

## **The Iroquois Struggle to Protect their Culture**

## **Table of Contents**

Title Page. . . . .	i
Table of Contents. . . . .	ii
Acknowledgements. . . . .	iii
Abstract . . . . .	iv
Table of Figures . . . . .	vi
Section 1 Introduction . . . . .	1
Section 2 Iroquois History. . . . .	11
Section 3 European Arrival . . . . .	16
Section 4 British and American Conflicts . . . . .	22
Section 5 The Decision . . . . .	30
Section 6 The Fatal Blow. . . . .	34
Conclusion. . . . .	39
Works Cited. . . . .	41
Appendices. . . . .	44

## **Abstract**

There have been many things written on the Iroquois way of life over the years: how they came to be, how they are today and their involvement in different wars. However, none have looked at how their involvements in war contributed, ultimately, to their loss of power among other native tribes and the Europeans.

Over time, much of society has forgotten what power and influence these Native Americans had at one point. By the time the white man came, the Iroquois had been at peace with one another for many decades. They were the most powerful nation on this continent at that time. They had struggled with war, hatred, desires for peace, just as the Americans did in the late 1700s. Their accomplishments helped our nation succeed in the end. The destruction of the Iroquois nation's way of life, as they knew it, was a great loss to mankind.

This paper will investigate the Iroquois Confederation's rise to power from its beginnings to its downfall in the later 1700s, due in great part to the American Revolution. This downfall led to the Iroquois fighting to protect and preserve their culture.

From the arrival of the Europeans leading up to and after the American Revolution, the Iroquois had to fight like never before to protect and preserve their culture; only to fail in part because of broken promises. The Europeans acted indecisively in making decisions and were unable to stick to decisions made. Also when a decision was made, enforcing the new law or treaty was

very difficult. The natives had similar difficulties enforcing treaties, but they were not as numerous as the Europeans. They became too dependent on the Europeans. This problem led to the Iroquois trying to protect their way of life. The struggle to protect the Iroquois culture was a direct result of European involvement.

How did this destruction of the Iroquois Federation/Nation come about after they had existed for many centuries? This paper follows the Iroquois Nation's beginnings mainly focusing on the prophecy made by Hiawatha, followed by American and British influence (1763-1783), focusing on the years 1774-1779. Then, this paper will follow Joseph Brant, a leader for the Mohawk Tribe and his influence in the Iroquois decision to take sides. Finally, the decision to take sides will be discussed and the fatal blow to the Iroquois instigated by General George Washington and why he did what he did.

## **Table of Figures**

1. Map of Iroquois Lands before 1700. ....	1
2. Picture of Joseph Brant.....	3
3. Picture of The Longhouse.....	10
4. Picture of Hiawatha. ....	12
5. Picture of Benjamin Franklin. ....	22
6. Depiction of a treaty council. ....	23
7. Picture of Sir William Johnson. ....	24
8. Picture of Joseph Brant. ....	29
9. Picture of General George Washington. ....	32

## Section 1

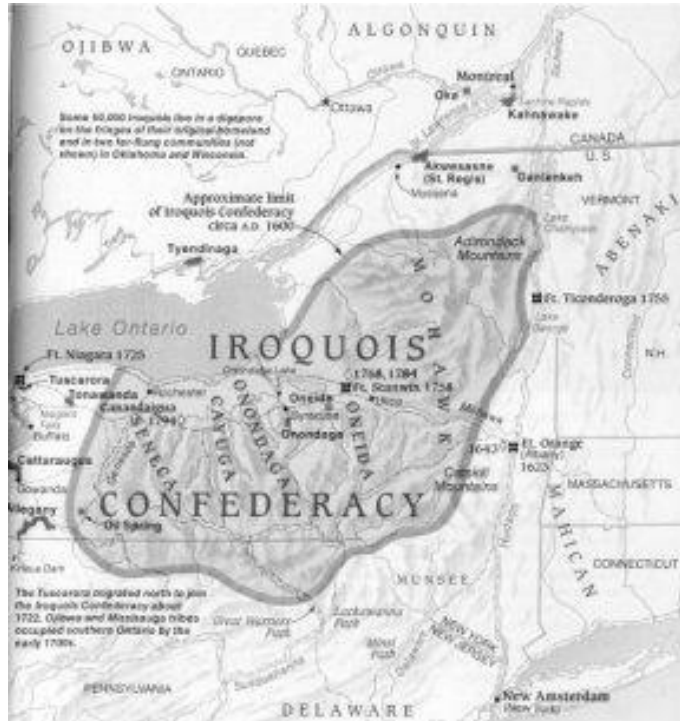
### Introduction

The Iroquois had been at peace with one another for a number of decades before the white man came. They were the most powerful Indian Nation in the area at the time (See Figure 1).

They had fought and conquered tribes

such as the Algonquin and Huron. The Five Tribes of the Iroquois, which are the Mohawk, Oneida, Seneca, Onondagas and the Cayuga, had come together and formed a League of peace, war and survival. They had been told by an ancient prophet (Hiawatha) not to admit other nations into this League for fear that jealousy would grow and tear their unity apart.<sup>1</sup>

As more and more Europeans came seeking wealth, the Native Americans desired to be friendly and to work together with them. Europeans were new and exciting, and they had things to offer and trade; however, the



**Fig. 1. Iroquois lands before 1700**

This shows the strength of the Iroquois and also how they were a buffer zone between the French to the north and the English to the south. Francis Jennings, *The ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 1984, 87

<sup>1</sup> Max M. Mintz, *Seeds of Empire: The American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1999), 1; S.C. Kimm, *The Iroquois: A history of the Six Nations of New York* (Middleburgh, N.Y.: Press of Pierre W. Danforth, 1900), 15.

Europeans wanted to conquer and to have power. Not too long after their arrival on the American continent, tension began to build between the different European colonies and the Iroquois and between the Iroquois and other tribes, including the Algonquin. However, the Iroquois were feared by the other Native American tribes. The French also learned this very quickly through battles with them and left the Iroquois alone for the most part. The Dutch came to New York in the 1600s and became friends with the Five Nations. The English later bought the Dutch lands. The Iroquois learned that the English had a lot to offer, maybe more so than the others; they were a strong and powerful nation themselves. When disputes began between the French and the British and other Native Tribes, the Iroquois initially did take sides to protect their families, villages and way of life. This did not have the desired result: as tensions increased around them, the Iroquois's power slowly diminished.

Many things contributed to this difficult time. The most important was how dependent the Native Americans, specifically the Iroquois, had become on the Europeans. They were dependent on goods such as shoes weapons and even sometimes food. It was during this time that tribes within the Five Nations who wanted to stay as neutral as possible gained a lot of influence among the Iroquois. Richter states that "Under their leadership, the Confederacy council sought to rescue some shreds of Iroquois independence and, perhaps more important, to begin to restore the political unity and spiritual power that the military crisis had destroyed."<sup>2</sup> The Iroquois decided the best

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<sup>2</sup> Richter, Daniel. *The Ordeal of the Longhouse*. (Williamsburg, VA: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 191.

thing to do was to stay out of as many of the problems as possible. From the early 1600s to the mid 1700s they tried to stay out of any controversy with the white man. When the British/American conflicts began around 1763, the Iroquois, even before the Americans asked, had decided to stay neutral. They also believed at first that these problems were not as serious as the colonists thought.<sup>3</sup> It was not their fight. It was between the mother country and her white children. There were others, however, who decided that their tomahawks



**Fig. 2. Joseph Brant**  
A very well known picture of Brant. This is a depiction of Brant talking to the English and tribesmen. Brant was a great orator, that is why he had such pull among the Iroquois  
“Joseph Brant,” in google [database on-line], accessed 28 May, 2004; available from <http://www.google.com>; Internet

had been clean too long (See Figure 2). In their eventual involvement with the Revolutionary War, George Washington was forced to make a difficult decision that affected the entire Iroquois nation.

From the end of the Revolution

looking back to European arrival in the New World, one can see how the Iroquois had to fight to protect and preserve their culture; only to fail to some extent because of broken promises. The main reasons

behind this statement are from the Europeans indecisiveness in making decisions and sticking with them. Also when a decision was made, enforcing the new law or treaty was very difficult. The Natives had similar difficulties enforcing treaties, but they were not as numerous as those of the Europeans.

This problem led to the Iroquois trying to protect their way of life. They

<sup>3</sup> Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant 1743 – 1807: Man of Two Worlds* (New York, NY.: Syracuse University press, 1984), 145.



became too dependent on the Europeans. The struggle to protect the Iroquois culture was a direct result of European involvement.

This paper follows the Iroquois Nation's beginnings mainly focusing on Hiawatha's prophecy, followed by European arrival and the results of their contact with the Native Americans. This leads to American and British influence (1763-1783), focusing on the years 1774-1779. Then, this paper will follow Joseph Brant, a leader for the Mohawk Tribe and his influence in the Iroquois decision to take sides. Finally the decision to take sides will be discussed and the fatal blow to the Iroquois instigated by General George Washington and why he did what he did.

### **Review of Literature**

Similar topics have been written on by many historians from the 1700s to the present. C. Colden's book *The History of the Five Indian Nations*, is the first in a long series of books and articles on the Iroquois. Some historians dispute over his book being a primary or secondary source—depending on one's definition of a source. Though he lived during much of the time period he is writing about, he is not a Native American and is not of the Iroquois tribe. Despite all of this, Colden wrote a very convincing book, which is one of the best for this paper. This microfiche is one of the first attempts to look at Native American history. He shows how the Iroquois government was set up and also discusses how the hatred began between the Indians and the Europeans. It also helps explain why some tribes sided with Americans and others the British.

This gives much of the history of the Iroquois which will be very helpful for the beginning of the paper.

Colin Calloway's book *the American Revolution in Indian country: crisis and diversity in Native American communities* follows the Revolution in Indian country. "Most writings give the Indians a minimal and negative role in the revolution," says Calloway. "They chose the wrong side and lost."<sup>4</sup> This book is probably the second most helpful for this paper. Another important book is: *War Under Heaven* by Gregory Dowd. This gives some background on the natives and focuses on the conflicts between the Natives and Europeans.

*The Ordeal of the Longhouse*, by Daniel Richter, explains how the Iroquois Nation began to fall apart as early as the 1730s from inner turmoil and that the troubles from the 1760s through the 1770s finished off their authority. He goes through the political and social history and how the natives interacted with each other and other peoples. Two other important authors are S.C. Kimm and Max M. Mintz. Kimm wrote *The Iroquois: a History of the Six Nations of New York* and Mintz wrote *Seeds of Empire: the American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois*. These books give a history, although brief, of the Iroquois and why they formed their League of Nations. Most of the books focused on the Revolutionary War and the new dilemmas it brought to the Iroquois.

*An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs*, written by Peter Wraxall in 1915, discusses Indian affairs during the 1700-1800 time period. It is a chronology of

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<sup>4</sup> Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country* (New York, T.H. Morrell.: 1866), xii-xiii.

who did what to whom, how and why. This helps to clarify many different aspects of Native American history that were difficult to understand and shows the Indian's point of view. This is one of the first attempts to write with a Natives perspective or how Europeans thought the Natives would want to be written about by an outsider. It also discusses treaties and other documents that were important at this time.

The next two books are on similar topics. Barbara Graymont's *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* and Donald A. Grinde's *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation*. The first is one of the few books that focus solely on the Indians in the American Revolutionary. Some writings allude to it, but this one centers on their role. It goes through their affect on the Revolution, and reaffirms roles of specific individuals, including William Johnson. This information will be used to discuss the Iroquois' decision to remain neutral and why some, including Joseph Brant, changed their minds.

The latter begins with a quick overview of the Iroquois background and follows them through their relations with the colonists and the American Revolution. The most important part will be the Constitution of the five nations or their laws and customs. The background will be helpful for the beginning of this paper. Another interesting part is the Iroquois relations with the colonists and during the war. This helps others to understand the Native Americans, especially the Iroquois, better than they may have before.

A number of articles have been written with an emphasis on Native Americans. The few listed below are those which are beneficial to this paper.

To start with there is Philip Levy's *Exemplars of Taking Liberties: the Iroquois influence thesis and the problem of evidence*. This article is all about the work involved in creating a nation and considers the major question of how could the Indians create a democracy and why would we borrow it from "savages"? The author defends others' point of view. It is helpful to see what other historians believed and how they believe the Iroquois influenced our ancestors before and after the Revolution. Next the article, *The United States will Protect You: the Iroquois, New York, and the 1790 Nonintercourse Act*, by William Starna considers why the Americans originally wanted the Indians to keep their lands, or at least most of it, but because of the history of broken treaties, the Iroquois no longer trusted the white man's word.

Robert Berner, in his article *Commentary: Iroquois influence: a response to Bruce E. Johansen's 'Notes from the Culture Wars,'* shows the influence the Native Americans had or did not have over the years of peace and war. The author's view point was that the Iroquois did not have as big an impact as Johansen said they did. There are different variations of democracy and ours is very different than that of the Indians. This article comments on how the Iroquois government was set up. First it states that the Iroquois' national government really did not have any power. When they met they met to discuss foreign policy and the like, they did not make laws. That was left up to each tribe or clan. Interestingly enough, this is what the founding fathers wanted—more power in the states than nationally. However, it is argued that

that was one reason for the downfall of the Iroquois Confederacy: not enough unity.

Alan Taylor wanted to show through Canadian history what happened to the Iroquois. He wrote: *The Divided Ground: Upper Canada, New York, and the Iroquois Six Nations, 1783-1815*. The destruction of the Iroquois villages and people in 1779 is a helpful part. Taylor tries to show that this was Washington's last chance to save his people. This also shows that the Natives were more than mere pawns in the imperial game between the United States and Great Britain. They tried to look at the pros and cons before they made decisions. Next, Barbara Mann and Jerry Fields wrote *A Sign in the Sky: Dating the League of the Houd'enosaunee*. This article shows the folly of previous historians in dating the beginning of the League of the Iroquois. All agree it started sometime between 1100-1600 AD. This author uses historical evidences, such as eclipses of the sun or moon, to show when the League must have formed. His study coincides with that of the Iroquois. The founding of the Iroquois Confederacy is an important part of the history that is being built. It is also very helpful to know how long they had been in existence before the Europeans.

These last two hold their own special appeal. Francis Jennings wrote *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*. This book gives an even greater history of the Iroquois. Again this is where facts can be checked to make sure that the sources are correct. It starts before the Iroquois Confederation was established. It follows the beginnings of the alliance and their relationship with the

colonists. It does not go deep into the American Revolution but it is a much more complete early history of the Iroquois people. And last is an article written by Helen Addison Howard entitled *Hiawatha: co-founder of an Indian United Nations*. This was an absolutely perfect article for this paper. It dissects who Hiawatha was, what he did, why he did it, and what he was up against at the time: very fascinating. This paper is using his prophecy as a base to establish the thesis of protecting their culture.

## Section 2

### Iroquois History

Like many cultures today, the Iroquois base their history on a legend.

It is unknown exactly how long ago the Iroquois united. However, the consensus among most historians places the formation of the League of the Houd'enosaunee, or Five Nations <sup>5</sup> (See Figure 3) around 1570 AD. Many Iroquois tribes state that it was much earlier.

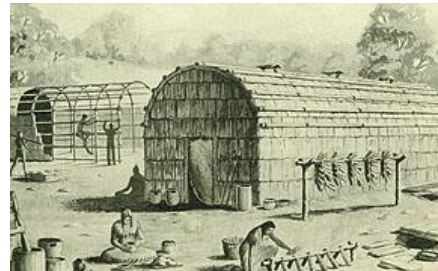


Fig. 3. The Longhouse of the Iroquois people  
After the Iroquois came together in unity, they all adopted the longhouse. It was used by some of the Iroquois tribes but not all until the League was formed.  
Francis Jennings, *Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 1984.

One way for the Iroquois to show their importance was by the telling of their legend of the League's origin and of the promises and prophecies made at that time. It showed that they could work together and compromise for a common goal or purpose for the benefit of all. This is their story.<sup>6</sup>

Many, many years ago our fathers fought wars amongst themselves. They lived near a mountain in the Mohawk valley with other borders which included rivers and lakes. Each tribe had an area in which they lived. They each wanted to be the strongest most powerful people. Not even a marriage between two of the tribes would stop the fighting for very long. There was a lot of anger inside. Around this time the sixth tribe, Tuscaroras, left the area and

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<sup>5</sup> Francis Jennings, *The ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (New York, NY.: W. W. Norton & Co. 1984), 8. Houd'enosaunee: Means People of the Longhouse

<sup>6</sup> This story is a combination of paraphrase and quotation. Each paragraph is cited.

moved to where the birds fly for the winter. The last five continued to fight amongst themselves to be the best and fiercest tribe.<sup>7</sup>

The Great Spirit decided that it was time to end this fighting. So “after a time a fierce and warlike tribe came from the home of the north wind and falling upon the Onondagas nearly exterminated them. This threw the Iroquois into the greatest consternation. Unless they could overcome these northern barbarians their whole nation [could] perish.” So the Great Spirit sent the most respected tribesman of all the Iroquois tribes to talk to the people. He was called the “holder of the heavens” or Hi-a-wat-ha or “the very wise man.” He called a meeting of the five Iroquois tribes along the banks of the Onondaga Lake. Hiawatha considered the Iroquois his dear children and they would always follow his voice.<sup>8</sup>

For three days Hiawatha left the tribes to sit and wait around their council fires. At dusk on the third day, the Great Spirit saw fit to lead Hiawatha to them across the lake in a canoe with his daughter. Then, just as they landed, out of the sky came a mighty wind and a gigantic bird. It was so large that it blackened the horizon. It swooped down and killed Hiawatha’s daughter upon the earth. Hiawatha mourned for her loss for three days. He then told the tribes, “I will return tomorrow and will tell you all that the Great Spirit desires for you to know.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> S.C. Kimm, *The Iroquois: A history of the Six Nations of New York* (Middleburgh, N.Y.: Press of Pierre W. Danforth, 1900), 13. Beauchamp, William M. Rev. *Iroquois Folk Lore: Gathered from the Six Nations of New York* (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, Inc, 1922)

<sup>8</sup> S.C. Kimm, *The Iroquois: A history of the Six Nations of New York* (Middleburgh, NY: Press of Pierre W. Danforth, 1900), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 14



The next day Hiawatha (See figure 4) arose in council and spoke unto the council as follows: “Brothers; you have come here from a great distance to provide safety for yourselves and your homes. We can make no progress by opposing these tribes from the cold north singly. We must unite all our tribes into *one band of brothers*. In that way we shall be able to keep our enemies from our land.” Each tribe will have a part. The Mohawk shall be the first nation because your roots are deep in the earth and you are a warlike people and very mighty. The Oneidas, you are like a stone that cannot be moved. You shall be called the second nation and will give wise counsel.<sup>10</sup>

The Onondagas who overshadow us by the great mountain, you shall be the third nation because you are mighty in war and speech. The fourth nation will be the Cayuga who live in the dark forest. You are superior in hunting. And the fifth nation will be the Seneca who live in the open country. You have much wisdom and understand how to grow food and make cabins.<sup>11</sup>



Fig. 4 Hiawatha as depicted by artists  
Hiawatha was a great orator who believed in peace among everyone. He desired all Natives to be on good terms one day, starting with the Iroquois.

“Hiawatha,” in Google [database on-line], accessed 28 May, 2004; available from <http://www.google.com>; Internet

“You, five great and powerful nations, must unite and have but one common interest, and no foe shall be able to disturb or subdue you. If we unite, the Great Spirit will smile upon us. Brothers, these are the words of Hi-a-wat-ha; let them sink deep into your hearts. *Admit no other nations, and you will always be free, numerous and happy.* If other tribes and nations are admitted to your councils they will

<sup>10</sup> “Iroquois Nation,” in The history channel [database on-line], 2003, accessed 3 February 2004; available from [http:// www.historychannel.com.html](http://www.historychannel.com.html); Internet; S.C. Kimm, *The Iroquois: A history of the Six Nations of New York* (Middleburgh, N.Y.: Press of Pierre W. Danforth, 1900), 13. (emphasis added)

<sup>11</sup> S.C. Kimm, *The Iroquois: A history of the Six Nations of New York* (Middleburgh, N.Y.: Press of Pierre W. Danforth, 1900), 14

sow the seeds of jealousy and discord, and you will become few, feeble and enslaved. *Remember these words.* They are the last you will hear from Hi-a-wat-ha. The Great Master of Breath calls me to go. I have patiently awaited his summons. I am ready to go. Farewell!"<sup>12</sup>

There are several versions of this legend. Each has been changed as it has been handed down from generation to generation. They were not written down until the 1800s. Then, because of translation, many words and emotions were lost. Regardless, it is important to understand that the Iroquois contribute their unity to a higher power—one who they believed knew what was in store for them in the years to come, including the arrival of the white man.

Their Constitution, or the "Great Law of Peace was recorded on wampum belts<sup>13</sup>, and a confederacy of tribes was formed, united against their enemies."<sup>14</sup> According to the history, the Iroquois people quickly moved through many political developments. The Mohawks and Senecas started phase one. They desired to expand their tribal membership and their territories through typical conquest. Phase two was called the Beaver Wars because of the fighting by the Mohawk's and Seneca's for land increase. These wars caused great strains in the newly formed League. In phase three they began solving their problems and becoming truly united as a League. According to Jennings,

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<sup>12</sup>"Iroquois Nation," in The history channel [database on-line], 2003, accessed 3 February 2004; available from [http:// www.historychannel.com.html](http://www.historychannel.com.html); Internet. Ibid; 15. emphasis added

<sup>13</sup> Wampum belt: depending on the design, it was used for many different things. Signifying treaties, telling a story, recording anything important for the Indians to remember.

<sup>14</sup> Susan Avery and Linda Skinner, *Extraordinary American Indians* (Chicago, Illinois: Children's Press), 13.

“The League was only the beginning of Iroquois experimentation in expanding tribal government beyond the merely local ‘kinship state.’”<sup>15</sup>

By the mid to late 1600s (during phase three), the Iroquois acted as a defense unit. This lasted throughout the League’s existence. Each tribe in the League was constantly trying to increase their importance and power through their relations with the Europeans and with other tribes—trying to decide who had the most benefits and chance to win to make it worthwhile for them. In other words, the Iroquois were dependent upon them for their success or used them to gain greater success and prestige. In 1722, the Tuscaroras came back and joined the Confederacy, after leaving years earlier because of the fighting between the Iroquois tribes, and the League became known as the Six Nations. The League reached its peak of importance and of strength and power in the 1600s and through most of the 1700s. This was during a period of time when many European rivals were attempting to become the leaders of North America.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Francis Jennings, *Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (New York, NY.: W. W. Norton & Co. 1984). This paragraph was mainly paraphrases from this book with that one quote on the bottom.

<sup>16</sup> Susan Avery and Linda Skinner, *Extraordinary American Indians* (Chicago, Illinois.: Children’s Press), 14

## Section 3

### European Arrival

It can be argued that the Iroquois broke this covenant made with Hiawatha, by letting the British into their circle. It was one thing to be friends and help each other and quite another to be let in to the innermost secrets/ workings of the tribes. This alliance began to plant seeds of jealousy and hatred among the Iroquois, and with other nations (European and Indian). They competed with each other over who had rights to trade with certain Europeans, etc. The British however, had a lot to offer. The French had been an annoying thorn in the Iroquois's side since their coming. (i.e. Cartier took four chiefs back with him to France where they died).<sup>17</sup> It was instant dislike. The British gave the Iroquois the opportunity to destroy their enemy during the French and Indian Wars. The Iroquois's greatest desire was to be the most powerful. They compromised their values and integrity to meet this desire. Both the British and the Colonists had Indian agents and/or religious leaders throughout the land of the Iroquois. First they each wanted to show that they were friendly, so they could obtain land for expansion. This was very important to the Europeans. Second, they wanted the natives on their side so if any problems arose they could count on having help.

It is important to point out that the Europeans had different ideas on land ownership, religion and what civilization was. They were just as power

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<sup>17</sup> S.C. Kimm, *The Iroquois: A history of the Six Nations of New York* (Middleburgh, N.Y.: Press of Pierre W. Danforth, 1900), 43. Many of the Iroquois believed that Cartier forced their leaders to go with him and so the Iroquois held Cartier responsible for each death.

hungry as the Iroquois and the only real difference being that the Europeans had superior weapons. It was difficult for the white man to understand how the Indians thought, nor did they try very hard. This led to many of the problems spoken of later on.

As problems occurred more frequently, the nation with the most influence was that of the British. They had people living among the Indians with power and authority in both nations. The British had shown since their arrival that they did want to unite and work with them. However, they did not want to compromise their ideals and plans. They were willing to walk all over the Indians if they could not meet their goal any other way.

One other thing that should be remembered is that the Natives and Europeans were more often at peace than at war. Richter says, “The Iroquois, the premier Indian military power in eastern North America, occupied a pivotal geographical position between the rival French of the St. Lawrence Valley and the English of the eastern seaboard.”<sup>18</sup> They were considered the buffer zone between the two European powers. It was important to keep them happy to continue having a buffer zone. Also in the Iroquois way of life, they desired “everyone [to] have free access to the means of production, just as one has free access to the political process. Hence, the Iroquois’ collective ownership of the land clashed with the white European’s ideas about private property.”<sup>19</sup>

When the Europeans first came to the New World they were intrigued and appalled with what the Natives had and did. They quickly introduced their

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, xv.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

own goods and showed that they wanted to be friends and trade. The Iroquois were likewise fascinated and were willing to trade and interact with these people.

Some tribes were skeptical of what they saw, but no one wanted to be left out of the riches that could be gained through trade. The desire for riches and being powerful was too strong. The largest trade commodity was fur. Many battles were fought over who had rights to the best trapping areas and the Europeans benefited the most from this arrangement.<sup>20</sup>

Land, religion and trade were great blessings and reoccurring thorns in everyone's side. They each did not understand the other. Europeans continually would diminish Iroquois lands to build cities, etc. They really focused on giving the Natives a religion that would save them and just like all merchants; they each followed the rules of supply and demand.

As was mentioned before, the Europeans did not understand the Iroquois' collective ownership of land. Ownership of land created status and prestige. It could be passed down from father to a son, creating an inheritance for their posterity. It was considered extremely important. To have land was in a sense to be someone. To the Iroquois, however, honor and self-worth were considered to be of equal importance. Land was something for all to share. Who you are was important, not necessarily what you had.

Those who first arrived from Europe were very prim and proper. Many protested against the uncivilized way they had to live at first. Over the next few

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<sup>20</sup> Richter, Daniel. *The Ordeal of the Longhouse* (Williamsburg, VA: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

generations, however, things began to change. Gipson wrote, “The great wilderness of north America was slowly helping to create a new kind of Briton- the American. But the American was not shaped from any one world.”<sup>21</sup>

The colonists saw a great opportunity and they pursued it aggressively. They wanted to tame and civilize the land. Over time, the Indian lands diminished greatly. It began subtly at first, often with the land being purchased out right. But the desire was always there for more; what they had was never enough (See Appendix A).

With the beginning of land exchange between the colonists and Iroquois, ideas were exchanged as well. Religion spread quickly throughout the land. When a country claimed an area, they saw it as their duty to “civilize” anyone who already lived there. This was seen in Spanish conquests, like those of Cortez, and in the French conquests of Cartier. Each nation went about it in their own way, using such methods as enslavement, deceit, and brute force. The British used mostly persuasion, sending reverends, priests and other clergy to preach and convert the savages. It was an effective way to make friends and to gain trust for those who came later—namely tradesmen.

The converting of these so called savages to a new religion was not as easy as it might seem. Each native tribe had their own religion that played an active role in their daily way of life. While some liked the ideas presented and were converted many did not convert. This began the strife between the two

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<sup>21</sup> Gipson, Lawrence Henry. *The Coming of the Revolution* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1954) 11.

worlds. Britain alone had not one but four main Christian denominations established by the law. If they could not agree, how could they expect the Natives to agree?

From the Iroquois' first encounter with Europe, there was almost immediate trade. Each was interested in what the other had to offer. The Europeans discovered that fur was desired in Europe. Fur was an expensive commodity and the Indians used this to their advantage.

Just about anything could be traded for fur: weapons, rum, food clothing, etc. No one wanted to be left out of the opportunity for riches, and so the tribes began to focus more and more on hunting for fur at the cost of providing for their basic needs. Because knowledge was passed down verbally from generation to generation, after a couple of generations of relying on the Europeans for basic necessities, they lost the knowledge of how to make things for themselves. They were at the mercy of a foreign power for their livelihood.

The British Empire as a whole was more prosperous than any other nation in the world and they were economically self-sufficient. "These varied achievements together with the spirit of enlightenment stamped the old Empire as truly the wonder of the world. Yet within a decade it was to be torn asunder by internecine strife."<sup>22</sup>

When the first colonists arrived in the new world, Great Britain did not care of the Colonists' existence. "As the charter of Massachusetts bay made clear, the inhabitants alone were to encounter, expulse, repel and resist by force

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 9.



of arms, as well by sea as by lands' any attempt to invade or destroy their community.”<sup>23</sup>

As soon as Britain realized the importance of the colonies economically, interference from London in colonial matters became noticeable. However, the colonies had been governing themselves for over a hundred years and resent the new British interest; the colonies did not feel truly apart of the British empire anymore. The issue of control began to come to a head at the end of the French and Indian wars around 1763.

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<sup>23</sup> Higginbotham, Don. *The War of American Independence* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1971) 1.

## Section 4

### **British and American Conflicts**

During the time of struggle between the Americans and the British, the Indian agents on both sides of the conflict were trying to keep the Indians neutral to each individual cause. The agents felt that it was not the Indians fight and they should have no part in it. Both sides wanted to use the Iroquois as a safety net if it was ever needed. Following the French and Indian War, relations with the Iroquois were unsteady for all involved and the English and Americans both worked to repair and maintain good relations.

Benjamin Franklin, a man of all trades, became a diplomat for the colonies, not only with England, but with the frontier as well, namely Indians. While in England, Franklin sent George Croghan to travel in the Indian country for a long period of time to report his findings (at the end of the year 1765 the English were still having peace talks with Indians). When Croghan returned, he wrote a written report of what he found and sent it to Franklin. Croghan states: “For our future trade and of course, fixing a precedent, that will be of inexpressible importance to the Nation. Indeed! From my knowledge of Indian affairs, I am thoroughly convinced (as I can assure you, Sir William Johnson is) that no event could have happened, that will more effectually consolidate and strengthen our alliance, than the completion of this [meaning peace talks]—as they will ever here-after, dread a declaration of war against us, from a conviction, that no peace will be made with them, until they surrender,

a part of their country, as a consideration for their perfidy.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, it is either let us be friends now or be forced into submission later. It was imperative that these peace talks end with a treaty for peace, regardless of what might happen between the British and the Americans.

At the same time he became intrigued with how the Iroquois government worked and used it to his advantage while doing his duty. He states, “it would be a very strange thing if Six Nations of Ignorant Savages should be capable of



forming a Scheme for such an Union and be able to execute it in such a manner, as that it has subsisted Ages, and appears indissoluble, and yet a like Union should be impracticable for ten or dozen English colonies.”<sup>25</sup>

Fig. 5 Benjamin Franklin as depicted by google. He was always interested in learning new things. That is why he wanted to learn more about the Indians. “Benjamin Franklin,” in google [database on-line], accessed 28 May, 2004; available from <http://www.google.com>; Internet

One thing that drew Benjamin Franklin

(See Figure 5) to the Iroquois was their way of life. It was so different and yet held something dear to him. “The Iroquois’ law and custom

upheld freedom of expression in political and religious matters... it provided for political participation by women and the relatively equitable distribution of wealth.”<sup>26</sup> It fascinated him that these savages as many Europeans referred to the Indians as, could have, what appeared to Franklin as a flawless government.

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<sup>24</sup> *Benjamin Franklin Papers*, December 12, 1765 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 398-399. The original agreement was that the Indians would surrender land to the traders in reparation for the earlier attacks on them and their goods. The point was to eventually regulate the Indian trade and to open the lands in the west to settlement. Things were pending on a decision from London and everyone was becoming impatient and it was stalling the peace talks.

<sup>25</sup> Bruce E. Johansen, *Forgotten Founders* (Ipswich, MA.: Gambit Inc. Publishers, 1982), 56. Benjamin Franklin to John Parker, 1751.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, xiv.

He believed that the Iroquois were indestructible if they followed the government they had set up for themselves and worked together.

The Natives and the Europeans were more often at peace than at war. The Iroquois acted as a buffer zone between France and England, the two main European powers. To continue having that buffer zone the Iroquois must be kept happy. However, in the Iroquois way of life, they desired “everyone [to] have free access to the means of production, just as one has free access to the political process. Hence, the Iroquois’ collective ownership of the land clashed with the white European’s ideas about private property. No wonder land became the central point in Indian-white relations.”<sup>27</sup> Not to mention the conflict between the Colonists and the British which is where Sir Johnson comes into play.

Sir William Johnson acted as the main Indian agent for the British. He had great pull among the Natives in this country and was respected not only by the different tribes but also by his own countrymen. His job was to bridge the gaps between the different cultures; so that the English were on friendly terms with as many tribes as possible (See Figure 6). Many letters written by General Thomas

Gage to Sir William Johnson and vice versa on this subject. Here is an excerpt from one, written about the time peace was settled after the French and Indian War.



Fig. 6 Depiction of Sir William Johnson making a treaty with the Iroquois. “Treaties,” in google [database on-line], accessed 28 May, 2004; available from <http://www.google.com>; Internet

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<sup>27</sup> Donald A. Grinde, Jr., *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation* (The Indian Historian Press, 1977), p. 25.

I don't expect that those nations who met me at Niagara will attempt to break out so soon as you mention, I shall do every thing in my power to keep them well disposed and hearty in their engagements.

A party of Mississagas from *Wapaskotiany* near the North Side of Lake Ontario, arrived here some days ago, excused themselves for not attending the congress at Niagara on account of their being on the hunt. The occasion of their coming was to make peace & enter into the same Engagements the rest of their Nation had done which they did on behalf of themselves and all the Neighbouring Indians living about the Lakes formed by Kent's River, & delivered a large Coyt Chainbelt. I gave them assurances that they would find the English true to their words, whilst they observed in on their parts, & that no Nation could expect forgiveness, if they ever broke out again.<sup>28</sup>

This letter shows that Sir William Johnson had quite a bit of power. It was his job to keep the peace with the Indians at all times. Right after the French and Indian War, the Europeans stopped fighting, but the Iroquois and other Indian tribes continued to fight amongst themselves. He needed to bring them together. Many Europeans such as General Gage did not believe it was possible. However, because of the mutual respect the tribes had for Johnson, he made great headway. He gave them what they wanted and they listened to him in return. It is said that he considered them his children as did the King of England.



Fig. 7 A painting of Sir William Johnson. "Sir William Johnson," in google [database on-line], accessed 28 May, 2004; available from <http://www.google.com>; Internet

Great Britain desired a permanent peace with the Indians. In the new struggles with the colonies, they felt it was necessary to strengthen their ties with these so called savages.

Through Sir William Johnson, this plan became a reality. This also ultimately paved the way to the

Indian alliance with Britain during the Revolutionary War which led ultimately to their destruction.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Sir William Johnson papers, September 21, 1764 (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), microfiche, p. 544.

When Sir William Johnson (See Figure 7) died in 1774, his length of service with the Iroquois extended longer than any other British or American agent. Joseph Brant took up Johnson's cause, as did Guy Johnson, Johnson's nephew and brother-in-law. Sir William Johnson's son, John, also took up his father's cause alongside his cousin. It is said about him: "Now it is time to choose between long accustomed authority and the new ideas that were taking root all over the country, some people knew immediately just where they stood. Sir John Johnson was one of these persons. Sir John was genuinely bewildered to hear all that talk about liberty. He said he had liberty. Didn't everybody have liberty?"<sup>30</sup>

The direct questions about liberty sprang up mainly in the northeast around the time of the French and Indian War. When the war ended in 1763, the colonists believed they were not treated fairly and were upset with the mother country. The Proclamation of 1763 forbade the colonies from expanding onto Indian lands—lands the colonists had helped fight for. This was done to protect Indian allies and to keep the colonists closer at hand. However, the Americans did not like this arrangement and defied it. They had risked their lives and many were killed; it appeared as though it was all for nothing. They felt they were owed something for helping the British military. To further complicate matters, Great Britain's parliament, in an attempt to make the colonists help pay for the French and Indian War imposed tax after tax upon the colonies. In the late 1760s the Townshend duties were approved.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 731.

<sup>30</sup> Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant 1743 – 1807: Man of Two Worlds* (New York, NY.: Syracuse University press, 1984), p. 145.

The revolt against these duties led to the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party. When the “Boston Port act was passed against the colonists of Massachusetts, closing Boston’s Port, fear quickly spread throughout the other coastal colonies. If Britain could do that to Boston, they could do it to the other ports, forcing a submission of the colonies. The continental congress decided to act and stop parliament at all costs.”<sup>31</sup>

The more heated relations became between Britain and the Colonies the more fearful each became about the Natives, specifically the Iroquois. “The Indians might not understand the cry of ‘no taxation without representation,’ but some of them thought of the religious implications of the strife at once.” The Indians were becoming more and more nervous and were fearful that things would go too far and get out of hand, Despite his own worries, Sir William Johnson did his best to calm their fear<sup>32</sup>

Joseph Brant, “under the influence of Guy Johnson, perhaps at first did not take the white man’s troubles too seriously.”<sup>33</sup> Some British believed the Indians could very easily be persuaded to side with the Americans during these conflicts. Many Whig Ministers seemed to have quite a pull with the Iroquois almost as strong as that of Sir William Johnson. Others disagreed, believing the British had ultimate control. “The Reverend John Stuart, Anglican Missionary to the Mohawk Tribe, and Reverend Samuel Kirkland, Presbyterian

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<sup>31</sup> Gipson, Lawrence Henry, *The coming of the Revolution* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers), 223-225.

<sup>32</sup> Hamilton, Milton W., *Sir William Johnson and the Indians of New York* (New York, NY: The University of New York), 40-41.

<sup>33</sup> Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant 1743 -- 1807 Man of Two Worlds* (New York, NY.: Syracuse University press, 1984), p. 145.

Missionary to the Oneida Tribe, had no hesitations, either. The [former] was an ardent Loyalist (British Sympathizer) and the [latter] an ardent Whig (Devoted American).”<sup>34</sup>

Guy Johnson was very wroth with Reverend Kirkland because of Kirkland’s ability to influence the Natives without the use of presents, etc. Johnson wanted to have Kirkland removed so he would not affect the Iroquois’ loyalty and decision if and when it came. Both sides wanted to secure loyalties or at least be assured of their neutrality. The colonists decided that keeping the Indians neutral was the better choice, securing a neutrality agreement.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



## Section 5

### The Decision

“After Sir Johnson died in 1774, Guy Johnson became the new superintendent, and he appointed Brant as his principal aide. The following year the Revolutionary War broke out. Brant allied himself with the British, partly because of his personal relationships, but also because of his conviction that the Iroquois would be better off if the British rule continued.” It was believed by many, including Brant, that if the Colonists won more Indian lands would be taken by settlers and the Indian way of life would cease to exist as they knew it.<sup>35</sup>

From 1763 to the start of the Revolutionary War (1775), the Americans were afraid that the Iroquois would side with the British. They took great pains to see that this would not happen.

During the French and Indian War, George Washington developed a great relationship with the Iroquois when he was sent to ask for help and guidance in defeating the French. By 1770, he was trying to keep Indian relations on friendly terms. He knew that Sir William Johnson had a great hold upon them, but also knew that Johnson understood the Iroquois better than anyone at that time. When he met with the Six Nations they also wanted to stay friendly despite the problems.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Susan Avery and Linda Skinner, *Extraordinary American Indians* (Chicago, Illinois: Children's Press), 19-20.

<sup>36</sup> *Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799*, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1925), vol 2, microfiche.

When Washington accepted his command of the American forces in 1775, he knew things would be more difficult if the Iroquois did decide to side with the British. He got together with some men in Congress, including John Adams, to draft a letter asking the Iroquois to stay neutral. The Iroquois agreed by signing a treaty to their continued neutrality during this war.<sup>37</sup>

According to the *Encyclopedia of Native American's*, "During the American Revolution the grand counsel of the Houd`enosaunee met and formally declared neutrality in the war between Britain and the American colonists, however, religious loyalties had invaded the Houd`enosaunee communities and continued to work to their disadvantage".<sup>38</sup> The words of Hiawatha had not been completely forgotten by the Iroquois.

Through the continued efforts of John Adams, George Washington and others, the Iroquois kept their oath of neutrality for a time, giving the Americans an advantage for a short while.



Fig. 8 Portait of Joseph Brant done in Britian. "Joseph Brant," in google [database on-line], accessed 28 May, 2004; available from <http://www.google.com>; Internet

Joseph Brant (See Figure 8), a man of two worlds who disagreed with the neutrality agreement, had his work cut out for him. From the time that he was a young child he

looked up to Sir William Johnson.<sup>39</sup> Brant's sister married Sir Johnson, and since Brant was at a young and impressionable age Johnson used that to

his advantage. Joseph Brant became a prize pupil of Johnson's and served as

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<sup>37</sup> *Writings of George Washington, 1745-1799*, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. ( Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931-44), Vol 4, p. 436.

<sup>38</sup> *Encyclopedia of Native American Indians* "Iroquois Confederacy," by John C. Mohawk.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

Johnson's interpreter with the Indians. Brant felt safe and secure on the British side of any conflict that arose. He even went to school to learn the white man's ways. He truly became a man who lived in two worlds but never completely belonged in either.

At the time of Sir William Johnson's death the British were afraid that the Indians would no longer be manageable. Joseph Brant took this opportunity to show himself worthy to be Johnson's successor.<sup>40</sup> Benjamin Franklin was in England at the time attempting to fix the rift between the mother country and her colonies. Franklin's son William sent him a letter which his father immediately replied to. "I am sorry for the loss of Sir William Johnson, especially at this time of danger from an Indian war. I see by the papers you were with him at the time."<sup>41</sup>

With Brant urging the Iroquois to fight to protect their way of life and others urging them to not take sides and remember their oath, incredible strife and tension developed within the tribes. Many wanted to keep their words, but felt it not necessary as it appeared the Americans were not keeping their words.

The Sachems debated many times, listening to both sides. They did not want to make either side angry or deepen the already present rift. Brant finally,

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<sup>40</sup> It is good to keep in mind that Joseph Brant, while growing up, was friends with Guy Johnson (Sir Johnson's nephew and son-in-law) and also John Johnson (Son of Sir Johnson).

<sup>41</sup> *Benjamin Franklin Papers, September 7, 1774* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 287. William Franklin had been with Sir William Johnson at an Indian conference at Johnson hall, called to deal with trouble on the Ohio. When the Vandalia scheme appeared to be blocked in London, Gov. Dunmore and his agents around fort Pitt asserted Virginia's administrative control of the area, and settlers from that colony came into increasing conflict with the Indians, some of whom were murdered. The Shawnees renewed earlier efforts to form a defensive confederacy, and the six nations, alarmed by the outrages against their dependents, demanded a conference with Johnson. It was during the conference that Sir William died, just at its conclusion.

however, had a large enough following that they felt like they did not need the approval or agreement of the leaders and the Iroquois Confederacy broke apart. The Mohawks, Senecas, Onondagas, and Cayugas allied themselves with the British. The Oneida and Tuscarawas remained neutral for two more years before allying themselves with the Americans. They had tried to keep their promise to themselves, the tribe, and Hiawatha.<sup>42</sup> The Iroquois were sincere in their desires, but did not calculate all the possible consequences.

“Taking him literally [meaning Johnson] and maintaining the classic Iroquois neutrality policy, at Oswego the eastern tribes of the Iroquois agreed that they would permit neither British nor American troops to pass through their country.”<sup>43</sup> This caused many problems for all involved. Some historians argue that the Iroquois deep down really wanted to take sides. This also brings up an important question as to why they sided with the side they did. When both countries violated the agreement, it seems reasonable that the Iroquois would declare war on the white men together. Instead, they split and took different sides.

The Natives always tried to weigh the pros and cons of any situation; so that they would get the best end of the bargain. The majority believed that the British had the most to offer if they won. They believed the British were more honest and trustworthy. The tribes however, who went with the Americans believed the colonists had more to offer.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid; “Iroquois Nation,” in The history channel [database on-line], 2003, accessed 3 February 2004; available from [http:// www.historychannel.com.html](http://www.historychannel.com.html); Internet.

<sup>43</sup> Wallace, Anthony F.C., *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf Inc, 1970), 127.

## Section 6

### The Fatal Blow

The Americans borrowed many tactics from the Natives including ambush, camouflage and other guerrilla tactics.<sup>44</sup> George Washington (See figure 9) was the man behind a lot of these borrowed tactics as well as many of his trusted generals.

By 1778 and 1779 the Americans were spending more time fighting an enemy other than Great Britain. "The Indians in Pennsylvania and New York were led by Tories to engage in brutal raids against Patriots on the frontier....in response to these bloody activities, Washington sent General John Sullivan and 5000 men against the Iroquois settlements in those states."<sup>45</sup> No major battles

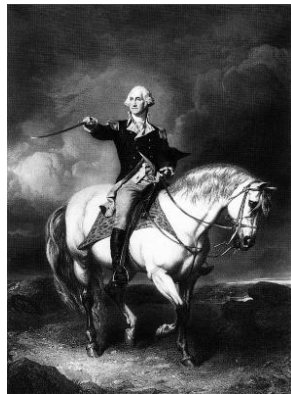


Fig. 9 Picture of General George Washington. "George Washington," in google [database on-line], accessed 28 May, 2004; available from <http://www.google.com>; Internet

were fought; however, the Americans burned about 40 towns of the Indians and also burned over 160,000 crops without distinction between their allies and the Iroquois who sided with Britain.<sup>46</sup>

From Washington's writings we find that he agonized over his ultimate decision. It was the hardest decision he ever made. He knew, however, that if the Indians continued to fight against them that the colonists would lose. He could not allow that to happen.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid. "Iroquois Nation," in The history channel [database on-line], 2003, accessed 3 February 2004; available from [http:// www.historychannel.com.html](http://www.historychannel.com.html); Internet.

<sup>45</sup> Parry, Jay, *The Real George Washington* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Constitutional Studies, 1991), p. 303.

<sup>46</sup> *Encyclopedia of Native American Indians* "Iroquois Confederacy," by John C. Mohawk.

<sup>47</sup> Fitzpatrick, John C. *Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799*; second Ed; Mt Vernon ladies' association of the...; 1925.

The Iroquois never obtained the same power and status again after this war. They attempted to begin where they left off, but everything the League stood for was destroyed: the Iroquois had not listened to each other to make a united decision. The words of Hiawatha rang true. “Admit no other nations, and you will always be free, numerous and happy. If other tribes and nations are admitted to your councils they will sow the seeds of jealousy and discord, and you will become, feeble and enslaved”.<sup>48</sup>

The Iroquois nation was destroyed from within. At the end of the war the Iroquois were not spared in any way. Not even those who helped the Americans win were exempt from further destruction of their lands. The fear many Natives had that if the American’s won they would take all of our lands was also very real.<sup>49</sup> Mintz states that “Three thousand miles across the ocean, in Paris, negotiators at the conference table dealt the Iroquois a blow more fatal than any they had ever suffered on the battlefield...” It is true that the British did try to make a case for the Indians to keep their lands for them, however, the Americans came up with another proposal that countered that of the British. “For the Indians, the treaty was a sentence of death for their civilization”.<sup>50</sup>

The Indian agent, Sir John Johnson, met with the Indians on 23 July 1783 to let them know the verdict of the preliminary treaty in France. “The best relief he could offer them was the hope that the definitive treaty, or

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<sup>48</sup> S.C. Kimm, *The Iroquois: A history of the Six Nations of New York* (Middleburgh, N.Y.: Press of Pierre W. Danforth, 1900), p. 13-15.

<sup>49</sup> Susan Avery and Linda Skinner, *Extraordinary American Indians* (Chicago, Illinois.: Children’s Press), 19-20.

<sup>50</sup> Max M. Mintz, *Seeds of Empire: the American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois* (New York, N. Y.: new York university press, 1999), p. 173.

perhaps, a secret agreement, would yet prove more favorable.” The British, although they wanted to look out for their “friends” the Indians, would not continue the war in their behalf. They were on their own. They were encouraged “to negotiate [separate] treaties with the Americans”.<sup>51</sup>

For any negotiations to take place the Iroquois must come together again and speak with one voice. This was difficult because they had disbanded the League when they took sides in the 1770s. Brant, who was “most responsible for persuading the warriors to support the British,”<sup>52</sup> was desirous to have a meeting with not only the Six Nations, but also with many other Indian Nations, including, the Huron, Shawnees, Creeks, and Delaware. Brant states: ““We the Six Nations with this belt [wampum belt] bind your hearts and minds with ours, that there may be never hereafter a separation between us, let there be peace or war, it shall never disunite us, for our interests are alike, nor should anything ever be done but by the voice of the whole, as we make but one with you.””<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately the Iroquois never completely worked together as a united nation as effectively as they once did. And because they could not do it with themselves they were unable to stay united with other tribes for long too. The Americans were able to continue to steal lands and scatter the Indians over the whole face of the North American continent for more than a century after. Many of the Iroquois, to stay away from the injustice, bought lands in

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 174.

<sup>52</sup> *Encyclopedia of Native American Indians* “Iroquois Confederacy,” by John C. Mohawk.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Canada.<sup>54</sup> Many more, however, stayed and tried to reason with the Americans, hoping that it would work out for them in the end.

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<sup>54</sup> Max M. Mintz, *Seeds of Empire: The American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1999), p. 174.



## Conclusion

The beginning of the united Iroquois Nation was based upon the prophesy made by Hiawatha. If heeded, great prosperity was promised for the Iroquois.<sup>55</sup> The influence of the American's and British's between 1763-1783, was a very crucial time for the Iroquois. Because of inner strife, the tribes began to slowly listen to others to help them make decisions, one such leader being Joseph Brant. His influence in the Iroquois decision to take sides was one of the most important in their choice. They were changed from within and it seeped to other nations, creating distrust and discord once again. The fatal blow to the Iroquois instigated by General George Washington eventually destroyed their way of life as they knew it. It destroyed their unity, trust, and power, all of which made up who they were. Their culture was permanently damaged from that time on.

Hiawatha's words, spoken in behalf of the Indian's Great Spirit went unheeded and were forgotten. If these words were remembered, things may have turned out differently. From an historian's perspective, this is something that will never be known, but it is something to speculate on with hindsight. The Americans greed may have still caused many of the problems, as was demonstrated by their lack of respect to the tribes that did help fight against the British.

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<sup>55</sup> See Section 2

Many of the Iroquois listened to just Joseph Brant instead of the 50 sachems<sup>56</sup> chosen specifically to lead the Six Nations. They allowed hatred of and loyalty to nations different than their own to decide their course of action. Ultimate destruction came with that vital decision they made. It will never be known what the Iroquois were thinking when they made that neutrality pact and then ultimately disregarded it and took up arms against the other side and each other. Historians, anthropologists, and others have looked into this many times, trying to understand what happened. There is no answer at this time. The sad reality is that regardless of which side they fought for, the result was the same—destruction.

Another question needing to be answered is would this have happened if the Iroquois had stayed neutral? The most likely answer is no. However, the Americans were not willing to give up anything that could belong to them. They trampled over everything and everyone in their way or who they believed was in their way to obtain what they wanted.

The British and the Americans had different ideas for the Indian's future. Both included looking at the Native Americans as savages unable to take care of them. The British believed it was their right to take care of the Indian and to integrate some what into white culture. The Americans on the other hand, were greedy and desired to rule over them—similar to what the Americans believed Great Britain was doing to them. Choices made had

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<sup>56</sup> The leaders from the tribes of the Iroquois. Their job was to decide together what was best for the Federation as a whole.

drastic affects upon everyone involved, especially the Iroquois. As C. Colden said: “They chose the wrong side and lost.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian country* (New York, T.H. Morrell.: 1866), xii-xiii.

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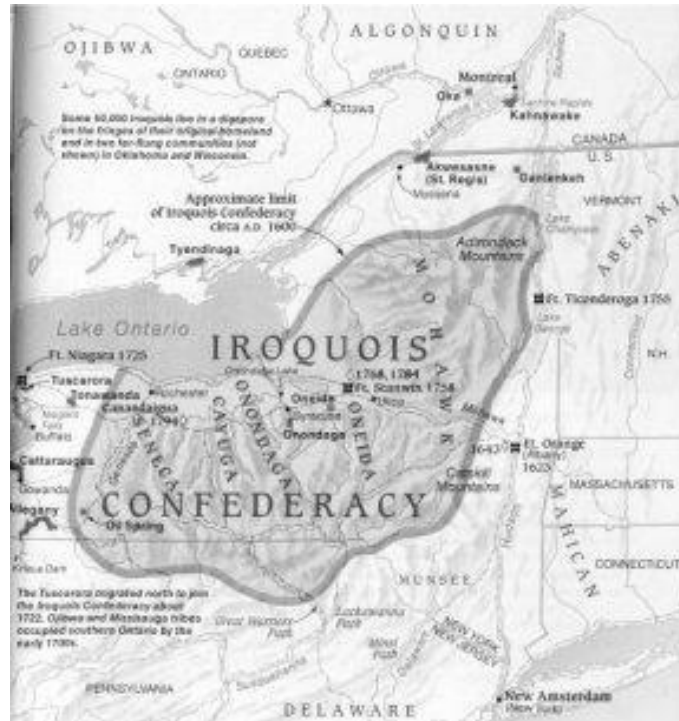
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## Appendix A

These are maps to show what the Iroquois had and what was taken away over the years. First we have Iroquois lands before 1700.



Second we have a map of the State of New York Today.



