Dunbar followed with the supply train and additional troops. Colonel Innes informed General Braddock that he would only need ten Indian scouts on the campaign, because any more would be troublesome. When Braddock met with chiefs from the Ohio Iroquois, Shawnee and Delaware, he was asked about helping to save their land. Braddock is said to have replied: “that the English Shoud Inhabit & Inherit the Land.” On questioning further, he proclaimed: “No Savage Shoud Inherit the Land.”<sup>30</sup> At this point, he was abandoned by the Indians except for about a half dozen Seneca. Many stepped aside while some went to join the French side. The English were already aware that the Indians were angry about the continual loss of land as described by New York Governor Shirley: “The Indians in general are certainly uneasy at any incroachments upon their lands whether by French or English: could we but perswade them by such plans of settlements in their country...the incroachments upon their lands by English was to protect them in the possession of their country, not to take it away.”<sup>31</sup>

By mid-September, Fort Duquesne became aware that the English Army was approaching. The French Captain Daniel Beaujeu was tasked with the defense of Fort Duquesne and he had a difficult time motivating the Indians who day after day refused to go until he made the final fateful speech that has become known as ‘Captain Beaujeu’s

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<sup>30</sup> Beverly Bond, Jr., “The Captivity of Charles Stuart, 1755–1757,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 13, no. 1 (June 1926): 58–81, 63.

<sup>31</sup> William Shirley, *Correspondence of William Shirley*, 2 vols., ed. Charles Henry Lincoln (New York, 1912), 2:123, William Shirley to Thomas Robinson, February 4, 1755.

prayer: “I am determined to meet the English. What! Will you let your father go alone...Those who love their father, follow me...The victory is ours!”<sup>32</sup>His total force of 72 French regulars and 146 Canadiens marched past the Indian camp and the Indians began to file in behind him. Beaujeu was one of those Frenchmen who came to America and assimilated with the Indian culture readily and served as a leader and trusted ally. He assumed command of Fort Duquesne when Contrecoeur asked to return to Montreal for health reasons and understood that he had a difficult task. He was faced with an English Army of 1,500 men approaching his makeshift fort with a much smaller force of French regulars, some Canadiens and French Indians from the Ohio Valley and the Lakes who were all aware of the odds that they faced. As the English Army was so close, the French were not able to meet them at their preferred ambush site but walked straight into battle with the French taking the center and the Indians flowing around the flanks of the English in the woods to the point where they could pour fire on the English army from places of concealment. Early on, Beaujeu was killed causing the Indians to buckle when Captain Dumas stepped forward to steady the French line and the accurate fire of the Indians began to take its toll on the English. The English troops panicked and ran leading to the rout now known as Braddock’s defeat that George Washington described as: “We have been beaten, shamefully beaten, by a handful of men!”<sup>33</sup> His Virginians fought hard while the English Army ran away. The English Army was pursued for several miles by

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<sup>32</sup> John Gilmary Shea, “Daniel Hyacinth Mary Lienard de Beajeau, Commandant of Fort Duquesne and of the French Forces in the Battle of July 9, 1755,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography* 8, no. 2 (March 1884): 125.

<sup>33</sup> Washington, *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, 1:349–351.

the Indians who continued to kill, scalp and take prisoners that were saved for further torture, death or adoption.

Another after-action report from inside Fort Duquesne was provided by James Smith who was captured before the battle and held as a French captive. He reports: “One of his Indian guards told him that they were watching Braddock’s approach and noted that the English were marching in close formation through the dense woods so that the Indians would be able to “shoot them down like pigeons.”<sup>34</sup> He was present to see the 400 Indians get supplied and march off to face Braddock who he assumed would overwhelm them with superior numbers. That afternoon, a runner came back to the fort saying that the English had been surrounded and had been shot down in heaps. Rather than try to fight their way out, the English had just walked around in circles slowly getting killed off. Just before nightfall, the scalp hallows were heard and they began to return along with 12 British regulars with faces painted black for death. Most of the Indians were wearing redcoats taken from dead English regulars and waving hundreds of scalps. Next came dozens of horses with wagons loaded with guns, powder, food and other items of supply. As he described it: “the most melancholy spectacle was the band of prisoners.”<sup>35</sup>

The remnants of Braddock’s Army joined Colonel Dunbar’s rear guard who beat a hasty retreat back to Philadelphia leaving the entire Pennsylvania and Virginia frontier open to attack by the energized Ohio Indians and the French Indians from the Great

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<sup>34</sup> James Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences of James Smith* (Philadelphia: Grigg & Ellicot, 1834), 18.

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 19–20.

Lakes. Besides the loss of life, the British Army abandoned enough equipment and supplies to equip another army so the Indians had sufficient powder and lead to sustain a military campaign for years without requiring any resupply from the French.

Upon hearing that Colonel Dunbar planned to retreat to Philadelphia for the winter in August after Braddock's defeat, Virginia Governor Dinwiddie was infuriated and pointed out that Dunbar still commanded twice as many men as the French and Indians. He also pinned blame on the army including: "the Militia are ungovernable" and his neighbor Pennsylvania: "our neighbour'g Proprietary Gov'ts continue in their lethargic Indolence with't giving a mutual Assistance."<sup>36</sup> Dinwiddie followed further with Colonel Dunbar: "I am inform'd y't 300 Fr'h and Ind's have defeated 1,300 British Forces...Dear Colo.' Is there no method left to retrieve the Dishon'r done to the British Arms? You must still have remain'g upwards of 1,600 Men. I cannot see where they can be supplied. They have none in Canada, and the Embargo...will effectually prevent their Supplies...the dastardly Conduct of the Privaaate Men is with't Precedent; or can History produce where so many British Forces were defeated by so few of the Enemy."<sup>37</sup> The withdrawal of Colonel Dunbar left the frontier wide open to Indian raids and they pushed the settlers all the way to Carlisle with little resistance. Virginia Governor Dinwiddie continued to rage about the poor performance of the English Army in remarking: "1755, I doubt not before this you have heard of the unexpected Defeat of our Forces on the Banks of Monongahela under the Command of General Braddock, of his death and many more

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<sup>36</sup> Dinwiddie, *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, 2:116–118, Dinwiddie to Lord Halifax, July 25, 175.

<sup>37</sup> Dinwiddie, *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, 2:118–121, Dinwiddie to Colo Dunbar, July 26, 1755.

brave Officers. I never doubt of the Success of our Arms on the Ohio, as I think we were more numerous than the Enemy.”<sup>38</sup>

Once again, the captive, James Smith remarked: “It may be said by some that the French were also engaged in this war. True, they were; yet I know it was the Indians that laid the plan, and with small assistance put it into execution.”<sup>39</sup> In summary, the Mingo Chief Scarouady remarked that Braddock: “is now dead; but he was a bad man when he was alive; he looked upon us as dogs, and would never hear anything what was said to him. He never appeared pleased with us, & that was the reason that a great many of our warriors left him and would not be under his command.”<sup>40</sup> After the Battle of Monongahela, most of the Ohio Iroquois supporting the English moved east into Pennsylvania while Conrad Weiser was told: “that the Senecas...had sent messages...to the Indians on Ohio to order them not to meddle with the French neither in one way or the other, but to stand Neuter and keep their Ears and Eyes towards the Six United Nations.”<sup>41</sup> With the passing of Tanacharison or the Half-King after Braddock’s Defeat, there was a dispute between White Mingo and Old Belt in regards to which Iroquois was in charge. Eventually Old Belt moved back to New York and White Mingo stayed in Ohio. Guyasuta had taken part in supporting the French at Braddock’s defeat but drifted west and stayed quiet the duration of the war in the Mingo towns. By the summer of

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<sup>38</sup> Dinwiddie, *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, 2:156, Dinwiddie to Shirley, July 29, 1755.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 152.

<sup>40</sup> Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 6:589.

<sup>41</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 6:158.



1755, France and Britain were locked in an undeclared sea and land war centered around the Ohio Valley.

After Braddock's Defeat, the Shawnee and Delaware were promised their own land by the French swaying them to attack the frontier. The French had convinced them that the English intended to drive them from their land. Sir William Johnson stated that the "Indians of the Six Nations who were settled on the Ohio were so dissatisfied with the Albany purchase...and saw such bad Consequences arising from it that they left the Ohio and returned to their own Country..." while telling Johnson that: "You desire us to unite and live together and draw all our allies near us, but we shall have no land left either for ourselves or them, for your people when they buy a small piece of land of us by stealing they make it large."<sup>42</sup> In October 1755, Vaudreuil met with some of the Five Nations after hearing of a building sentiment towards the English. As opposed to the term Brethren used by Duquesne, he said: "Children... You beg of me not to stain the lands you inhabit with blood. You must admit that you have accepted the hatchet of the English... But as a good father, I must warn you that if you resume your infamous conduct, you will receive no more mercy and the arms of all my children will weigh so heavy on you that they will crush you to the earth without a single one of you escaping. Reflect serious on what I tell you."<sup>43</sup> The Five Nations remained divided and non-committal in response to this threat.

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<sup>42</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 7:330, Six Nations to SWJ on July 3, 1755.

<sup>43</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:362–364, Vaudreuil to the Five Nations, October 22, 1755.

This is where matters stood while England attempted to retool their war effort in North America. They were assured of control of the sea lanes but needed to devise strategies to reduce the Native American support for the French. By the end of 1755, the Indians began to realize that the French forts were running low on everything including food, guns, powder and lead.<sup>44</sup> If it was not for Braddock's Defeat and all the war munitions seized there, they would have been in even more trouble.

In January 1756, Pennsylvania requested a meeting with the Six Nations to address the attacks on their western settlements. Lieutenant Governor Morris asked the attending Chiefs: "what is the Reason of their becoming our Enemies" and "what manner we may best put a stop to the Ravages of our Enemies." The Belt speaking for the Iroquois explained to them that although they had an understanding with their tributary tribes, the Shawnee and Delaware, the French had made a "secret Treaty" with these Indians and that is why they began to attack the English. The New York Iroquois were divided at the time but speaking for the Iroquois in Ohio, the Belt added: "few as we are we are all Warriors...We esteem the Blood that has been shed in this Country as running from our own Veins." He recognized the French were the cause of it and promised the Six Nations would deal with it.<sup>45</sup>

His view seemed to matter little as Montcalm wrote to Machault on June 12, 1756, informing him that: "Pennsylvania and Virginia are really desolated. All the Indians generally appear to us very well affected, and I believe that the neutrality of the

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<sup>44</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2:722–724, Minutes of the Council in Easton, 25, July 1756.

<sup>45</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 7:1–5, Carlisle Council, January, 1756.

Five Nations can be depended on.”<sup>46</sup> Vaudreuil noticed some of the Five Nations beginning to lean towards the English and warned them that: “he will let loose all the other Indians on them.”<sup>47</sup> At this time, Sir William Johnson with his ties to the Mohawk launched a campaign to win the support of the Iroquois knowing that they would bring other Indian nations with them. At the June, 1756 Iroquois Conference with Sir William Johnson, a Delaware leader said: “Last year the French brought a powerful army into our country, and soon after the English marched an other army which appeared to us like two clouds hanging over us; we looked on till the Battle was over.”<sup>48</sup> When questioned on the basis of their attacks on settlers, the Delaware Chief responded: “my people will follow the example of the Six Nations while the Shawnee Chief answered: “I and my people have always listened to our Brethren the 5 Nations and conducted ourselves according to their advice.”<sup>49</sup>

At this point, major action quiets to the west while the French try to consolidate their position and strengthen their relationships with their Indian allies. Captain Pierre Pouchot was Officer in Charge at Niagara and reported: “My Lord, when I assumed the command at Niagara, the Marquis de Vaudreuil wished me to engage the Five Nations to observe neutrality. I dare flatter myself that I have.”<sup>50</sup> However, there appeared to be a

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<sup>46</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:418, Montcalm to Machault, June 12, 1756.

<sup>47</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:428.

<sup>48</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 7:148–149, Proceedings with the Indians, June 3, 1756.

<sup>49</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 7:157, Johnson’s Speech to the Shawanese and Delawares.

<sup>50</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:668, Pouchot to Montcalm.

shift in power in 1756 as after Braddock's Defeat, Indian raids extended east to within 75 miles of Philadelphia and the entire countryside was decimated. In August 1756, Pennsylvania launched a raid on the mainly Delaware Indian town of Kittanning where they burned the town and rescued some prisoners after suffering heavy losses. At this point, the Forbes campaign began to take shape as 7,000 man Army began the slow trudge towards Fort Duquesne. In advance, Christian Post was sent to meet with the Ohio Nations to see what means were necessary to detach them from the French side. The Ohio Indians were willing to talk as they were aware that a large English Army was approaching and they realized that the French forts were running low on food and supplies.<sup>51</sup>

Indian raids were able to continue through 1756 but by the time of approach of General Forbes to Fort Duquesne on the Ohio, the supply problems for the French were dire. In 1756, Governor Robert Hunter Morris noted "You cannot conceive what havock has been made by the enemy...nor what numbers of murders they have committed; what a vast Tract of territory they have laid waste, and what a multitude of inhabitants...they have carried into Captivity."<sup>52</sup> George Washington agreed saying: "the ruinous state of the frontiers, and the vast extent of land we have lost...must appear incredible to those who are not eye-witnesses of the desolation. Upwards of fifty miles of a rich and (once) thick-settled country is now quite deserted and abandoned."<sup>53</sup> Some frontier areas were

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<sup>51</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2:723, Minutes of the Council in Easton, 25, July 1756.

<sup>52</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 7:97, Pennsylvania Governor to Sir William Johnson, April 24, 1756.

<sup>53</sup> Washington, *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, 4:11–18, George Washington to John Robinson, November 9, 1756.

exploring surrendering to the French and ending the bloodshed since they were not protected by the English.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile out west, the French Officer Louis Antoine de Bougainville began to make a number of observations regarding the conflict and its participants. On the Delaware, he observed that when it came to the Iroquois whom they call their uncles: “they fear them more than they love them.”<sup>55</sup> Pouchot reported that the Seneca began to go on raids for the French into Pennsylvania. By the fall of 1757, the war was still going well and if they could be resupplied they could devastate the frontier from Niagara to Virginia.

In 1757, the Iroquois Confederacy Chiefs met with several Cherokee and Sir William Johnson to discuss peace between the two and the Seneca Chief, Old Belt spoke for Peace with the Cherokee and added: “We are warriors and our Nation have lifted their ax against the French.” The Cherokee added: “We will make war upon the Ohio, and spare neither the French or their Indians if they fall in our way.”<sup>56</sup> In 1757, the tide began to change as Lord Pitt took over and London opened their wallet and provided all the troops and funding that was requested. Not counting Indians, the British had almost 50,000 men in arms against a much smaller French force of approximately 16,000. In a 1757 meeting between the French and a number of Indian Nations, an Ottawa Chief stood up and told the Iroquois: “We notify you for the last time to be faithful...If you falsify it, we will make a sacrifice of you...in the spring the number of our warriors will make the

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<sup>54</sup> Washington, *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, 3: 44–47, George Washington to Robert Dinwiddie, April 24, 1756.

<sup>55</sup> Louis Antoine de Bougainville, *Adventures in the Wilderness*, ed. Edward P. Hamilton (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 105.

<sup>56</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 7:325.

earth tremble.”<sup>57</sup> They shrugged off this comment and remained neutral while continuing to watch the events unfold.

Campaigns against Louisbourg were planned but Fort William Henry became the next important battle. It had already been attacked by the French and was now approached by a larger force of French and Indians under Montcalm which brought artillery that would quickly destroy the earthen and wooden palisades of the Fort. Hundreds of Indians from as far as Minnesota and Lake Superior as well as the local Christian Iroquois joined the French forces under Montcalm. Vaudreuil was experienced with working with Indian forces and they raided the British lines of supply and communication. Montcalm was unhappy with the behavior of the Indians after the victory at Oswego but accepted their participation. Prior to the attack on Fort William Henry in 1757, Bougainville writes: “It will be with great difficulty that we can control these Indians of the Far West, the most ferocious of all people, and great cannibals by trade. Listen to what the Chiefs said to M. de Montcalm three days ago. Father, do not expect that we can very easily give quarter to the English. Fresh meat has brought them here from the ends of the earth. Behold our comrades, dear Mama; what a crew, what a spectacle for a humane man.”<sup>58</sup> A force of 8,000 French including 2,000 Indians from more than 33 tribes laid siege on Fort William Henry with its garrison of 1,100 and as soon as the artillery began to fire on the fort, it was evident that it could not hold out long and no support was coming from elsewhere. After a week of increasing bombardment and realizing that no reinforcements were coming, the English Commander decided to

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<sup>57</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:561.

<sup>58</sup> Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, 331, Letter of June 30, 1757.

surrender with conditions of safe passage for his troops. This was granted by Montcalm but as the inhabitants of the fort filed out, they were attacked, robbed, killed or taken captive by the Indians. The Indians immediately ransacked the fort in search of booty and alcohol and this only increased the chaos. The Indians killed all the English being treated in the Fort Hospital and attacked the retreating English column with a total of about 500 killed or taken captive, many of whom were sold back to the French. Survivors reaching Fort Edward told of what had happened and General Montcalm was helpless in his ability to control the Indians who quickly left the scene of the battle and returned to their homes with whatever they could carry.<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately, they chose to take the clothes from the patients in the hospital who had smallpox so they carried small pox to their towns around the Great Lakes resulting in a devastating epidemic.

Conditions continued to deteriorate for the French in 1758 as there were bread riots in Montreal, no ships had come in and word of a 7,000 man Army marching on Fort Duquesne became known. The loss of Fort Frontenac in August 1758 at the hands of Lieutenant Colonel Bradstreet was a blow to the French in the west as it cut the supply line and the English captured 100 cannons, 10,000 barrels of provisions and a vast treasure of trade goods along with powder and lead.<sup>60</sup> France's western campaign was crippled and the dominos continued to fall. Frontenac was defended by 50 French while it was attacked by 3,000 English under Colonel Bradstreet. French General Montcalm noted that: "The loss of Fort Frontenac is a deadly blow." The Iroquois had given the

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<sup>59</sup> I. Minis Hays, "A Journal Kept During the Siege of Fort William Henry," *American Philosophical Society* 37 (January 1898): 143–150.

<sup>60</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10.

French three weeks warning that the English were approaching Frontenac yet Vaudreuil failed to act. Montcalm noted this as the Iroquois stated: “You are asleep where is our War Chief?”<sup>61</sup> The loss of Fort Frontenac was fairly inconsequential but the supplies were badly needed in the west. Much of it was already loaded on a ship that could have taken it west to Niagara and Detroit.

As General Forbes approached the forks of the Ohio, Colonel Henry Bouquet sent a force of 800 men under Major Grant to probe the French lines. They were ambushed and lost half of their men. The Battle of Grant’s Hill was another humiliating defeat for the English army as they proved once again to be no match for a fast-moving Indian army backed up by French militia and regulars. Grant was supposed to only scout Fort Duquesne but decided his force was sufficient to capture the Fort so in a rush for glory, he led his command into annihilation. Although Grant was situated on some high ground, the Indians maneuvered around him and then noting the Highlander kilts, thought that they were fighting bearded women. In the end, half of his force managed to escape including a rear guard who rescued some of the frontline troops. The rest were killed outright or captured to be tortured to death later.<sup>62</sup> As General Forbes continued to approach the Fort through the bones of Braddock’s Battlefield, the French burned Fort Duquesne and withdrew up the Ohio River and upon arriving at Fort Duquesne, Forbes found spiked cannon, smoldering ashes and the heads of many Highlanders mounted on poles with their kilts attached further down. It was the Indians statement on what they

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<sup>61</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:960–961, Montcalm to Belle Isle, April 12, 1759.

<sup>62</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:902–903, An Account of Major Grant’s Defeat near Fort Duquesne.



called the “Petticoat Warriors due to the kilts that the Highlanders wore.” Although a setback for the English, it worked to their advantage when the victorious French Indians returned to their homes with their booty after the battle and assumed the British would turn back again like they did after Braddock’s defeat.

General Forbes brought in several hundred Cherokees and Catawba to bolster his forces approaching Fort Duquesne. They made several small raids on the Ohio Indians and then most returned home early. The Catawba brought smallpox back to their town that was spread by the English Army while the Cherokees were attacked on their way home by settlers and started robbing white farmers to feed themselves. In the final analysis, General Forbes did not think much of his Indian auxiliaries saying: “to say the plain truth, the Cherokees behaved so infamously bad, that I dare trust none of the race of Indians, who are both perfidious and expensive.”<sup>63</sup> One reason for Forbes delay in marching was that the English knew that the French Indian forces came from the Great Lakes and would need to return home before winter came on to hunt and provide for their families. After the French abandoned Fort Duquesne, they moved north towards Niagara while General Forbes left a garrison at the newly named Fort Pitt and returned to Philadelphia.

At this time, the Five Nations became more active in supporting the British cause influenced by Johnson and a somewhat reenergized central council fire at Onondaga. The British Navy continued taking its toll on French supply ships coming to Canada while the French forces suffered from the lack of war munitions. The Indians realized this and

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<sup>63</sup> John Forbes, *Writings of General John Forbes*, ed. Alfred Procter James (Menasha: Collegiate Press, 1938), 200.

began to pull away from their full support for the French. During this period of time, Sir William Johnson began to emerge as a regional power broker between the English and the Indians. From his position in Iroquois country and ties to the Mohawk, he would be the dominant force in Indian affairs for the next 20 years. In doing so, he played upon his ties with the Iroquois and their tradition of dominating all the Ohio and most of the western Indian nations at one time. He reminded the Iroquois Confederacy Chiefs that “the Indians the Delawares and Shawanese always lived under your direction” and “looked upon you as their Master.”<sup>64</sup> However, meetings with the Indians shifted west and the Iroquois central fire at Onondaga was increasingly passed over. Bougainville observed in 1758 that: “The English use all that they can to disrupt our alliance with the Five Nations, the Loups and the Shawnee. These Indians are the rampart of the Belle Riviere and I would imagine it lost if they grant our enemies neutrality, to which their demands are limited...Our misery grows each day. Almost no meat or bread is left...I am very worried that the English will obstruct commerce between this country and yours.”<sup>65</sup> Montcalm was aware of the effect of these shortcomings and noted: “great efforts on the part of the English to detach some of the Indian Nations from our alliance. I was not without some uneasiness on that head. A number of the Upper country Indians who came last to the expedition against Fort William Henry, died of smallpox on their way home. The English had it.”<sup>66</sup> He finally summed up his thoughts with: “The Five Nations on which I, contrary to M. de Vaudreuil’s opinion, never placed reliance, appear inclined

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<sup>64</sup> Johnson, *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 2:414.

<sup>65</sup> Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, 201.

<sup>66</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:698–700, Montcalm to de Paulmy April 18, 1758.

towards the English. The war has changed character in Canada. I serve the King and the State. I shall execute to the best of my ability. To retreat would be the ruin of the colony; to lose the battle, would be to lose both it and myself.”<sup>67</sup> If France sent 10,000 men, we would still not be on the same level.

Following Louisbourg, Fort Duquesne and Frontenac, the momentum shift was obvious. In a repeat of a previous war, the surrender of the French Fort at Louisbourg in 1758 effectively closed off New France’s lifeline for supplies and reinforcements. By late 1758, we begin to see how grim<sup>68</sup> the prospects for Canada becomes in the letter from Doreil to Massiac where he states: “’Tis evident that the Indians of the Five Iroquois Nations and even some of our domiciliated tribes have deceived the Marquis de Vaudreuil...The English have actually more troops on foot in this Continent than Canada has people.” This message also notes that their allied Indians were beginning to kill Frenchmen to steal their supplies since the supply chain was severed.<sup>69</sup> He concludes with: “’Tis by these, my Lord that the Canada machine, ever ready to fall, has kept itself up for three years, but there is no longer reason to flatter oneself; we are approaching its total ruin, and nothing but peace can guarantee the country against such a fate.”

The Ohio Indian Nations continued to drift away from the French as they saw their weakened condition and when they were approached by the Iroquois to discuss a peace, they agreed to attend the 1758 Easton Treaty of Peace with the English. Key

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<sup>67</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:958, 926.

<sup>68</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:828, Doreil to Massiac, August 31, 1758.

<sup>69</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10, 821, Doreil to Marshal de Belle Isle, August 31, 1758.

articles of agreement were a return of land to the Six Nations by Pennsylvania, stop to the Indian raids in Pennsylvania, resumption of normal Indian trade, a pledge to not settle west of the mountains and remove all forts there after the war with the French was over. With the Ohio Indian nations at peace and the Lake Indians returned to the west, the French were left with few Indian allies. Once Forbes assumed command at Fort Pitt, a wave of settlers was close behind to encroach on the Indian land. The 1758 Treaty of Easton brought hope to both the inhabitants of Pennsylvania and the Ohio Indians who both felt that their lives were more secure. The Indians promised to return all prisoners once the peace was final and they refused to fight for the English against the French unless they were attacked as so many of their people were married to the French Indians and they would not fight their family. In explaining their ties to the French, one Mingo Chief answered: "The French came and became our Neighbours, and you neither coming yourselves, nor assisting us with Warlike Stores, our People of necessity, were obliged to Trade with them for what we Wanted as your Traders had left the Country. The Governor of Virginia took care to settle on our lands for his own Benefit."<sup>70</sup>

With the completion of the 1758 Treaty of Easton and the French gone from Fort Duquesne, the Ohio Indian nations grew restive that the English Army still lingered and was actually adding on to the structure at Fort Pitt while the promised restoration of vigorous trade was not evident. Henry Bouquet reassured the Indians that the British had not come to settle their lands and they planned to restore an extensive trade. Bouquet was left at the Fort with 400 men for the winter and resupply issues arose in no time. Some

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<sup>70</sup> Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 8:198, Treaty of Easton, October 18, 1758, Speech of Iroquois Chief.

Ohio Iroquois traveled east with Forbes to inquire what the plan was to follow-up on the takeover of Fort Pitt. They met with Amherst, were told of some major English campaigns and returned home with some gifts. The presence of French Indians near Fort Pitt was still pronounced and snipers were everywhere while English supply trains ran the risk of being waylaid. One supply train guarded by 110 men was overrun near Fort Ligonier with loss of life and all the supplies were taken by the French Indians who were short of food. The garrison in the Fort was close to eating horses and dogs and plans for abandoning the fort were made when one train guarded by 300 men made it through the woods. Another supply train brought reinforcements while word came that 700 French troops backed by 950 Indians were camped to the north and preparing to attack. The French were suddenly ordered to move north to reinforce Niagara which was being attacked by a combined Indian/British Force led by Colonel William Johnson.

Many Seneca in the vicinity of Niagara had been pro-French or neutral at the onset of the war but at this time, they began to sense the momentum shift to the English and the remaining French soldiers were starving and deserting due to lack of supplies. Furthermore, the French had promised to take care of the Indians with all of their trade needs and they could no longer provide due to their inability to evade the British Naval blockade between France and Montreal. This was felt throughout the Ohio Valley and the Lakes and the Indians began to question the strength of their French father. By late 1758, the situation was critical for the defense of Canada. Montcalm proposed: "It is no longer the time when a few scalps or burned houses means anything these are "petty means,

petty ideas...nothing less is at stake than the utter and impending loss of the Colony.”<sup>71</sup>

He suggested falling back to a defensible area of Quebec to Montreal for if Quebec falls, all of Canada is lost. In regards to the “Beautiful River, nothing can be done now for it...Fort Duquesne no longer exists.”

On April 4, 1759, the Iroquois Confederacy Chiefs met at Canajoharie to discuss the upcoming English campaign against Niagara and all were in favor of the campaign while the Caughnawaga declared they were through supporting the French and would not attack New York any longer. It appeared that 300 French were near Fort Duquesne and the Shawnee and Delaware were divided on supporting the French. George Croghan was told that the French around Venango were starving and the Ohio Indian towns around Fort Duquesne had been attacked by British Indians. They also reported that the Lake Indians were eating British captives while the Caughnawagas had a fight with the French near Fort Duquesne over the lack of food and supplies with over 50 dead. As usual for France, supply issues were paramount with Montcalm writing on April 12, 1759 that: “Canada will be taken this campaign, and assuredly during the next, if there be not some unforeseen good luck...or some gross blunders on the part of the enemy. The English have 60,000 men, we at most from 10–11,000. Our government is good for nothing...M. Bigot appears occupied only in making a large fortune for himself; We have been driven out of Fort Duquesne; The Five Nations are ill disposed; The loss of Fort Frontenac is a deadly blow.”<sup>72</sup> It is surprising that Montcalm would choose to mention the Iroquois at

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<sup>71</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:874–876, General Reflections by Montcalm, 1758.

<sup>72</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:960–961, Montcalm to Belle Isle, April 12, 1759.

this time when the situation in Canada was so hopeless but it supports the thesis that they were so important in developments in the west. Although their numbers were not great, their support could bring other Indian nations with them and reduce those in opposition.

Following their string of victories in 1758 including the capture of Louisbourg, Fort Duquesne and Ticonderoga, British Prime Minister William Pitt took advantage of his superior forces and supply to plan a three-pronged attack on Canada targeting Niagara, Quebec and Montreal. One English Army led by General Prideaux left by bateaux from the restored English post at Oswego in May 1759. The British success at retaking Oswego and the growing weakness of the French began to draw support from the Five Nations again. When the French were strong, their argument to the Iroquois was to not trust the English because they wanted to steal their land made sense. But when it came down to the supply of the basic necessities, they had to go with the side that could deliver. Sir William Johnson utilized his ties with most of the Five Nations to bring the Chenusios and the Ohio Iroquois into agreement to recall their heritage as a Confederacy of Nations to oppose the French and their possession of Fort Niagara. He described these western Seneca as: “The Chenossia Indians, who are a Body of the Seneca Nation, a Brave and Powerful people that live nearest Niagara and the most remote from Us...Declare their Resolutions...to Commence Hostilities against the French...Joining us in the destruction of Niagara, which was built in their Country.”<sup>73</sup>

The English landed within several miles of Fort Niagara and by the first week in July, the Fort was surrounded while the English dug in to lay siege. As usual custom, the

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<sup>73</sup> Johnson, *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 3:27–28, Johnson to Amherst, April 21, 1759.

Iroquois outside the Fort requested a parley on July 12 with the Seneca inside the Fort who were supporting the French. When they realized the entire Five Nations were now supporting the English, most of the Seneca left the Fort with their families to avoid fighting against their fellow Iroquois. When the French at Venango discovered the English were collecting to attack Niagara, this force was ordered to head north to reinforce the French position there instead of retaking Fort Pitt. If Niagara was lost, the French could not sustain themselves on the Ohio River as it was key to their supply chain from the Saint Lawrence River to France. Upon receiving word of the Six Nations massing with the English, most of the Ohio Indians left the French and returned home while others stayed with the French.<sup>74</sup>

Nine hundred sixty-five Iroquois warriors were camped at La Belle-Famille just south of Fort Niagara while the English Army tightened the siege on Niagara. On July 19, 1759, the English received word that 1,600 French and Indians were approaching from the south. They were met by the Iroquois warriors who advised the other Indians to leave or face the consequences. An excellent summary of the battle is provided by the English Capt de Lancey who wrote: “Some of our Indians went to the Enemy’s Indians to prevail on them not to fight but the French told them, they did not want to fight with our Indians but with us.”<sup>75</sup> Some Indians did agree to step back while others exchanged insults and the Iroquois returned to the British lines informing them to be ready. As the French approached, the English held their fire and then let loose several volleys of fire which

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<sup>74</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, First Series, 3:671–672, Croghan to Governor Denny, 1759.

<sup>75</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 7:402, Letter from Capt De Lancey, July 25, 1759.



were not returned with vigor and as the Iroquois began to attack, the French forces “immediately ran away as fast as they could...Our Indians pursued them very briskly and took and killed great numbers of them, we pursued about five Miles.” Some of the English pursued the retreating French also as they tried to protect the surrendering French Army while the Iroquois were not selective in who they killed. His summary states 200 killed while 100 were captured during the retreat.<sup>76</sup> Sir William Johnson noted that French casualties could not be accurately noted because they fell throughout the woods but he reported that: “I cannot ascertain the Number of the Kill’d, they are so dispersed among the Woods, but their loss is Great.”<sup>77</sup>

The remaining French wandered west towards Detroit and the surviving Indians returned to their towns while Fort Niagara surrendered to the British within a day. This ended the presence of the French on Iroquois lands and ended the French Iroquois battles that started with Champlain in 1609. Although a number of Iroquois especially the western Seneca or Chenusio were fairly pro-French, there were also a large number who would never forgive the French for leading the war on the Iroquois people since the arrival of Champlain. In the final analysis, the Indians were going to side with the winner and by this time, it was obvious that France could not sustain the war if they could not resupply its forces in North America.

When news of the rout of his relief forces hit the garrison of the Fort, Pouchot was forced to face the inevitable surrender as much of his force was ready to walk out. Running out of food, powder, and operable muskets while receiving continual shelling from British

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<sup>76</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 7:403.

<sup>77</sup> Johnson, *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 3:108–110, SWJ to Amherst, July 25, 1759.

artillery, Pouchot called in an English Officer to discuss terms of capitulation. He only asked that his men be allowed to march out with the honors of war, protected from the Indians and transported back to Montreal. All civilians were provided immediate transport to Montreal while French Indian allies were told to leave immediately as their safety was not guaranteed. Under the leadership of Colonel Johnson, the Iroquois complied with orders and it was a dignified surrender with few disruptions. In regards to the relief force that had engaged in battle with the English and Iroquois, they did not fare well. Of the 400 French soldiers, more than 250 were killed and an isolated group wandered back to Detroit by foot and boat to bring them the news of the fall of Fort Niagara. There were also isolated pockets of French between Niagara and Fort Pitt but these quickly journeyed south to the Mississippi or surrendered where they could. With this final victory at Niagara, the French Army that marched into the Ohio Valley was no more and their Indian allies from the Lakes were beaten and ran back to their towns with the loss of their French benefactor and protector.

The Iroquois lost three men during their participation in this battle but demanded and received 150 prisoners as their own to kill or adopt. As most of the Seneca were on good terms with the French garrison at Fort Niagara, they did not disturb them although they stole everything that they could carry. Shortly thereafter, word was received that the French had burned and abandoned Venango, Fort Le Boeuf and Presque Isle. On June 28, Johnson asked Bunt from Onondaga and The Belt from the Seneca to speak to the Indians the following day to discuss peace. The western nations wanted both peace and a strong trade. Sir William Johnson gave a speech to the celebrating Iroquois warriors that included: "Brethren of the Seneca Nation: I am glad to hear that all those of your people,

who were living at Ohio, and dispersed about, are now come to settle among you. It is right to settle in bodies, as by that means, you will be more respectable.”<sup>78</sup>

English leadership was quick to recognize this victory and its implications for the Ohio Valley in North America with the English Lieutenant Governor de Lancey writing: “congratulating Your Lordship in defeating the French forces coming to the relief of Niagara Fort...which brought the capitulation the same evening 24 July. His Majesty is now in possession of the most important pass in all the Indian Countries. The Advantages arising from this defeat are of very great consequence.”<sup>79</sup> Charles Lee took part in the battle as well as Braddock’s Defeat and described Niagara campaign to a friend as: “acquaint you with our happy reduction of this important Fort of Niagara, which is to the English Nation a most glorious and solidly advantageous acquisition, by its strength most formidable, and by its situation absolute Empress of the Inland parts of North America, commanding the two great Lakes, Erie, Ontario; the River Ohio...thus defeating their favourite and long projected scheme of forming a chain round our Colonies. This event was brought about by a mere handful of men...with 1000 Indians of the Six Nations.”<sup>80</sup>

As a result of this battle and the devastating outcome for the French Army and their western Indian allies, conflict in the west came to an end. The post at Toronto was burned and abandoned as were all the French forts down the Allegheny River. By maximizing the contribution of the Iroquois warriors under Sir William Johnson, the

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<sup>78</sup> Johnson, *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 13:130, Journal of the Niagara Campaign.

<sup>79</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 7:401, De Lancey to the Lords of Trade, August 10, 1759.

<sup>80</sup> Charles Lee, *The Papers of Charles Lee*, ed. Henry Edward Bunbury (New York: New York Historical Society, 1871), 1:20, to Sir William Bunbury, August 9, 1759.

British Army had exorcised the ghost of their failures at Braddock's Defeat, Grant's Defeat, Oswego and the massacre of their surrendering forces at Fort William Henry. They understood that the Indians and Canadians they were facing were the same ones that tortured and killed surrendering English soldiers while the Iroquois were able to remind the other Indian Nations of their tradition of dominance on the field of battle. Some of the English Units fighting here were remnants of the 44<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> regiments that failed so badly at the Monongahela under General Braddock and although the Iroquois received little credit for their support, having 1,000 Iroquois standing with them gave the English the heart to carry the battle to the French this time. The action shifted east and the cannons could be heard at Quebec as the English began to relax and celebrate their victory in the west.

After the fall of Niagara, Sir William Johnson asked the Chenusio about the Ohio Indians. He was told that the Ottawa and others held a council at the falls and wanted to return to make peace with the Iroquois but the French would not let them. Several did return to see if the Seneca were still mad at them and they said no.<sup>81</sup> The After Battle Report from Colonel Mercer at Fort Pitt tells a slightly different story of Indian relations: "I have the following Intelligence: That on the Fifth the French made a great Sally from the Fort, that all the Indians they had with them at the Fort deserted them; that the French Indians often attempted to speak to the Six Nations, but as the Six Nations constantly kept hallooing to them, threatening to put every Indian they found with the French to Death." Later he adds: "three Indians came here from Venango and Confirmed the above

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<sup>81</sup> Johnson, *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 13:128.

Intelligence of the English taking Niagara by storm, and say the Indians from over the Lakes are very much displeas'd with the Six Nations, as they had a number of their People killed at Niagara.”<sup>82</sup>

The Seneca Chief, The Belt remained heavily involved in the Niagara campaign and diplomatic efforts in the aftermath while the military action shifted east to the big armies on the Saint Lawrence River. The absence of the French traders was felt in the native American communities as the French had integrated themselves into the social structure and they now had to wait for the war to conclude to see how they would be treated by the English. They had enjoyed the benefits of having two options for trade and support but were wary of now having an all-powerful English presence. After the loss of Niagara Vaudreuil noted that: “All the Nations of the Beautiful River witnessed with sorrow the departure of the French.”<sup>83</sup>

This concludes the action in the Ohio Valley and a Conference with the Ohio Indians was held in early 1759. A Delaware leader spoke saying: “Your Nation and my Uncles, the Six Nations, came here together to make a Treaty of Peace. The Six Nations and you desired that I would sit down and smoak my Pipe at Kuskusky; what they desired me I intend to do.” Speaking for the English, Colonel Mercer replied “I am come to this Place with a Friendly Disposition and hearty Desire to make Peace with all Nations of

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<sup>82</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 8:395–396, Colonel Mercer to Governor Denny August 13, 1759.

<sup>83</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:1094, Vaudreuil to Berryer, June 24, 1760.

Indians. Your great Men are to Consider that their Brothers, the English, from a few that came into America, are becoming a great People.”<sup>84</sup>

Another Indian Conference was held at Pittsburgh on 24 October 1759 where Capt Montour lit the Peace pipe and passed it around the attendees before informing the attending Indian leaders that: “we had taken Quebeck, and that we expected soon to drive the French out of America.” With this news, the Wyandot Chief shook hands and returned thanks in response to what had been said to them.” He exclaimed: “It is a long time since this whole Country has been overspread with darkness; being led by the Evil Spirit...you the White people, by making War upon each other, was the first Occasion of it.”<sup>85</sup> At a 1759 Indian Council, Pennsylvania Governor Hamilton was told: “We make eleven Nations on the West of Allegheny, who have heard what you and Teedyescung have concluded at the Treaty of Easton, and as we all heartily agree to it... We say nothing of the Six Nations; We leave you to Treat with them yourselves. We make no Road for them... We only tell you we do not include them in anything We say. I have done.”<sup>86</sup> These were the Algonquins from the Lakes who were still angry about the beating that the Seneca and English had put on them at the Battle of Belle Famille. At the Peace Conference at Fort Pitt on August, 1760, General Monckton assured the Ohio Indian Nations that: “His Majesty has not sent me to deprive any of you of your Lands and Property...no part whatever of your Lands Joining the said Forts shall be taken from

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<sup>84</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 8:307, Indian Conference at Fort Pitt, Colonel Mercer, February 24, 1759.

<sup>85</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 8:431, Indian conference at Pittsburgh, 24 October, 1759, Henry Montour.

<sup>86</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 8:416, Indian Council at Philadelphia 4 December, 1759, Teedyescung speaking to Hamilton.

you, nor any of Our people be permitted to Hunt or Settle upon them, But they shall remain your Absolute property.”<sup>87</sup> He then asked for some land on the outside to plant corn whereby the Delaware informed him that: “we can give no answer to it, you must apply to our Uncles, the Six Nations, for the very ground we live on belongs to them.”<sup>88</sup>

In his Review of the Trade and Affairs of the Indians in the Northern District of America, Sir William Johnson provided his analysis on intertribal relations in the Ohio Valley as: “The Six Nations who had subdued all their neighbours, still maintained their ascendancy over them, which was the sole fruits of their conquests, as their War was chiefly carried on to bring them to a submission and acknowledgement of being vanquished...The Western Indians were very sensible of their present superiority in numbers over their Conquerors but they could not divest themselves of some awe before them, and considered them as people of superior skill...the whole Western Indians considered the 6 Nations, as the Door, (as they call it) to their Country, and received the surest intelligence concerning the designs of the White people.”<sup>89</sup> In the final surrender by France, Article 40 of the Articles of Capitulation for the Surrender of Canada states: “The Savages or Indians, allies of his Most Christian Majesty, shall be maintained in the lands they inhabit.”<sup>90</sup> Despite this surrender being signed by both Marquis de Vaudreuil for France and Jeffrey Amherst for England, the English under the direction of Amherst immediately claimed additional land surrounding Fort Pitt and Niagara from the Indians.

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<sup>87</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, Ser 1, 3:746, General Monckton Indian Conf, August, 1760.

<sup>88</sup> Hazard, et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, Ser 1, 3:748.

<sup>89</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 7:957–958, SWJ Review of the Indians of the Northern District.

<sup>90</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:1117, Article 40.

Although the Iroquois were not heavily involved in the final battles at Quebec and Montreal, the involvement of the Seneca in the capture of Fort Niagara effectively ended the French presence in the Ohio Valley as the string of Forts south and west surrendered except Detroit where a small French force waited to be relieved by the English.

The Seven Years War ended in victory for England but this joy was not shared by the various Indian nations. The English Army had brought another smallpox epidemic to North America which spread from the Ohio Valley to the northern Great Lakes and South Carolina. Contrary to promises at the Treaty of Easton, the English did not withdraw back east across the mountains. In summary, the Ohio Valley became the epicenter of a global conflict between France and England with the Iroquois playing a major role. The conflict began with a divided Confederacy remaining neutral although factions supported both sides. As the war progressed and the French began to emerge as being at a disadvantage, the Iroquois swung to the English side under the influence of Sir William Johnson, the promises made at the 1758 Treaty of Easton and anger directed towards the French for bringing war to their land. The Iroquois also exerted pressure on the Ohio and Lake Indians by Diplomacy and by war as demonstrated at the Battle of La Belle-Famille and its aftermath.

In regards to the loss of Canada, Dumas wrote in 1761: “Commerce has changed the face of Europe...the more commercial nation will become the more powerful...We can no longer dispense with America without falling sensibly from our state of splendor...Louisiana cannot exist for us without Canada...tis essential to insist strongly on the entire possession of the Ohio...To make the Ohio the boundary of the respective Colonies is to surrender it entirely to the English...The English are ten to our one in



America... Canada bathed in the blood of our unfortunate Colonists, will soon be the appendage of the English.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:1134–1138, Memoir on the Boundaries of Canada by Dumas, April 5, 1761.

## Conclusion

So we have been on a journey to watch an Indian people adapt to the changes brought to North America with the advent of the colonial era. The Five Nations were entrenched in their homeland when the colonists first arrived and although direct contact was minimal at first, disease epidemics were able to spread from one Indian nation to another without a white carrier. They came to know the Dutch and were introduced to European trade goods that they readily adopted. Firearms, steel blades and copper pots were always in demand and they discovered the trade value of beaver and other animal skins. When Champlain introduced the French to the Iroquois, the first impression was a lasting one. The French became an enemy and the Iroquois responded with 50 years of animosity that could break out in open warfare at any time but was usually limited to minor raids. Champlain did not feel concerned when he wrote Richelieu in 1635 that one company of French regular soldiers would enable him to subdue the Iroquois and make the French masters of the continent.<sup>1</sup>

The Iroquois managed their wars admirably with diplomacy as we see them pursue a peace with the French in 1654 while they battled the Erie to the west and then the Susquehannocks. The French understood what was going on but they were relieved to not be subject to Iroquois raids. Once again, we return to the words of Father Louis Hennepin who wrote: “The Councils which the Salvages generally hold concerning the management of all their Affairs, ought to be look’d upon as the chief Cause of their Preservation, and of the Terrour they strike into all the Nations of North America...They

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<sup>1</sup> *Collection de Manuscrits de la Nouvelle France*, i:112–113, in *The French Regime*, ed. Louise Phelps Kellogg (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1968), 85.

undertake no manner of things rashly, and their Elders, who are wise and Prudent, have always their Eyes intent upon the good of the Nation.”<sup>2</sup>

The Iroquois utilized their diplomatic skills in handling the French and seeking coalitions with other European powers to acquire firearms and other weapons. They also offered these trade channels to other Indian nations to build friendships that would prove tenuous but the Indian nations never stopped talking to each other and seeking accommodation even when France tried to stir up wars among the Indians. It is telling that when Joncaire provides orientation to Duquesne upon his arrival in Canada, he admits that French policy was to keep the Indians fighting each other to weaken them and make them less threatening to France.<sup>3</sup>

In regards to the Iroquois Wars of Conquest, it is impressive to see the Confederacy operate at this time when you see the Mohawk negotiate with the Dutch traders for the acquisition of a large number of firearms and then bring in the Seneca for the takedown of the Huron. The amount of planning involved in these campaigns is impressive as they were often outnumbered and could not count on brute force to accomplish their goals. They did not win every battle but always found a way to support each other to achieve the ultimate victory. The *Jesuit Relations*, volume 41, shows the Five Nations soliciting a large group of Hurons in competition for their favor. These Huron were unsure in regards to who to join as they still feared retribution from the various Nations that they had insulted in the past wars. One Huron leader commented: “We see plainly that those two Iroquois Nations, in a spirit of mutual envy, wish to win

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<sup>2</sup> Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country*, 93.

<sup>3</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:242–244.

us each to its own side.”<sup>4</sup> Father Hennepin observed that: “This Barbarous Nation has destroy’d divers Nations, and such of them as have escaped the Sword, they have always oblig’d to live amongst them.”<sup>5</sup> Father de Lamberville’s warning in 1680 that: the Seneca had just brought 600 captives from the Illinois and Miami helped fuel a renewed French-Iroquois War.. The Iroquois were at a peak of their power and they had no fear of the French or any Indians. He added: “Every year they profit by our losses; they annihilate our allies of whom they make Iroquois.”<sup>6</sup>

It may sound contrary to state that one of the goals of their warlike behavior was to bring peace to the land and ensure their safety and territorial integrity. By calling on one of the tenants of the Iroquois Great Law, they were able to bring in adoptees to fill the ranks of citizens depleted by war or disease. This law states: “ALIEN REFUGEES SEEKING PERMANENT RESIDENCE.” When a member of an alien nation comes to the territory of the League and seeks refuge and permanent residence, the Statesman of the Nation to which he comes shall extend hospitality and make him a member of the Nation. Then he shall be accorded equal rights and privileges in all matters except as mentioned here.<sup>7</sup>

In one observation in the *Jesuit Relations*, the father states that the Seneca now have people of 11 nations living among them and there were now more non-Seneca there than actual Seneca people. This served them well and the Seneca sustained their strength

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<sup>4</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 41:57.

<sup>5</sup> Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country*, 86.

<sup>6</sup> Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 62:71, 153.

<sup>7</sup> *Great Law of the Iroquois*, # 75 online,  
[http://web.pdx.edu/~caskeym/iroquois\\_web/html/greatlaw.html](http://web.pdx.edu/~caskeym/iroquois_web/html/greatlaw.html).

by acquiring Indians through war or peace and they usually were accepting of new members that were able to earn their way to full status by their actions. The Great Peace of 1701 was an outstanding example of Iroquois Diplomacy as they had to maneuver between the two European powers to find a peace through strength. This brought an end to war in Iroquois lands and resulted in a relative peace for over 50 years.

The Quiet Time after the Great Peace of 1701 was a chance to observe the Iroquois use diplomacy and persuasion to win friends and allies among the other Indian nations while they enjoyed gifts from both the English and French to curry favor. It was also a time of more mixing among the various Indian Nations brought on by intermarriage and common interests. This is noted by the French Minister La Galissonière in 1748 when he remarked on the Shawnee leaving Detroit to move near the Ohio River: "They have formed a Republic of many tribes dominated by some Iroquois of the Five Nations who form part of it."<sup>8</sup> This ended with the Seven Years War which the Iroquois did not encourage as they enjoyed being courted by both sides and did not want to get involved. They remained neutral until the ultimate outcome became obvious and then they jumped on board the winning side to put an end to the conflict on their land. The Seneca Chief Old Belt spoke for the Iroquois in New York and in the Ohio valley in 1756 when he stated: "few as we are, we are all Warriors and...we esteem the Blood that has been shed in this Country as running from our own Veins."<sup>9</sup> Their decision to support the English was made despite the French warnings that the English

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<sup>8</sup> *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 18:20, The French Regime.

<sup>9</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:4, Old Belt speech to Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor Morris, January 16, 1756.

wanted to steal their lands. Despite angering some of the other Indian nations, the Iroquois stayed with their decision and sought unity after the war.

Ohio represented a middle ground between the Atlantic colonies and what is defined as the “Farr Indians” on the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. The space was created by the Five Nations conquest of the Erie, Susquehannock, Shawnee and others. Their influence was wielded by diplomacy and threats as the Five Nations pursued peace under the covenant chain at this point in their interaction with other Indians. They had to balance these relationships alongside their interactions with the European powers that could not control the Indians hearts and minds. Few native people retained their autonomy throughout the swirl of Human conflict that was the Ohio Valley and many Indian nations ceased to exist as separate entities although some were absorbed into larger Indian nations. Not only did the Iroquois survive, they continued to exert power in imposing their mark on the events that shaped the Ohio valley.

In describing Iroquois dominant influence in the Ohio Valley, I refer to the concept of “spaces of power” where although lacking an immediate army in the region, they controlled major events by use of threat, diplomacy and partnership, the same qualities that helped the Five Nations in their initial wars of conquest. They wielded their influence over the area spatially and functionally utilizing their ties to the various colonial governments and traders and even after the decline of the Central Fire at Onondaga, the Seneca maintained a strong presence among the Ohio Indian nations. Spaces of power can be difficult to discern over an area the size of the Ohio valley as there may appear to be no strong center of influence. A coalition once developed was kept in communication by means such as annual conferences whether held at Logstown,

Sandusky, the Scioto or the Maumee which always included some Five Nations attendance who were usually heard although they stopped calling the shots. While European powers negotiated their spaces of power in capitals, the Indians were more informal although just as much dialog could take place in the woods at the council fire.

In writing this thesis, it is important to note that the primary sources could be fairly one-sided in the French interest and they even questioned each other. In the literature, we see Baron de Lahontan criticize part of the *Jesuit Relations*: “I have seen so many impertinent Accounts of this Country, and those written by Authors that pass’d for Saints; that I now begin to believe, that all History is one continued Series of Pyrrhonism.”<sup>10</sup> This is the same Lahontan who claimed there were crocodiles in the Ohio River. In 1682, we see La Barre describe La Salle as: “bold enough to give you intelligence of a false discovery in order to try and build up an imaginary kingdom for himself.”<sup>11</sup> The French also had a tendency to exaggerate their accomplishments. Frontenac’s 1696 account of his 2,000 man military campaign against the Onondaga, who he described as the “terror of all the Indians” ended with the French capturing one blind 80 y/o man while he described his encounter with the Oneida as: “In order to add to the brilliancy to the affair.”<sup>12</sup> To sum up the French Iroquois wars is the admission by Cadillac in 1703 that the French made war on the Iroquois: “perhaps unjustly on false statements which had been made to the court.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Lahontan, Baron de, *New Voyages to North America*, 2:413.

<sup>11</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:204

<sup>12</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:639.

<sup>13</sup> *Historical Collections: Collections and Researches made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 33:169–170.

Although it is not a focus of my thesis, I have made note of the interest in Ohio land on the part of the wealthy citizens of Virginia who organized the Ohio Land Company of Virginia. Starting with Governor Spotswood in 1722, they tried to buy every politician they could and lobbied for land in the Ohio Valley. I do not mean to pick on the French exclusively. We see George Croghan report to Pennsylvania that the Iroquois desired a fort to be built at the forks of the Ohio when the Indian interpreter, Andrew Montour corrects him and states that this was a lie and the Iroquois wanted no fort on the Ohio.<sup>14</sup> The colony of Virginia tried to convince the Indians that Ohio actually belonged to them and their colony extended as far as the Western Ocean. The situations that challenged the Five Nations were numerous but they were steadfast when they were in the right.

The most appropriate topic for historiographical discussion would be the French Iroquois War as there are several well-respected books written in the last 30 years. These would be the *Ordeal of the Longhouse* written by Daniel Richter in 1992 and *Your Fyre Should Burn No More* written by Jose Antonio Brandao in 1997.

Daniel Richter returns to the use of the term Beaver Wars that dates back to the day of Francis Parkman and as discussed in chapter two, I find it insulting to think that all these people died for an economic reason let alone a rodent. The Iroquois onslaught came out of several reasons with the common denominator being peace and security. Through the use of firearms, they were able to conquer all their Iroquois relations and compel the survivors to join them and not oppose them. In this way, they became stronger and were

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<sup>14</sup> Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:635.



able to maintain their strength during the disease epidemics that would sweep through the land and take 30–40 percent of their population in one epidemic. There was also a revenge factor in their initial assault on the Hurons but this dissipated soon when the Hurons adopted into the Iroquois side would seek out their relations still with the Hurons and ask them to join the Iroquois which many did. The Iroquois did not fit the evil mode that some Jesuits and French tried to put them in. It is important to remember that Champlain attacked them three times before even meeting one even though his initial impression of the Iroquois when he met them in battle was: “I saw the enemy come out of their barricade, nearly 200 men, strong and robust to look at, coming toward us with a dignity and assurance that pleased me very much.”<sup>15</sup> I believe that the adoption of Iroquois captives added to Iroquois society and the fact that they bought some Christianity in the form of Catholicism did not seem to matter much except it was noted in a negative light with the Onondaga before the Seven Years War. Christianity added to the mix of what the Iroquois communities evolved into but it never had a major impact with the Five Nations like it did with the Christian Iroquois or Huron further east.

As Diplomats and negotiators, the Iroquois Chiefs could project strength or weakness depending on the situation and were never too proud to ask for handouts whether it be food, war supplies, or consumer goods. But they could also step up and help feed the Europeans although usually not for free. In regards to war, the Iroquois could hold their own until the time when English had a Catholic King named James II who reduced the flow of military support in the form of powder and lead. The Glorious

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<sup>15</sup> Samuel de Champlain, *The Voyages and Explorations of Samuel de Champlain, 1604–1616*, trans. Annie Nettleton Bourne, 2 vols. (New York: Allerton Book, 1922), 1:211.

Revolution of 1688 and the ascendancy of King William in England upset the balance of power in Europe and America as Louis XIV began to suffer setbacks on the battlefield and in the Atlantic Ocean. The repeated wars involving European Armies had serious effects as smallpox had a tendency to follow the English Army and it continued to devastate Indian communities.

In regards to the value of the covenant chain, I fail to see much as Indian relationships were fairly fluid and the losing party was quickly abandoned whether it was Iroquois, French or British. The four threats to all Indians identified by Richter were: Demographic loss of population mostly due to disease but also war; economic dependence due to reliance on trade items such as firearms, copper pots, clothes, etc; participation in European wars although their efforts at neutrality did benefit them; and loss of land to the European by taking or sales. These are undeniable. The centralized location of the Iroquois and the fact that they somewhat discouraged visitors also helped in their navigating these turbulent waters. In summary the Iroquois were already strong before the Europeans arrived. They learned to negotiate trade with the newly arrived colonies like the Dutch and Swedes to gain the military might to set out on their wars of conquest and by doing so, acquired new citizens to be adopted and established a buffer around them that left them at peace for a period of time. They maintained this even after the beaver lost all value in trade and it was only after the Great Peace of 1701 that some of these defeated Indian nations returned to their original lands although Ohio remained an open hunting ground. My primary disagreement with Richter would be his view that the Iroquois negotiated the Great Peace from a position of weakness which I do not accept. The Onondaga were usually for Peace while the Seneca had to be convinced that

it was legitimate and this was only guaranteed with the death of Frontenac. The Mohawk did not participate in the Great Peace of 1701 although they fell in line later.

The roots of the Great Peace of 1701 actually go back to the Peace reached between the Kings of France and England in 1698 as stated by Pontchartrain in his memo to Frontenac: “The King having given peace to Europe” and that England would not provide any military support to the Five Nations while they worked out peace in North America.<sup>16</sup> Frontenac took this as a green light to send his Indian allies to destroy the Iroquois as they lacked the means to defend themselves. It took the death of Frontenac and another year of direction from the New York Governor Bellomont and Louis XIV before Callières began to take the proper steps to attain a lasting peace which was successful. In regards to Brandao’s work, he is more in line with my thoughts and recognized the frequent times when the Five Nations failed to agree on what policy to follow. This was driven by historical relations, their proximity to European neighbors and penetration of Christian churches and ideology. He felt the Great Peace was a triumph of Iroquois Diplomacy. I would agree to the extent that the Five Nations managed to negotiate two separate agreements with the English and French at the same time but the actual directive to attain a Peaceful settlement was driven by the Kings of France and England. Frontenac would never accept a peace with the Iroquois and drove his Indian allies to continue the war while Callières was more compliant with orders from Versailles and arranged the ceremony which held up fairly well considering the duration and intensity of this conflict.

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<sup>16</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 9:677.

This held up until the Seven Years War when a divided Five Nations watched and waited as the French Army marched into the Ohio Valley. They stayed with neutrality although they did not want war coming on to their land. They managed to be courted by both sides to maintain neutrality but it was not until the weakness of the French became apparent, that they acted to end the conflict on their land. Their domination at Niagara won them no favors from the English as General Amherst proceeded to claim Seneca land around both Fort Niagara and the newly renamed Fort Pitt. This supported the French warning that the English wanted to take their land and Vaudreuil's words rang true when he noted that: "All the Nations of the Beautiful River witnessed with sorrow the departure of the French."<sup>17</sup> The actions of Amherst would lead to further conflict and Peace would not reign on the Ohio River for many years.

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<sup>17</sup> Brodhead, et al., eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History*, 10:1094.

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