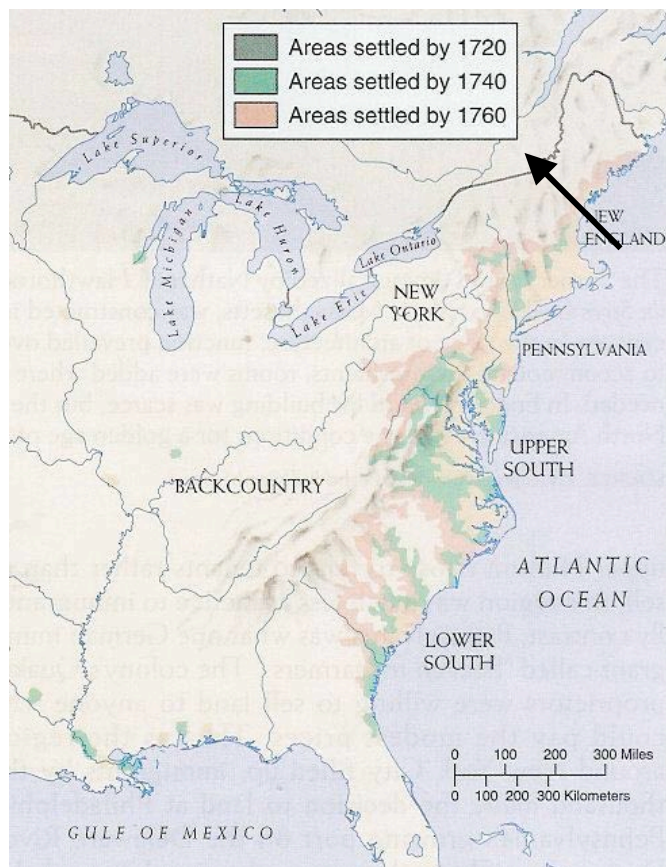


ABENAKI BACKGROUNDER 1749 - 1777



The Abenaki are a coalition of Algonquin-speaking peoples who live in southern Quebec, Maine and Northern New England. They were allied with the Micmac, the Sokoki, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscots of Maine. By the Seventeenth Century, they occupied a precarious position between the Iroquois to the west, the French colonies to the north, and the English colonies to the south. Odanak, or Saint Francis, on the St. Lawrence River in Quebec emerged as a mission village and refugee center for Abenakis fleeing the Iroquois onslaught during the “Beaver Wars” of the 1670’s and 1680’s. During these Wars, the Iroquois waged massive campaigns to seize furs, trapping grounds, and especially captives among French-allied Indians of the Great Lakes region. Nevertheless, the Abenaki resisted the pressure to join the French when they went to war against the Iroquois. Early on, they recognized the dangers of dependence on any single European power, preferring to play one off against the other up to the time of the American Revolution. The Abenaki way of life – one that involved family bands seasonally dispersing out over a wide from Odanak and other centers, such as Missisquoi, to hunt, fish and trap - worked well as a subsistence pattern for countless generations, serving also as a strategy for keeping their casualties low during the colonial wars with the English.

Both France and Britain placed the The Abenakis and their allies under great pressure during the decades leading up to the French and Indian War (The Seven Years War, 1754 - 1763). In 1749 the French reoccupied the upper St. John's River. By blaming the British for a smallpox epidemic that had broken out among the Micmac during the war and supplying arms and ammunition, the French were able to prolong the fighting in Nova Scotia until 1752. By 1755 the British had decided to reassert their control of the Maritimes by deporting the entire French Acadian population, which had steadfastly refused to sign an oath of loyalty to Great Britain. Things were also very tense in western New England, and the Sokoki at St. Francis threatened war in 1752 if there was any further English settlement up the Connecticut River. The murder of two of Abenaki hunters by New Englanders the following year brought retaliatory raids by the Abenaki against the New England frontier during the summer of 1754. In preparing for war, the French had encouraged the mission villages along the St. Lawrence (Caughnawaga, Lake of the Two Mountains, St. Francis, Becancour, Oswegatchie, Lorette, and St. Regis) to organize themselves as the Seven Nations of Canada, also known as The Great Fire of Caughnawaga.

The Caughnawaga (The Iroquois of Canada) dominated the Seven Nations and attended the Albany Conference with the British colonies (August, 1754), serving as the “older brothers” of the Abenaki and Sokoki, much as the Iroquois Six Nations did for the Ohio Indians. Speaking on behalf of the Abenaki and Sokoki, the Caughnawaga agreed to stay out of any future war between Britain and France. Unfortunately, it was a promise that could not be kept. The opening shots of the French and Indian War (1755-63) were actually fired in 1754 in western Pennsylvania. Raids from Missisquoi and St. Francis (Odanak) hit the frontier in New York that year, and the Penobscot attacked Maine settlements, prompting the Massachusetts governor to offer bounties of: £50 for a male Penobscot prisoner, £40 for a male scalp, £25 for a woman/child prisoner, and £20 for a woman/child scalp. In 1755 the British had assembled a large military expedition under General Edmund Braddock to capture Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh). Strangely enough, the allies that helped the French inflict the horrendous defeat on Braddock's army

near Pittsburgh were, for the most part, not from the Ohio valley, but warriors from the Seven Nations of Canada led by a Huron war chief from Lorette.

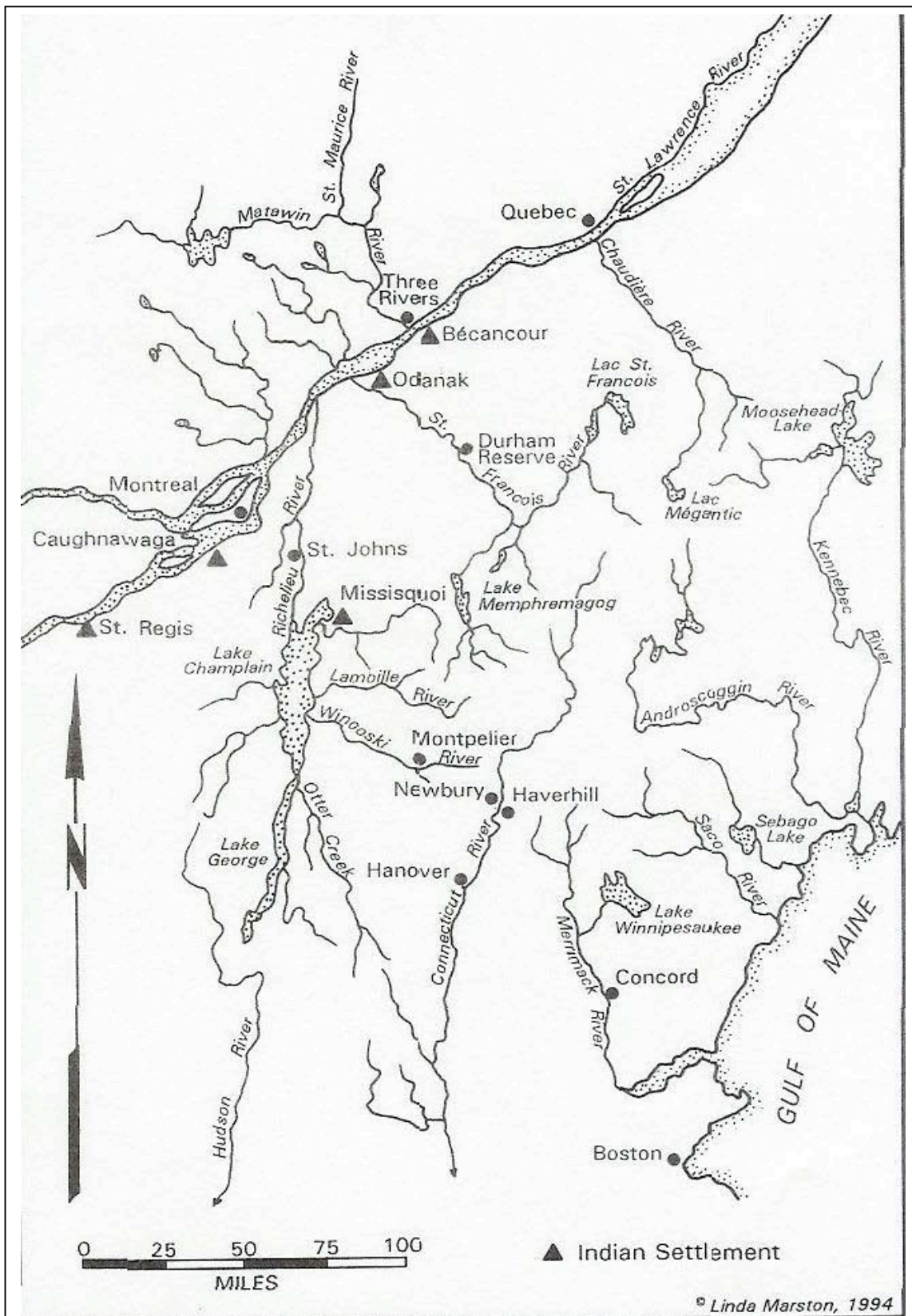
Abenaki and Sokoki warriors also participated in French general Montcalm's campaign in northern New York, where it is rumored that the Penobscot initiated the massacre that followed the capture of Fort William Henry in 1757. Meanwhile, an Abenaki war party from Becancour raiding near Albany gathered up the last 60 New England Algonquins at Schaghticook and resettled them back in the Abenaki settlement of St. Francis (Odanak) on the south bank of the St. Lawrence River. The frontier areas in Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire, New England suffered relatively few Indian attacks during the war, especially after the colonial rangers commanded by Major Robert Rogers attacked and burned St. Francis during the fall of 1759. Rogers claimed to have killed 200 Abenaki (including the French priest), but the French records listed only 30 dead. The Abenaki rades Charlestown in retaliation, but the St. Francis Abenakis dispersed after the raid and were effectively taken out of the war. After the capture of Quebec in 1759, the war was over in North America, although the French did not officially leave until 1763. Rogers' decimation of Odanak (St. Francis) burned an intractable memory of war and its consequences in the collective Abenaki consciousness, providing a tragic cautionary of the perils of ever going to war again.

Peace did not come uniformly, and Rogers Rangers were required to expel the French from the St. John's River in 1760. Even then a British survey crew was warned by the Maliseet to remain on the lower part of the river. Peace with the St. John's tribes and their eastern Abenaki allies did not really happen until after treaties were signed in 1770 and 1776, and peace with the Micmac took another three years. Elsewhere, with the French defeated and the Abenaki scattered into small groups, settlers flooded north between 1761 and 1774. With their lands being overrun, the Seven Nations (the Caughnawaga) considered joining the Pontiac Rebellion in 1763, but in the end urged peace. The British response to the uprising was to issue the Proclamation of 1763 halting further settlement west of the Appalachian crest. However, Sir William Johnson, the British Indian agent for North America, ruled that this did not cover lands claimed by the Caughnawaga, Sokoki, and Abenaki. cold.

Johnson's ruling left the Abenaki without a homeland. After years of passing back-and-forth across the border, Quebec considered them New England Indians, and New England felt they belonged in Canada. During the war, many Abenaki and Sokoki had been given refuge at the St. Regis, but with the end of the fighting, the Mohawk wanted them to leave, but they no longer had a place to go. Some stayed as unwelcome guests, others were absorbed by the "St. Francis Indians" in the multiethnic town of Odanak on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, but many were forced to scatter in small bands across northern New England as squatters in their own homeland. It was not surprising that, on the eve of the American Revolution in 1775, Catholic Abenaki and many former French allies longed for the return of French rule to North America. The American Revolution presented the Abenaki with two poor choices, namely between the Americans who were taking their land and the British who were giving it away.

The Abenaki way of life that involved family bands dispersing over wide areas worked well as a subsistence pattern for generations and allowed them to respond to the pressures of war by pulling back into their territory and to continue to avoid direct involvement with the British. In Canada, the British attempted to confine the Abenaki to Odanak (St. Francis) to control their activities and their loyalties, but the Abenaki used the town only as a seasonal home, and their mobile life style frustrated British efforts at British control. Southward, in Northern New England, the Abenaki has shared long periods of peaceful, if cautious, coexistence with the colonists. The settlers who rushed into Abenaki country after the French defeat in 1760 brought dispossession and hardship for the Abenaki but they also mingled with them in remote frontier communities. Many of the Abenaki also were the children or grandchildren of Anglo American settlers, captured by Abenaki warriors during the century's colonial wars and adopted into Abenaki families. Confronted with the choice between British redcoats, their foes during the colonial wars, and American colonists, many of whom they came to know as neighbors and even kin, the Abenaki sometimes felt stronger loyalties to the latter. Furthermore, both the Abenaki and their fictive Iroquois overlords, the Caughnawaga, were reluctant to go to war with the Americans because some of the sons of their leading families were students or alumni of Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

The Abenaki of Odanak (St. Francis) disagreed about what course to pursue in the Revolution, but beneath the surface confusion and ambivalence, all Abenaki at all times shared the goal of preserving their community and keeping the war at arms length. "O, strange *Englishmen* kill one another. I think the world is coming to an end," exclaimed an Abenaki woman, "Why should we fight for t'other country, for we never see t'other country; our hunting is in this country?" But, neutrality was becoming difficult. The American invasion of Canada in 1775 placed Odadanak in the direct line of fire and demanded an early decision by the Abenaki.



Map 4. Odanak and Abenaki country during the Revolution.

The Abenaki During and After the Revolution

In the beginning, the Seven Nations and other Abenaki were asked to remain neutral but ended up fighting on both sides. Already involved in a struggle with the British over settlement in northern Maine and the Canadian Maritimes, and perhaps hoping the revolution would get rid of the British and restore the French in Canada, various Abenaki divisions, such as the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet and Micmac, sided with the Americans. The St. Francois were divided but some helped the Americans besiege Boston and provided guides for Benedict Arnold's ill-fated expedition against Quebec during the winter of 1776-77. The Penobscot also served as scouts for Washington's army, and in 1779 participated in the unsuccessful American attack against the British forts on the Penobscot River. Colonel John Allen formed an Abenaki regiment at Machias which harassed British shipping along the Maine coast during the war. Meanwhile, other Abenaki served with the British and raided Maine's Androscoggin valley in 1781.

As the Revolution entered its closing years, many Canadian Abenakis, such as those at Odanak, and Joseph Louis Gill in particular, gave indications of newfound devotion to the British. The Redcoats suspected them of double-dealing, and perhaps with good reason; after all, the Abenaki knew all too well the consequences of putting all their eggs in one basket, having been left high and dry by the defeat of their French allies in 1760. Pro-British sentiment increased as the British lost the war. By the time Gill took his oath of allegiance to King George the Abenakis probably sensed that no invasion was coming. Their need for a "play-off" system between the two powers decreased, and they proceeded to mend their diplomatic fences with the British. Whatever the result of the American struggle for independence, Odanak still would have to live with - and in - the reality of a British Canada. Abenakis might continue covertly to assist the rebels, but they also had to put by some insurance for when the war was over. Having done so, they were able to request a grant of lands in subsequent years in recognition of their services.

Like other Indian communities along the Saint Lawrence, Odanak played no great role in the American Revolution. the Abenakis fought no major military actions, and their ambiguous stance frustrated Britons and Americans alike. But by successfully keeping the Revolution at arm's length, they avoided devastating losses. Unlike their parents during the French and Indian War and unlike their contemporaries in New York, the Ohio Valley, and the Smoky Mountains, the Abenakis did not have to endure the burning of their homes and the destruction of their crops. Odanak survived the Revolution, politically divided but physically intact. In a conflict that tolerated no neutrals, internal turmoil was a small price to pay for group survival.

The support lent the American cause by many Abenakis in Vermont and New Hampshire should have entitled them to claim special protection from the the newly independent states and the new republic, but that wasn't the case. The leaders of the state and federal governments did nothing to stop the postwar land-grabbing of Ethan and Ira Allen in Vermont. In New Hampshire, the son of Timothy Bedel, who once recommended a small reservation for the friendly Abenaki around Coos, grabbed a huge swath of Abenaki territory in defiance of federal law.

After the war the Abenaki Penobscot and Passamaquoddy received some recognition for their services on behalf of the American Revolutionaries, and by 1798

Massachusetts established three small reservations for them in northern Maine (Maine was not a state until 1820). The treaty was a clear violation of the Non-Intercourse Act passed by Congress in 1790, and led to a \$81.5 million federal settlement in 1978 for lands taken from them without compensation. Federal recognition followed in 1980. The Passamaquoddy and Penobscot were granted representation in the Maine legislature in 1823, but their representatives had no status except in matters concerning Native Americans. Tribal members were not allowed to vote in state elections until 1924. The Canadian Abenaki at St. Francois and Bécancour were granted reserves. These were enlarged to accommodate an enlarged population in 1805, although the land was reclaimed in 1839 for "nonuse." During the War of 1812, the "last time the Abenaki went to war," Bécancour provided two companies to the British army. The St. Francois and Bécancour have endured to the present, although groups have left over the years. Many went west and worked with the Hudson Bay Company during the 1800s.

Small groups of Abenaki have been moving west to the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley since they accompanied La Salle's expedition in 1680. The French encouraged one group to move to Ohio in 1721, but upon learning the Abenaki had proposed an alliance with the Fox (who were at war with the French at the time), the invitation was withdrawn. Several small groups still managed to settle along the Ohio River by the 1750. In 1787 some of the Abenaki with the Iroquois at St. Regis left. Crossing the Mississippi, they settled on the White River in Spanish Arkansas. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, they apparently merged with the Delaware and Shawnee who lived nearby and later moved with them, first to Kansas and then Oklahoma. Vermont became a state in 1791, but neither it nor the United States has ever recognized the land claims or tribal status of the Abenaki living there. The Sokoki presented claims for parts of their homeland in 1798, 1800, 1812, 1826, 1853, and 1874, but all were rejected by the State of Vermont.

Joseph Louis Gill

(Magouaouidombaouit)

Abenaki



Joseph Louis Gill, the “White Chief of the Saint Francis Abenaki,” was the son of Samuel Gill and Rosalie James. Samuel Joseph Gill was an English boy, taken captive at Salisbury, Massachusetts when he was nine or ten years old and brought to St. Francois Du Lac Indian Mission (St. Francis, or Odanak) near Quebec in 1697. Samuel was baptized as a Catholic and raised as an Abenaki boy at the Odanak Indian mission. The fact that Samuel's son Joseph Louis became an important chief and married the daughter of a chief strongly suggests Samuel was adopted into one of the leading families, probably that of a chief. (St. Francis Mission was made up of several tribes, which had fled English inroads in Maine and New Hampshire. There were four chiefs at Odanak, with one chosen as head chief.)

Samuel's own father made two trips to Canada to persuade his son to return home to his friends and family, but Samuel came to love his new life and adoptive Abenaki family, and he refused to return. He had status as a full family and tribal member and willingly lived all the rest of his life as an Indian.

When Samuel grew up, he married another former captive, raised as he was, named Rosalie James. Rosalie James was captured as child and brought to St. Francois Du Lac Indian mission, where she grew up. It had been thought she was captured from Massachusetts, but the "Ne-Do-Ba" web page (Abenaki Genealogy) says new evidence indicates she may have been taken in a raid on the lower Mississippi. Rosalie and Joseph had several children, most of whom, such as Joseph Louis, married into Abenaki Indian families.

Joseph Louis Gill, therefore, was raised as a traditional Abenaki, and mostly likely fought with the French against the British during the French and Indian War (1754 - 1763). His first wife, an Abenaki woman named Marie Jeanne, was the daughter of Odanak's “Grand Sachem” (Chief). By virtue of traditional Abenaki matrilineal descent, Gill and Marie's male children, thereby, became eligible for the office of Grand Sachem. Gill and Marie Jeanne had two or three children. Tragically, only one member of Gill's family, their son Antonine, survived the 1760 raid and slaughter of Odanak Abenaki by Robert Rogers' New Hampshire Royal Rangers during the French and Indian War. The death of the Gill family and the burning of Odanak at the hands of the British colonial rangers burned deeply into Abenaki memory. In 1763, Gill married the daughter of a French militia captain, Antoine Gameline. Together they produced six sons and two daughters. The Rogers' raid, the resulting death of his family, and Gill's subsequent matrimonial alliance with the French Canadians across the St. Lawrence River from Odanak precipitated in Gill a deep resentment and distrust of the British Empire ... but also of the American colonials, their rangers and militias.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, the Odanak community split into two shifting camps: a pro-British factions lead by older Abenaki and a pro-American faction, largely of younger Abenaki, that gathered about Joseph Louis Gill. Gill and the Odanak Abenaki had close ties with the French Canadian village across the St. Lawrence River, where Joseph Travesty was an active rebel collaborator. During the war, Gill moved freely between Odanak and the rebel settlements in the upper Connecticut Valley, and his brother-in-law Annance went over to the Americans early in the war. Fearing the defection of the Abenaki to the Americans, the British sent first a French Canadian in the British Army, Hertel de Rouville, and later Will Crofts of His Majesty's 34th Regiment to keep and eye on on Odanak. By taking up residence in Odanak, these British officers attempted to concentrate the Abenaki in the town, restrict their traditional hunting forays south into New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Maine, and prevent contact with the American rebels by dispatching patrols along the St. Francis River. But these measures failed, provoking only resentment among the Abenaki. Abenaki scouts and guides assisted the American Benedict Arnold's failed attempt to capture Quebec in 1775. In November 1777, Abenaki delegates from Odanak, perhaps Gill himself, accompanied pro-American Oneida Iroquois to a day-long conference with American Indian commissioners. The Americans could offer little material benefits in exchange for Abenaki support, yet by the winter of 1777 some Abenaki warriors and their families had immigrated from Odanak to the upper Connecticut Valley where they placed themselves at the service of the American New Hampshire Rangers.

In August 1778, Gill was in Haverhill, Connecticut in rebel American territory, having been pushed out of Odanak by the arrival of an occupying force of British and Hessian troops under Captain Alexander Fraser who “made great threats” against the pro-American Abenaki faction and clamped an iron grip on the town. At Haverhill, “The Chief from Saint Francis”(Gill), according to the American account, wanted to know what the Americans intended to do for his people, “as he [Gill] says we have a great many friends that way.”

Gill had not yet taken up arms for either side in the war, but his pro-American stance and the British occupation of Odanak were eroding British support there as the younger generation of Abenaki fell behind Gill, who Fraser accused of “abusing the ears of the [St. Francis] Indians.” Pro-British sentiment in Odanak, however, was bolstered by news brought north from Connecticut that “upwards of 30 families,” all pro-American Abenaki, were “almost naked and starving” and would return to Odanak and the British if they were welcomed back. This discouraging news from the south may have increased the Crown party’s following because in May 1779 a number of Abenaki asked British governor Haldiman’s permission to allow them to send a war party of twenty to thirty men to Coos “to put that country into confusion.” At the same time, the British efforts to concentrate and confine the Abenaki to Odanak precipitated great discontent among Abenaki hunters, who wanted to leave the town limits to travel south for their traditional seasonal round of hunting and trapping. Four years into the Revolutionary War, the Abenaki were keeping the paths to Odanak open to all comers and committing themselves to none.

The U.S. Congress, in the meantime, intensified their efforts to secure Abenaki allegiance. John Wheelock, President of Dartmouth College, urged Congress to appropriate funds to support the college and increase scholarships for Caughnawaga and Abenaki families who traditionally sent their sons there as a means of maintaining Indian loyalty to the American cause. George Washington, in turn, endorsed a recommendation that Joseph Louis Gill be granted an officer’s commission in the Continental Army. Gill thought himself entitled to the rank of major, “having been a long time a Captain.” In April 1779, the U.S. Congress granted Gill an officer’s commission and provided that all Abenakis who were willing to join the service of the United States “be collected and formed into a Company or Companies of the said Joseph Louis Gill & receive while in the Service the like pay[,] Subsistence & Rations with the officers and Soldiers of the Continental Army.” **Gill had thrown his lot in with that of the Americans ... or had he?**

Portions of this biography excerpted from Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995), pp, 65-84.

Joseph Louis Gill's Decision

In the Autumn of 1779, following the granting of his military commission by the U.S. Congress, Gill returned to Odanak ... and took an oath of allegiance to King George. According to the British, Gill returned from Connecticut "full of contrition for his past conduct and Profession of loyalties for the time to Come." In 1780, Captain Alexander Fraser of the British Indian Department visited Odanak to report on conditions there and cultivate friendship with Gill. Fraser found the place a hotbed of politics and intrigue. Meeting with Gill to root out the cause of the trouble, Fraser reminded the chief that here was his chance to prove himself a loyal subject. Fraser concluded that "the present despicable state ... must be the effect of evil councils which divided them or a want of wisdom in their Chiefs." Gill agreed that the problem lay with the chiefs, but since Abenaki leadership traditionally rested on voluntary obedience, *he* felt the problem was that the chiefs were too overbearing in their behavior toward the warriors ("They are the very opposite of that," editorialized Fraser in his report.) Continuing the British practice of interfering in Abenaki chief-making, Fraser suggested making Gill the principal chief, "providing he would undertake to unite the Village, and conduct them in a loyal and useful manner." Fearing this move might excite jealousy, however, Fraser advocated putting Gill's son Antoine in the position. Gill agreed, pointing out that his son had more right to it anyway, being descended matrilineally from a chief himself through his mother, Marie Jeanne, who was the daughter of the "Grand Sachem" of Odanak.

Fraser assured Gill that his son would be appointed chief, but demanded that the family first prove its loyalty to the Crown by striking a blow against the rebellious Americans. He dismissed Gill's protestations that British threats and heavy-handed control of Odanak caused his defection to the American's in the first place. The British governor, in turn, pardoned Gill's errors, but Gill had to give proof of his change of heart. If Gill gave any hint in the future of conniving with rebel scouts, the British would burn Odanak and drive his family into exile. So, Gill accepted the role of compliant yet valuable client chief, who, he admitted, "had been a very bad Subject" of King George but would convince the world that he could be a good one. Disingenuously exaggerating his own influence over the libertarian Abenaki, Gill said he would "immediately take measures to bring back all the Abenakis that are amongst the Rebels & he was sure he could do it, and he would also be responsible for their future good behavior."

In an effort to prove his newfound loyalty to King George, Gill went on a secret mission to the upper Connecticut with ten warriors and captured American general Benjamin Whitcomb. But Whitcomb escaped on the way back to Odanak, reinforcing British suspicions that their new ally, Gill, was playing both ends against the middle. In fact, the Americans later reported that Gill's actions were explained in terms of the consistent strategy of the Abenaki. Gill allowed Whitcomb to escape on the assurance that, if the Americans invaded Canada again, they would not burn Odanak. The memory of Rogers' raid in which he had lost a wife and children, was vivid in Gill's memory. He volunteered, under British pressure, to go on the mission against the Americans to safeguard Odanak, and he allowed the mission to fail in order to safeguard Odanak. Lest he burn his bridges with the British, he brought in another prisoner taken in the raid.

The Revolution was but one phase in a continuing Abenaki struggle to maintain their lands and independence against all comers - French, British, or Americans - if necessary by dealing with them all. For an Abenaki, such as Gill, whether the Americans won or lost was probably of less importance than whether the Americans succeeded in invading Canada again and successfully this time. For years, the Abenaki had sent messages to the Americans that they awaited expectantly for another invasion to follow Arnold's failed attempt. The threat that such an invasion posed to Odanak was more important than the impact of the war.

Odanak ended the war as it began it: as both a channel for rebel intelligence and a source of scouting parties for the British. On the upper Connecticut, Captain John Vincent's company of Abenaki rangers continued in service with the Americans at least 1781. The must roll of Vincent's troops in May listed seventeen Abenaki, but the Captain told General Washington that "a much larger number has been here at times but are not steady and though I do not think they have ever done us any damage but are rambling in the woods those inserted have been serviceable as scouts &c." He reckoned he had fed and supported about fifty Abenaki soldiers from Odanak from November 1778 to February 1781 when they were in from hunting, which was about half the time. On the British side, the English continued to send scouting parties from Odanak although they acknowledged that the purposes of such forays were to keep other Abenakis at home in Odanak. A British officer later described Gill as "man whose service to the Crown merits some attention," and secured his permission before sending Abenaki scouting parties south to spy on the Americans. Despite these services on behalf of the Crown, the Abenaki at Odanak resented the restraints placed on them by the British. By July 1782, they were "very impatient to have Liberty to Go to their Different occupations," which consisted of their traditional seasonal round of hunting, trapping, and fishing, their routine and seasonal movement between Odanak and Lake Memphremagog.

As the Revolution entered its closing years, many Abenakis at Odanak, and Joseph Louis Gill in particular, gave indications of newfound devotion to the British. The Redcoats suspected them of double-dealing, and perhaps with good reason; after all, the Abenaki knew all too well the consequences of putting all their eggs in one basket, having been left high and dry by the defeat of their French allies in 1760. Pro-British sentiment increased as the British lost the war. By the time Gill took his oath of allegiance to King George the Abenakis probably sensed that an American invasion of Canada would not be forthcoming. The opportunities for Abenaki leaders to play Britain off against the American rebels decreased. Consequently, the Abenaki proceeded to mend their diplomatic fences with the British. Whatever the result of the American struggle for independence, Odanak still would have to live with - and in - a British Canada. Abenakis might continue covertly to assist the rebels, but they also had to create some insurance for that time when the war was over. Having done so, they were able to request a grant of lands in subsequent years in recognition of their services. In switching his loyalties back and forth, Gill had played his cards well.

Like other Indian communities along the Saint Lawrence, Odanak played no great role in the American Revolution. The Abenakis fought no major military actions, and their ambiguous stance frustrated Britons and Americans alike. But by successfully keeping the Revolution at arm's length, they avoided devastating losses. Unlike their parents during the French and Indian War and unlike their Indian contemporaries in New York, the Ohio Valley, and the Smoky Mountains, the Abenakis did not have to endure the burning of their homes and the destruction of their crops. Odanak survived the Revolution, politically divided but physically intact. In a conflict that tolerated no neutrals, internal turmoil was a small price to pay for group survival.

Molly Ockett

Abenaki

1744 - 1816



Molly's Kennebec Abenaki name was Singing Bird. Her Christian name was Marie Agatha. She probably pronounced her baptismal name "Mali Agget," which sounded like Molly Ockett to the English settlers. Molly claimed that she was the daughter and granddaughter of chiefs. One story states that she was 15 when she hid in the bushes during the devastating raid by Roger's' Rangers at Odanak (St. Francis) which killed many Abenaki and incinerated the town in 1759. This is backed up by a story Molly told a friend of traveling to Canada when the trail was littered with the skeletons of her people. She said she was young when she made the trip. Around 1755 smallpox nearly wiped out the bands living in the Upper Androscoggin and Upper Connecticut River, and the skeletons she saw were the remains of the inhabitants of Abenaki towns whose entire populations were wiped out by the epidemic, leaving no one to bury the dead.

Who was Molly? First and foremost Molly was an Abenaki healing woman. She wandered throughout the Upper Androscoggin and Connecticut Rivers in traditional Abenaki manner. She collected her healing medicines and provided for herself as she had been taught by her ancestors. Molly also was a skilled hunter. If she made a large kill near a settlement she would seek help from the locals - Indians and Europeans - to drag out the kill and shared generously with her assistants. She administered her remedies to the settlers whenever and wherever there was a need, never accepting more than one penny for her services. Molly was the only doctor available to most of these early Anglo-American settlers. A story told by the Hamlin family of Paris Hill tells of her saving the life of the infant Hannibal Hamlin and predicting that he would become a very famous man. She touched their lives in many positive ways.

Molly was described by the Anglo settlers as a "pretty, gentle, generous squaw [an unwittingly pejorative term for a woman] ...possessed a large frame and features, and walked remarkably erect even in old age" and "kind in her disposition and unswerving in her devotion to truth". Molly generally got along well with whites but sometimes had problems understanding their attitudes. One Sunday Molly picked some blueberries and brought them to Mrs. Chapman of Bethel. The woman scolded Molly for picking berries on Sunday. When Molly returned several weeks later she said "Choke me! I was right in picking the blueberries on Sunday, it was so pleasant, and I was so happy that the Great Spirit had provided them for me." Some say she converted from Catholicism to Methodism. She was quoted as saying Methodists were "drefful clever folks" and, at times, she attended their church services. She was probably just covering all the bases.

One writer describes her normal dress as a "long one piece dress to her ankles, sleeves cut half way to wrists, fringed at hemline and sleeves, leather band around her forehead with single white feather in the back". Most accounts describe her as dressing in the fashion common to Indians and wearing a pointed cap that would be appropriate for an Abenaki woman of this period.

Molly was well known in Poland, Maine where she often visited the springs. Molly claimed the springs had medicinal powers. The local residents paid little attention to her as many thought of her as an old drunken woman or a witch. However, Molly often visited the modest Inn of Wentworth Ricker and always received a cordial welcome. Mr. Ricker's family must have paid some attention to her beliefs,

for it was his descendants that established the famous Poland Springs Resort. Another man from West Poland also listened to Molly. He fondly remembered some thoughts she shared with him when he was a young boy. She told him "Never marry a woman who don't love flowers or trust a person who hates music or children. When you find yourself in bad company get out of it at once and remember that as you pass through life's journey your greatest troubles will be found to result from ignorance."

Molly definitely had a sly sense of humor. One story tells of how she conned Wentworth Ricker out of a bottle of rum one very cold night by convincing him that she was about to die from a tooth ache. Another tells how she fooled a priest out of \$40 around 1774. She traveled to the Priest in Canada and explained that her husband had died without the benefit of absolution. After the priest performed the prayers, Molly asked if her husband was now released from purgatory. The priest replied that he was on his way to heaven. Molly scooped up the money she had offered. The priest became upset and said that he would send her husband back to purgatory. Molly replied "No you can't. Me sannap (husband), be cunning. He does not get in bad place but once. When he gets in bad place once and get out safe he stick up stake so he knows."

When Molly was in the Fryeburg vicinity she camped in a cave-like rock shelter near the base of Jockey Cap Mountain. She had a birch bark camp at Bethel on the North side of the Androscoggin River. At Andover she was known for her beautiful baskets and other small crafts that she sold to the locals. The histories of Andover, Rumford, Canton, Poland, Minot, Trap Corner, Paris Hill, Bethel, North Conway, Fryeburg, and Baldwin all proudly claim that Molly was a resident of their town. Molly's nomadic lifestyle would lead to established camp sites in these places and many others as well. Molly claimed the lands of these towns as belonging to her by birthright.

Molly treated Henry Tufts for a serious knife wound around 1772. At that time they were with the Cowas Bands of Swassin (Swashan), Philip, & Tomhegan in the Upper Androscoggin. Henry lived with these bands for 3 years. He recorded that they traveled to Quebec each spring to trade their winter furs for blankets, guns, and ammunition. Henry Tufts referred to Molly, Sabatis, and Philip as doctors. He was eager to learn about Abenaki medicine and asked questions. Tufts said "In general they were explicit in communication, still I thought them in possession of secrets they cared not to reveal."

Information about Molly's husband(s) and children is very confusing at best. He may have been married to Sabatis of the Cowas band. Sabatis was captured as a young boy by Roger's Rangers in their attack on St. Francis in 1759. It is said he was very fond of liquor, and Molly eventually parted company with him because he was very foul when drunk. It seems Molly was properly married to Capt. John Sussup in 1766 but she is also reported living with Sabatis during this marriage. It is believed she had children by both men. Captain John Sussup (John Joseph) served with the French at the defeat of Braddock's British army in 1755.

When the Revolutionary War broke out in 1775, Molly and Captain John Sussup were living and traveling among the scattered American settlements of northern New England. Like all Abenaki, they were suspicious of the British; they were certainly pro-French as reflected in Captain John's service in the French and Indian war; and, they especially remembered the burning of Odanak by British imperial agents. They also had many acquaintances and friends among the American settlers. Yet like all Abenaki, they preferred to remain neutral in the conflict, a choice made possible by their nomadic life style. **Which path would Molly and Sussup take?**

Molly Ockett and Captain John Sussup's Decision

Captain John Sussup was probably among the Abenaki who accompanied his fellow member of the Cowas band, Swashan, to fight with Washington at Cambridge. He also may have been among the Abenaki who served as scouts and guides for the American forces during General Benedict Arnold's ill-fated invasion of Canada. Captain John also probably fought with the New Hampshire Rangers against the British in the upper Connecticut River Valley. There is no record of Molly's service during the war. She may have been a member of the group of pro-American Abenaki who moved into the Connecticut Valley to follow their families engaged in service with the Americans there.

A Captain Sussup (Molly's husband or son?) was the head of a band that wintered near the headwaters of the Missisquoi River in Vermont during the winter of 1799-1800. Molly was with the band at this time. White settlers in the area observed that the band was in an "almost starving condition...the deer and moose being destroyed by the settlers". Their principal means of subsistence was baskets, birch bark containers, and trinkets" that Molly and others made and sold to the settlers.

Colonel Clark of Boston was an early trader in the White Mountains and Molly's friend. She saved his life in 1781, and he was forever in her debt. Molly overheard Tomhegan planning a raid. The men were drinking heavily, allowing her to slip away and traveled all night to warn her friend. In gratitude, Clark persuaded her to live in Boston where he would provide for her. She was not cut out for city life and soon returned to her Abenaki homeland.

We know that Molly had a daughter, Molly (sometimes called Molly Sussup and sometimes Molly Peol) who married a Penobscot (possibly Peol Sussup). She attended school at Bethel and spoke fluent English. A man known as Captain John Sussup born about 1768 was probably Molly's son by Captain Sussup. It is likely another daughter was born around 1769 and was the child of Sabatis. In 1798 Molly traveled to Carritunk to assist a son known as Paseel (Basil) to recover from wounds he received in a fight. One daughter is thought to have married a white man and was living in Derby, Vermont by 1800.

In 1816 Molly was camped with Metallic at Lake Molechunkamunk (Upper Richardson Lake). She became ill while camped here. Metallic reportedly brought her to Andover and stayed with her until the Thomas Bragg family took over her care as a ward of the state. Mr. Bragg made her a traditional Abenaki cedar bark camp in a clump of pines near his house. Just before her death, she asked to be carried out of her camp and placed on the ground under the sky. She expressed contentment that she had lived an honorable life and died shortly thereafter. Molly is buried in a cemetery in the town of Andover where she died. Sometime after her death a head stone was placed on her grave. The stone reads: "MOLLY OCKETT Baptized Mary Agatha, died in the Christian Faith, on August 2, A.D., 1816. The Last of the Pequakets."



Swashan Abenaki

Little is known about Swashan's life. He was a member of the Kennebec division of the Abenaki, who lived in Maine (claimed then by Massachusetts). Specifically, he belonged to the Cowas Band of Kennebec Abenaki who lived in the Upper Androscoggin River. As such, he probably knew Molly Ockett who also was a member of that band. In 1751, most of the Kennebecs amalgamated with the St. Francis Abenaki in Odanak (St. Francis, Quebec). The Kennebecs allied themselves with the French during the French and Indian War (1754 - 1763). Most likely, therefore, Swashan served as a soldier on the side of the French in this conflict. Doubtlessly, he was present with the other Saint Francis Abenaki and Canawhega Mohawks when they attacked and defeated General Braddock and Colonel George Washington. These Kennebecs also sent a war party in 1754 against Fort Richmond, but, after a few menacing words, they retreated. The few who were now left of the original Kennebecs were scattered among the other tribes, and acted as guides to the northern and eastern Indians during the conflict. Swashan and his family also doubtlessly suffered as a result of Robert Rogers' Rangers' decimation of Odanak in 1763. In 1764 there were but thirty warriors left of the once great tribe of the Kennebecs. The experience of the French and Indian War left Swashan, like the Abenaki Kennebecs, with a strong distaste for the British and a hope that the French might regain Canada.

By 1775, Swashan was living back in St. Francis (Odanak), perhaps chaffing under the increasing British control and domination of the town. The competition between the British and the Americans for Abenaki support of their war effort - as reflected in visits by agents and messengers - became so intense, according to an Abenaki woman on the Androscoggin River, that the men of her band could not hunt, eat, or sleep so involved were they in counseling with agents and discussing competing proposals. Shortly thereafter, the few remaining warriors of the Kennebecs gathered at Gardinerston, Maine, where they were persuaded by Paul Higgins, a white man who had lived among the Abenaki from childhood, to join the General Washington's army that had besieged the British in Boston after the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Headed and guided by Reuben Colburn, they went, to the number of twenty or thirty, in their canoes to Merry-meeting Bay, whence they proceeded on foot, to Washington's headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, arriving on August 13, 1775. They were not much encouraged by Washington who perhaps still resented how badly the St. Francis Indians had beaten him and Braddock during the French and Indian War. Accordingly, the small band of Kennebecs returned dejectedly to Saint Francis (Odanak).

At Odanak, the rejected Abenaki soldiers conferred with Swashan and requested that he break Abenaki neutrality and aid the Americans. During the first few months of the war, the British had employed Abenaki from St. Francis (Odanak) as scouts, but they suspected them of carrying news to the rebels. Swashan was well aware of the impending invasion of Canada by the Americans, and they feared that neutrality may no longer be a tenable option. Swashan might have thought back to the burning and slaughter of Odanak by Rogers' Rangers at the conclusion of the French and Indian War and wondered if aligning himself with one combatant or another might bring this carnage down again on the Abenaki. **Nevertheless, in 1775, Swashan had to decide to continue his neutrality or ally himself with the British or the Americans.**

Swashan' Decision

In the summer of 1775, Swashan decided to offer his assistance to the Americans. In August he and "four other Indians of the Saint Francois tribe" arrived at George Washington's camp in Cambridge, offered "their service in the cause of American liberty," and remained throughout the siege of Boston. Swashan said that he would bring half the Abenaki if the Americans wanted. The Massachusetts House of Representatives appointed a committee to confer with the chief, who according to the Bostonians, "appears as an ambassador of that Tribe." Swashan portrayed the Abenakis as making their own decisions, unintimidated by British threats. New Englanders, for whom the colonial wars and the propaganda they generated were recent memories, retained lingering images of black-robed priests inciting Abenaki warriors to war. But if Jesuit influence was ever significant in Abenaki villages in previous conflicts, it was evidently lacking in this one, as revealed by the committee's interrogation of Swashan:

Q: Have you a *French Priest* in your Tribe?

A: Yes

Q: Has he given you any Advice with Regard to this Dispute?

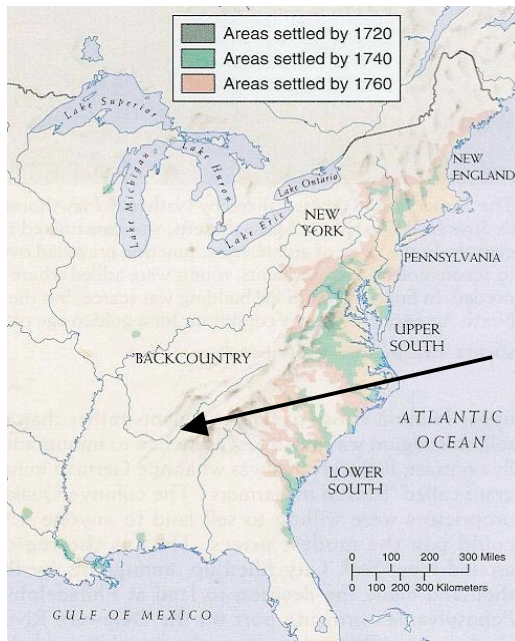
A: Our Priest is not Warriour, and he does not concern himself about it."

It is probable that, after the siege of Boston, Swashan joined the New Hampshire Rangers - less than twenty years after Rogers' Rangers burned Odanak - and served with them in fighting the British on the upper Connecticut River valley. Many of the pro-American St. Francis Abenaki relocated themselves to the upper Connecticut River Valley. By the winter of 1777-1778, they were starving and begged for help from the American authorities. In May 1778, Swashan and twenty Saint Francis Indians reenlisted with American general Schuyler. Five of the warriors had their families with them, and there were fourteen children in the group.

Abenaki oral tradition recalls that Swashan was back at Missisquoi after the Revolution. Nothing again appears about him in the historical record. In 1795, there were but seven families of the original Kennebec who had survived the war.

The following account was excerpted in part from Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country* ; Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998), pp. 65-84.

Background: Cherokee History 1754 – 1775



The Cherokees were divided into four groups: the Overhill towns (mainly in the Little Tennessee and Tellico Rivers), the Valley and Middle Settlements in the Blue Ridge region, and the Lower towns in South Carolina. The Cherokee's geographic location made them strategically important to the English colonies, in the words of a British statesman, "as they form a barrier against powerful incursions of Indians on the Ohio and Illinois tribes and as a counterbalance against the Creeks in case of war with them." Furthermore, the fertile valleys, described by colonials as "fertile as Manure itself," ensured that their lands would be coveted by white settlers. The Cherokees themselves were an settled and intensely agricultural people, but a further allure to Europeans was the Cherokee's prosperous taking, processing, and selling of deerskins which made them some of the richest people on the continent. By the first decades of the Eighteenth Century, the Cherokees formed a strong alliance with the British against the French and their Iroquois and Shawnee allies who hitherto had dominated the rich Kentucky hunting grounds

In the 1730's and 1740's, the Cherokee strengthened their military power by forming an alliance with their old enemies, the Chickasaw, against the Shawnees. Cherokee and Chickasaw forces eventually drove the Shawnees out of Kentucky and into the country north of the Ohio River. By 1754, the contest between the French for the new world empire culminated in the Seven Years War (The French and Indian War, 1754-1763) in which alliances with the First Nations became the coveted goal of the European rivals and the key to winning the contest. To maintain their independence and favored trading status, Cherokee leaders played Britain against France, soliciting favors from both colonial powers. To assure that the fickle Cherokees remained loyal, the British built Fort Loudoun near Chota, the principal Cherokee town. Affronted by this threat to their independence, the Cherokee lay siege to the garrison, starved it out, and killed most of the soldiers. In retaliation, the British army invaded the Cherokee nation in 1760 and 1761 and burned the principal Cherokee towns and cornfields, reducing those Cherokee, who survived the military onslaught, to starvation.

This invasion, coupled with devastating small pox epidemics in 1738 and 1759-60 reduced the Cherokee population in half (from 20,000 to 12,000). It was a time of staggering changes. New technologies, over-hunting of wildlife, Cherokee adoption of slave labor and the raising of domestic animals such as pigs and cattle combined with this demographic decline to set in motion changes in settlement patterns in which towns began to give way to isolated settlements and more individual farms - on some of which the Cherokees used African slaves - thereby eroding the social cohesion once enjoyed in the more populous towns. Affluence acquired through the deerskin trade and a growing use of alcohol prompted young male Cherokees to challenge to the traditional authority of village headmen and women. Europeans, primarily interested in military alliances and the deerskin trade, dealt almost exclusively with young warriors and hunters, thereby enhancing the power and wealth of the young soldier/hunters at the expense of the older, traditional male and female authorities. By 1770, the Cherokee nation teetered on the edge of fragmentation, factionalism, and generational revolt.

Throughout these momentous changes in Cherokee social and political fortunes, four great leaders - "the old and beloved men" - strove to exercise statecraft to preserve Cherokee independence and rebuilt its war-torn towns and political structures: Old Hop (the *uku*, or Fire King of Chota) who would not live to see the American Revolution, Attakullakulla (Little Carpenter), Oconostota ("the Great Warrior"), and Ostenaco. In addition, Cherokee towns were the homes powerful women leaders, such as Nancy Ward. Chastised by the debacle of Fort Loudon affair, these leaders engaged in peaceful diplomatic means of securing Overhill trade and security while keeping free of entangling alliances and keeping at bay the avaricious Virginian and Carolinians. These aging leaders also strengthened the traditional Cherokee town councils - assemblies of all men and women in the town

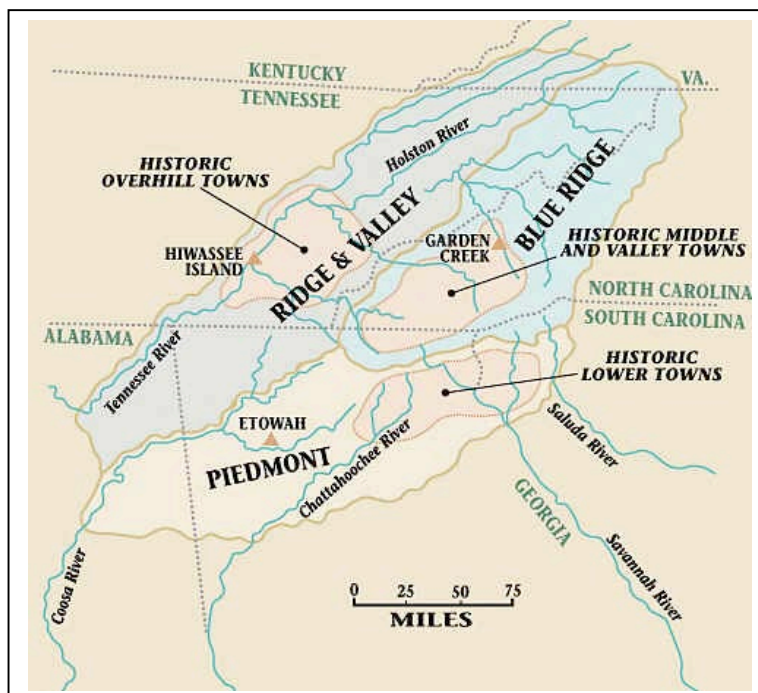
“whose purpose was to avoid rather than resolve issues, to conciliate rather than command.” The center of their influence was the town of Chota, a self-defined city of peace, “a beloved Town, A City of Refuge,” where no blood was to be shed, “where the fire of Piece [sic] is Always kept Burning.”

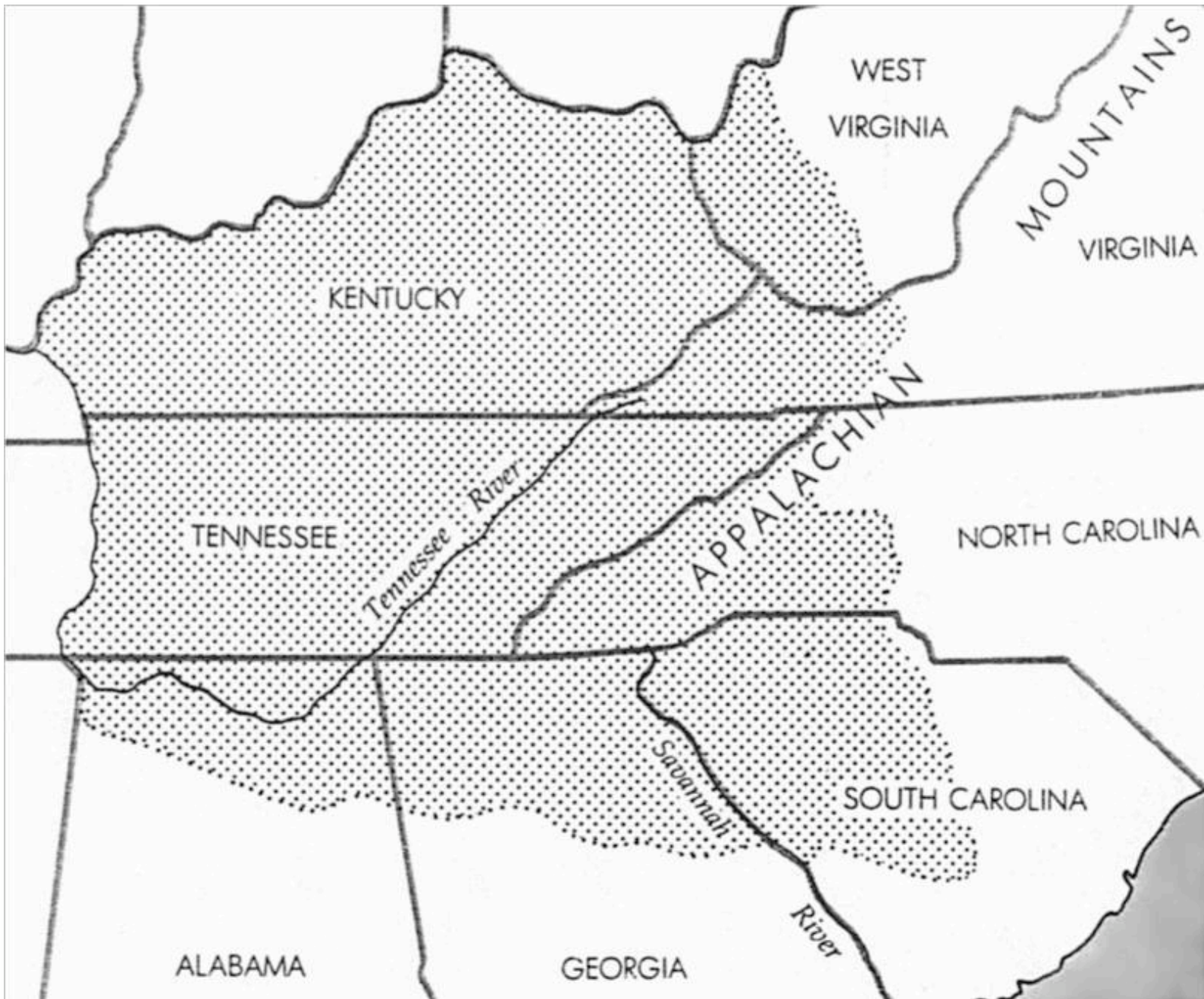
Despite the prohibition of British authorities, white settlers poured across the mountains and began settling illegally on Cherokee lands, and the Cherokee tried once again to compensate themselves with territory taken by war with a neighboring tribe. This time their intended victim was the Chickasaw, but this was a mistake. Anyone who tried to take something from the Chickasaw regretted it, if he survived. Eleven years of sporadic warfare ended with a major Cherokee defeat at the hands of the Chickasaw at Oldfields (1769) forcing the Cherokee gave up their war of conquest and began to explore the possibility of new alliances to resist the whites.

The victorious British colonists began to hold all Cherokees responsible for the action of any given Cherokee offense, perhaps recognizing that the Cherokee no longer had a rival power – as they once did in the French - to play against Britain and her colonies. On the eve of the American Revolution, the British government scrambled to appease the colonists and negotiate treaties with the Cherokee in which they ceded land already taken from them by white settlers. To this end, all means, including outright bribery and extortion, were employed as in the case of the Lochaber Treaty (1770); and the Augusta Treaty (1773) in which the Cherokee were forced to cede two million acres in Georgia to pay for debts to white traders. The traders had encouraged the Cherokees to run up large debts that could be paid off only with land. The Iroquois were caught in the same trap and, in the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix ceded the Shawnee claims to Kentucky. Similarly, the Cherokee tried to protect their homeland from white settlement by selling land they did not really control. Despite the fact that these agreements were a clear violation of existing British law, they were used later to justify the American takeover of the region. The Shawnee also claimed these lands but, of course, were never consulted. With the Iroquois selling the Shawnee lands north of the Ohio, and the Cherokee selling the Shawnee lands south, where could they go? Both the Cherokee and Iroquois were fully aware of the problem they were creating. After he had signed, a Cherokee chief reputedly took Daniel Boone aside to say, "We have sold you much fine land, but I am afraid you will have trouble [from the Shawnee] if you try to live there."

Confronted with rising tensions, the Cherokee elders assembled in the town house at Chota in 1774, and Oconostota sent emissaries to parlay with British and Virginian officials to keep the sporadic violence between Cherokees and the encroaching whites from escalating into a full blown war. Nevertheless the pressure on Cherokee lands continued to mount as did the challenges to the authority of the aging Attakullakulla and Oconostota by younger men. The situation reached a crisis with the infamous Sycamore Shoals Treaty in 1775 in which Richard Henderson and Nathaniel Hart met with Attakullakulla and Oconostota, and Savanukah, in defiance of Royal Proclamation and Tribal law, to fraudulently pull off the largest land swindle in history. In return for a cabin full of trade goods, Henderson secured 27,000 square miles between the Kentucky and Tennessee Rivers. Despite the elders' protestations that they had been deceived as to what they were signing, Attakullakulla's son, Dragging Canoe, stormed from the conference on the second day and promised to make the ceded lands “a dark and bloody ground” for the white settlers.

Traditional Cherokee Domains





The Cherokee Aftermath

1776 - 1817

Cui Canacina (Dragging Canoe) and the Chickamauga Cherokee refused to bow to American military might and kept raiding the new American settlements in former Cherokee territories that his father had sold to the whites. At the outbreak of the Revolution, the Cherokee received requests from the Mohawk, Shawnee, and Ottawa to join them against the Americans, but the majority of the Cherokee decided to remain neutral in this "white man's war." The Chickamauga, however, were at war with the Americans and formed an alliance with the Shawnee. Both the Chickamauga Cherokee and the Shawnees had the support of British Indian agents who were still living among them (often with native wives) and arranging trade. During 1775 the British began to supply large amounts of guns and ammunition and offer bounties for American scalps. In July, 1776, 700 Chickamauga attacked two American forts in North Carolina: Eaton's Station and Ft. Watauga. Both assaults failed, in part because of the warning given the settlement by Nancy Ward, but the raids set off a series of attacks by other Cherokee and the Upper Creek on frontier settlements in Tennessee and Alabama.

The frontier militia organized in response made little effort to distinguish between hostile and neutral Cherokee, except to notice that neutrals were easier to find. During September the Americans destroyed more than 36 Cherokee towns killing every man, woman and child they could find. Unable to resist, the Cherokee in 1777 asked for peace. The Treaties of DeWitt's Corner (May) and Long Island (or Holston) (July) were signed at gunpoint and forced the Cherokee to cede almost all of their remaining land in the Carolinas. Although this brought peace for two years, the Chickamauga remained hostile and renewed their attacks against western settlements in Tennessee, Alabama, and Kentucky during 1780. After more fighting, the second Treaty of Long Island of Holston (July 1781) confirmed the 1777 cessions and then took more Cherokee land.

Through all of this, the Chickamauga fought on but were forced to retreat slowly northward until, by 1790, they had joined forces with the Shawnee in Ohio. After the initial Indian victories of Little Turtle's War (1790-94), most of the Ohio Chickamauga returned south and settled near the Tennessee River in central Tennessee and northern Alabama. From here, they had the unofficial encouragement of the Spanish governments of Florida and Louisiana and began to attack nearby American settlements. One of these incidents almost killed a young Nashville attorney/land speculator named Andrew Jackson, which may explain his later attitude regarding the Cherokee.

Dragging Canoe died in 1792, but a new round of violence exploded that year with the American settlements in central Tennessee and northern Alabama. After two years of fighting with Tennessee militia, support from other Cherokee declined, and the Chickamauga's resolve began to weaken. Following the American victory at Fallen Timbers (1794), the last groups of the Ohio Chickamauga returned to Tennessee. Meanwhile, the Spanish government had decided to settle its border disputes with the United States by diplomatic means and ended its covert aid to the Chickamauga Cherokee. After a final battle near Muscle Shoals in Alabama, the Chickamauga realized it was impossible stop the Americans by themselves. By 1794 large groups of Chickamauga had started to cross the Mississippi and settle with the Western Cherokee in Spanish Arkansas. The migration was complete by 1799, and open warfare between the Cherokee and Americans ended.

The Keetoowah (Western Cherokee or Old Settlers) had their origin with a small group of pro-French Cherokee which relocated to northern Arkansas and southeastern Missouri after the French defeat by the British in 1763. The Spanish welcomed them and granted land. Towards the end of the American Revolution in 1782, they were joined a group of pro-British Cherokee. With the migration of the Chickamauga (1794-99), the Keetoowah became formidable and a threat to the Osage who originally claimed the territory. Cherokee and Osage warfare was fairly common in 1803, when the United States gained control of the area through the Louisiana Purchase. With continued migration,

the Western Cherokee steadily gained at the expense of the Osage, and by 1808 over 2,000 Cherokee were established in northern Arkansas.

The Turkey Town treaty (1817) was the first formal recognition of the Western Cherokee by the United States. Under its terms, 4,000 Cherokee ceded their lands in Tennessee in exchange for a reservation with the Western Cherokee in northwest Arkansas. With this new immigration during 1818-19, the number of Western Cherokee swelled to over 6,000. However, the Osage continued to object to the Cherokee presence, and the Americans were forced to build Fort Smith (1817) and Fort Gibson (1824) to maintain peace. White settlers of the Arkansas territory were soon demanding the removal of both the Cherokee and Osage. In 1828 the Western Cherokee agreed to exchange their Arkansas lands for a new location in Oklahoma. The boundaries were finally determined in 1833, although it took until 1835 to get the Osage to agree.

Meanwhile, the Cherokee homeland in the east was rapidly being whittled away by American settlement by a series of treaties forced on the Cherokee by the victorious Americans: Hopewell 1785; Holston 1791; Philadelphia 1794; Tellico 1798, 1804, 1805, and 1806. The final cession of ten million acres in 1806 by Doublehead (Chuquilatague) outraged many of the Cherokee and resulted in his assassination as a traitor by the faction led by Major Ridge (Kahnungdatlageh - "the man who walks the mountain top"). A new, mixed-blood leadership of Ridge and John Ross (Guwisguwi - blue eyes and 1/8 Cherokee) seized control determined not to yield any more of the Cherokee homeland while introducing major cultural changes. With a unity made possible by the migration of the more traditional Cherokee to Arkansas, in less than 30 years the Cherokee underwent the most remarkable adaptation to white culture of any Native American people. By 1817 the clan system of government had been replaced by an elected tribal council. A new capital was established at New Echota in 1825, and a written constitution modeled after that of the United States was added two years later.

Many Cherokee became prosperous farmers with comfortable houses, beautiful cultivated fields, and large herds of livestock. Christian missionaries arrived by invitation, and Sequoia invented an alphabet that gave them a written language and overnight made most of the Cherokee literate. They published a newspaper, established a court system, and built schools. An inventory of Cherokee property in 1826 revealed: 1,560 black slaves, 22,000 cattle, 7,600 horses, 46,000 swine, 2,500 sheep, 762 looms, 2,488 spinning wheels, 172 wagons, 2,942 plows, 10 sawmills, 31 grist mills, 62 blacksmith shops, 8 cotton machines, 18 schools, and 18 ferries. Although the poor Cherokee still lived in simple log cabins, Chief John Ross had a \$10,000 house designed by a Philadelphia architect. In fact, many Cherokee were more prosperous and "civilized" than their increasingly envious white neighbors.

Although the leadership of the eastern Cherokee steadfastly maintained their independence and land base, they felt it was important to reach an accommodation with the Americans. They refused Tecumseh's requests for Indian unity in 1811, ignored a call for war from the Red Stick Creek in 1813, and then fought as American allies during the Creek War (1813-14). Eight hundred Cherokee under Major Ridge were with Jackson's army at Horseshoe Bend in 1814, and according one account, a Cherokee warrior saved Jackson's life during the battle. If Jackson was grateful, he never allowed it to show. At the Fort Jackson Treaty ending the war (1814), Jackson demanded huge land cessions from both the Cherokee and Creek. As allies, the Cherokee must have been stunned at this treatment, and reluctantly agreed only after a series of four treaties signed during 1816 and 1817.

The Cherokee government afterwards became even more determined not to surrender any more land, but things were moving against them. In 1802 Cherokee land had been promised by the federal government to the state of Georgia which afterwards refused to recognize either the Cherokee Nation or its land claims. By 1822 Georgia was pressing Congress to end Cherokee title within its boundaries. \$30,000 was eventually appropriated as payment but refused. Then bribery was attempted but exposed, and the Cherokee responded with a law prescribing death for anyone selling land to whites without permission.



ATTAKULLAKULLA ("Little Carpenter") ca. 1700-1780

Attakullakulla became a powerful eighteenth-century Overhill Cherokee leader who, for over fifty years, played a critical and decisive role in shaping diplomatic, trade, and military relationships with the British Colonial governments of South Carolina and Virginia. He effectively led and acted as the primary spokesman for the Overhill Cherokees in the 1750s and 1760s, although apparently he never attained the official title of *Uku*, or foremost chief, within Cherokee society.

Attakullakulla was born around 1712 on what is known today as Sevier Island in the French Broad River of Tennessee. His father was a minor chief in the "Overhill Towns" of the Cherokee Nation. The infant's given name was Ookoonaka and he spent his earlier years in the Cherokee towns learning the ancient ways of his people. Popular stories attributed his name to his ability to construct amicable relationships with whites, but it more likely referred to his small stature and to his woodworking skills. He studied Cherokee government and trained as a warrior learning tactics and the arts of the bow, spear, knife, and blowgun. The skills came easily to him, and his presence of mind during battle was highly regarded among his tribe. In addition, he was taught a trade and, while still young, developed a great ability as a woodworker and house builder – a career that earned him a reputation as one of the best carpenters in the Cherokee Nation.

In 1730 Attakullakulla was one of seven Cherokees who accompanied Sir Alexander Cumming to England where he had an audience with King George. Throughout the summer, the Cherokee delegation toured and visited the country where they became instant celebrities in the European city. When they first met King George, it was at an installation ceremony of the Knights of the Garter at Windsor. It seems that part of Sir Cumming's show was to dress the Cherokee in the European stereotypes of native dress in the presence of the King. They were described as "being naked, except an apron about their middles and a horse's tail hung down behind. Their faces, shoulders, etc. were painted and spotted with red, blue, green. They had bows in their hands and painted feathers on their heads." "They were welcome," Attakullakulla remembered, "to look upon me as a strange creature. They see but one and in return they gave me an opportunity to look upon thousands." Attakullakulla quickly learned the English language and English ways and had learned and enjoyed much in London and in British culture. When the party left London, Attakullakulla cried at the thought of leaving. The visit to London had an incredible impact on Attakullakulla. The last person he saw was an old fisher woman on the dock. The young Cherokee soldier grasped her hand and repeated in his best English "I thank you, I thank you, I thank you all!"

From about 1743 to 1748 Attakullakulla resided as the captive of the Ottawas of eastern Canada, where he was afforded considerable freedom and became well regarded among the French. Because of his celebrity status in Europe and connection to the British Crown, he was treated with the utmost dignity by the French officials who took possession of him from the Ottawa. He returned to the Overhill country about 1750 and quickly became second in authority to Connecorte, or Old Hop, the *Uku* at Chota, who was probably his uncle. By this time, whites knew Attakullakulla as Little Carpenter.

In the 1750s Attakullakulla negotiated repeatedly with the Virginia and South Carolina Colonies as well as the French and British

traders in the Ohio Valley to increase the abundance and availability of trade goods to the Cherokees. He also argued for increased colonial military presence in the Overhill villages, which led to the construction of Fort Loudoun near the Overhill villages in 1756. In 1759 Chief Oconostota and twenty-eight of his followers were taken hostage by the British at Fort Prince George as the result of misunderstandings concerning a joint military action with the British against the French. Although Attakullakulla secured Oconostota's release, some of the hostages were killed; the Cherokees retaliated with the siege of Fort Loudoun. Attakullakulla worked to prevent an escalation of violence. Placing himself at great personal risk, he managed to save John Stuart from massacre that took away most of the Fort's garrison. Stuart was subsequently appointed the British Superintendent of Indian affairs south of the Ohio, becoming a close friend of Attakullakulla.

After the devastation of the British invasions of 1761 and 1762, Attakullakulla struggled to rebuild the Cherokee nation and reestablish the old political order, while dealing with white incursions on to Cherokee land and forestalling threats to his own political standing by younger, more militant, Cherokee men. When the British Royal Proclamation of 1763 failed to stem the flood of white settlers and land speculators that flowed on to Cherokee lands, Attakullakulla and the other elders resorted to the tactic of selling or renting, through treaty, land that white settlers and speculators had already occupied as well as signing over land that belonged to other tribes. The land-sales policy of older village headmen, such as Attakullakulla, may have represented an attempt to resolve the dilemma of keeping open trade contacts while preserving some kind of boundary line to separate themselves from the backcountry settlers. Incurring debts and selling, renting, or leasing land to metis traders (children of Cherokee mothers and European trader fathers) might have created a cultural buffer that could fend off colonial expansion. In 1775, for example, it was reported that Attakullakulla was at the white settlements of Watauga and Nolchuky "where he had been Collecting his rent" from the white settlers.

White settlement of Cherokee land pleased neither Attakullakulla's fellow headman Oconostota nor the younger warriors, especially Attakullakulla's own son, Dragging Canoe. In 1771 and 1774, Oconostota and the young soldiers summoned the British representative Alexander Cameron to the council house at Chota, where the young Cherokee warriors expressed their anger at settlers who occupied their lands without their consent. The situation reached a crisis with the infamous Sycamore Shoals Treaty in 1775 in which Richard Henderson and Nathaniel Hart meet with Attakullakulla and Oconostota, and Savanukah, in defiance of Royal Proclamation and Tribal law, to fraudulently pull off the largest land swindle in history. In return for a cabin full of trade goods, Henderson secured 27,000 square miles between the Kentucky and Tennessee Rivers - despite the elders' protestations that they had been deceived as to what they were signing. On the second day of the Conference with the British, Attakullakulla's son, Dragging Canoe, stormed from the conference and swore to make the ceded lands "a dark and bloody ground" for the white settlers.

The outbreak of the Revolution provided Dragging Canoe and the younger Cherokees an opportunity to challenge the actions and authority of the older village headman and gain the upper hand in the council house at Chota. Like Attakullakulla and Oconostota, the young men did not relish fighting Britain's war, but they felt hemmed in by the encroaching settlers. All of the Cherokees were confused by the spectacle of Englishmen killing other Englishmen. Attakullakulla, Oconostota, and the other chiefs remembered the devastation that the last war brought down upon the Cherokee nation.. The British agents in Cherokee country were equally reluctant to see the Cherokees go to war, at least until it became clear that Britain would call on her Indian allies to help suppress the rebellion.

What would be Attakullakulla's response be when Britain issued that call?

Attakullakulla's Decision

In April 1776, a deputation of fourteen Indians - Shawnees, Delaware, Mohawks, Nanticokes, and Ottawas - made a dramatic entrance into Chota painted black, carrying a Shawnee war belt that signified an invitation by the allied First Nations of the North for the Cherokee to join the British against the rebellious colonists. "After this day," wrote Oconostota's friend Stuart, "every young Fellow's face in the Overhill Town appeared Blackened and nothing was now talked of but War." The young men's chanting of the northern warrior's war song in the Chota Council House and Dragging Canoe's acceptance of the War Belt from the Shawnee constituted a vote of "no confidence" in the "Beloved Old Men of Chota" - Oconostota, Attakullakulla, and The Raven. The three then "sat down dejected and silent." They did not openly oppose the war, but their silence spoke nevertheless. By their silence, they recognized their loss of authority. The Cherokee militants came rapidly to power but only amidst division and doubt that had split the Cherokee nation.

Attakullakulla remained an active leader and negotiator for the Cherokees into the 1770s. While admiring the British since his journey with Oconostota to England in the early part of the century, Attakullakulla tried to cleave to the neutralist path. When American Revolutionary forces under the command of William Christian occupied the Overhill villages in 1776, Attakullakulla arranged for their withdrawal and played a leading role in the 1777 peace negotiated at Long Island on the Holston. His influence diminished as Dragging Canoe, his son, and other young leaders continued the Cherokee's resistance to the Americans.

Cut off from British support and supplies and reeling from the American retaliation, Oconostota had no choice but to make peace overtures to the Americans. After a meeting at Long Island on the Holston with Colonel Nathaniel Gist, who had a Cherokee wife, Oconostota, Attakullakulla, and a delegation of thirty Cherokee traveled to Williamsburg to talk peace, one of Attakullakulla's last diplomatic missions. Sometime between 1780 and 1785, Attakullakulla died.

Throughout his life Attakullakulla had served his village of Chota and the Cherokee people and, for that, he earned an international reputation. His rescue of John Stuart was a story literally told around the world. His life would influence Europe and America for years after his death and lead the British government to officially state that Attakullakulla was "the most 'noble native' on America's southern colonial frontier". Although Attakullakulla would be later eclipsed by Chief Oconostota in the numerous histories written about the Cherokee, he became a mythical figure among the Cherokee people. No one fought harder than Attakullakulla to see that families were justly compensated for the loss of their sons killed by colonists or while serving for the British. His son Dragging Canoe would continue his father's ways and support the British, which led to numerous attacks on him by then Col. John Xavier (AKA Sevier). Sevier's French name alone was enough ammunition for Dragging Canoe to rally support to his cause among warriors.

Although Attakullakulla's pro-British sympathies would later lead Cherokee elders to think of him as a British yes-man, the Chief was notorious for angering British colonial governors with his diplomatic methods that often proved successful. There was never a dull moment in his life, and no other Native American was so often written in to the early southern colonial records. According to the personal writings of many British colonial writers, it almost seemed like a game with the British to figure out what Attakullakulla would do next.



Tsi'yu-gunsini Dragging Canoe (Cherokee) 1740-1792

Dragging Canoe (Tsi'yu-gunsini), Cherokee soldier and leader of the Chickamaugas faction of the Cherokee Nation, was born in one of the Overhill towns on the Tennessee River, the son of the Cherokee diplomat Attakullakulla. He also was the cousin of Nancy Ward. Historians have identified Dragging Canoe as the greatest Cherokee military leader. Even at an early age, Dragging Canoe wanted to be a warrior. He once asked his father to include him in a war party against the Shawnees, but Attakullakulla refused. Determined to go, the boy hid in a canoe, where the warriors found him. His father gave the boy permission to go but only if he could carry the canoe. The vessel was too heavy, but undaunted, the boy dragged the canoe. Cherokee warriors encouraged his efforts, and from that time, he was known as Dragging Canoe.

Dragging Canoe's face was permanently scarred by smallpox, a disease brought by white settlers and against which Cherokee had no immunities. The onslaught of the disease beginning in 1738 resulted in the death of over half of the Cherokee people. Imagine the impact on a nation of people who "went to water" each morning in the cold rivers as a ritual cleansing when with a fever on them they took cold baths to rid them of illness when in fact the cold water only made their sickness worse. It is said that the Cherokee men who saw the death of so many threw away many of their special emblems of protection by the spirits, and some, after surviving the dread disease but finding themselves permanently scarred and pockmarked, killed themselves. Dragging Canoe survived but he bore the marks of the dread disease until his death in 1792.

Though pockmarked by smallpox, Dragging Canoe grew into tall man, stately in appearance, and became the primary leading force in the Cherokee's resistance to white settlement on Cherokee lands. As the head warrior of the Overhill town of Malaquo, Dragging Canoe fought a number of significant battles against white settlers. By the 1770s the increasing encroachment by settlers on Cherokee land concerned Dragging Canoe, and he worked to achieve their removal. He resisted the sale of Cherokee lands to whites and spoke at treaty negotiations, vehemently objecting to the continued sale and leasing of Cherokee land. At the conclusion of the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals of 1775, Dragging Canoe spoke against the sale of Cherokee land by his father Attakullakulla, Oconostota, and the Raven, who later claimed that they were defrauded into thinking that they were leasing, rather than selling the land. Dragging canoe rose and said,

"Whole Indian nations have melted away like snowballs in the sun before the white man's advance. They leave scarcely a name of our people except those wrongly recorded by their destroyers. Where are the Delawares? They have been reduced to a mere shadow of their former greatness. We had hoped that the white men would not be willing to travel beyond the mountains. Now that hope is gone. They have passed the mountains, and have settled upon Cherokee land. They wish to have that action sanctioned by treaty. When that is gained, the same encroaching spirit will lead them upon other land of the Cherokees. New cessions will be asked. Finally the whole country, which the Cherokees and their fathers have so long occupied, will be demanded, and the remnant of Ani-Yunwiya, THE REAL PEOPLE, once so great and formidable, will be

compelled to seek refuge in some distant wilderness. There they will be permitted to stay only a short while, until they again behold the advancing banners of the same greedy host. Not being able to point out any further retreat for the miserable Cherokees, the extinction of the whole race will be proclaimed. Should we not therefore run all risks, and incur all consequences, rather than submit to further loss of our country? Such treaties may be alright for men who are too old to hunt or fight. As for me, I have my young warriors about me. We will have our lands. A-WANINSKI, I have spoken."

Dragging Canoe's powerful speech had such a strong influence on the chiefs that they closed the treaty council without more talk. Yet, the white men prepared another huge feast with rum and were able to persuade the Cherokee Chiefs to sit in another treaty council for further discussion of land sale. The land being sought was the primary hunting lands of the Cherokee. Attakullakulla, Dragging Canoe's father, spoke in favor of selling the land, as did Raven, who was jealous of Dragging Canoe's growing power among the young warriors. The deed was signed. Richard Henderson, being very bold, now that his plan was succeeding and they had bought such a huge portion of land, sought to secure a safe path to the new lands. Saying "he did not want to walk over the land of my brothers", he asked to "buy a road" through Cherokee lands. This last insult was more than Dragging Canoe could tolerate. He became very angry and rising from his seat and stomping the ground he spoke saying "We have given you this, why do you ask for more? You have bought a fair land. When you have this you have all. There is no more game left between the Watauga and the Cumberland. There is a cloud hanging over it. You will find its settlement DARK and BLOODY."

For a year, Dragging Canoe wrestled with his growing feelings of rage and frustration - rage at the escalating intrusions of white settlers on to Cherokee lands and frustration with the accommodating behavior of his father and his fellow Cherokee elders. In April 1776, a deputation of fourteen Indians - Shawnees, Delaware, Mohawks, Nanticokes, and Ottawas - made a dramatic entrance into Dragging Canoe and Attakullakulla's hometown of Chota painted black, carrying a Shawnee war belt that signified an invitation by the allied Northern Nations to the Cherokee to join the British against the rebellious colonists. "After this day," wrote Oconostota's friend Stuart, "every young Fellow's face in the Overhill Town appeared Blackened and nothing was now talked of but War."

"The arrival of the northern delegation at Chota sparked a Cherokee revolution. It galvanized the young soldiers who wanted to go to war against the white intruders, and, at the same time to mount a dramatic challenge, to the leadership of their father's - Attakullakulla's - generation. "Traditionally, young men were expected to be aggressive in certain circumstances and old men [and women] to be rational; Cherokee society accommodated and harmonized the resulting tension. However, in the Revolution, the tensions became incompatible. The older chiefs who had sold lands to Henderson and built networks of accommodation with colonial traders and were hesitant to act now that their white counterparts were divided among themselves."

Even before the Shawnee delegate rose to deliver his oration to persuade the Cherokee to join the Northern Nations in an alliance with Britain against the rebellious colonists, **Dragging Canoe knew which side in the conflict he would choose.**

Quotes from Calloway, Colin G., *the American Revolution in Indian Country; Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, UK., 1995), pp. 196-197.

Dragging Canoe's Decision

Even before the Shawnee delegate rose to deliver his oration to persuade the Cherokee to join the Northern Nations in an alliance with Britain against the rebellious colonists, Dragging Canoe knew which side in the conflict he would choose. The Shawnee speaker unrolled a huge belt of wampum. Roughly nine feet by six inches, the darkly beaded piece had been "strewed over with vermillion red trade paint." No Indian observer - indeed in the eighteenth century, few white observers - would have mistaken the significance of this war belt, this symbolic "hatchet." The call to arms was not lost on the Cherokees: they had seen it many times in recent years. The Shawnee supported his call with a series of arguments, specifically aimed at convincing the Cherokee that, though the two peoples were once bitter enemies, it was now time to unite to defeat a common enemy. This was the theme of eighteenth-century pan-Indian resistance: Indian shared a history of trouble with Anglo-Americans; they should thus share in the struggle against them.

When the Shawnee finished speaking, Dragging Canoe accepted the northern war belt, symbolically accepting the idea of a Cherokee alliance with the northerners. Dragging Canoe's decision surprised no one. For over a year, Richard Henderson's private and illegal "purchase" of extensive Cherokee lands at Sycamore Shoals in May 1775 had rankled Dragging Canoe and fellow-minded militants, even though Dragging Canoe's father was deeply involved in the transaction. His challenge to the Henderson Purchase meant a challenge to the authority of the important Cherokee signers of the deal, including his own father, Attakullakulla, and two great warriors, Oconostota and The Raven. His decision and those of his allies split the Cherokee nation.

Dragging Canoe thought the opening of the Revolutionary War provided the perfect opportunity to strike the isolated white settlements. In the summer of 1776, he led attacks against white settlers, but didn't get much help, especially not from the Cherokee Warrior Nancy Ward, *Ghi-ga-u*, or Beloved Woman of Chota. Having learned of a large scale plan to attack the Americans with the help of British troops, she informed traders William Falling and Isaac Thomas and provided them with the means of setting out on a hundred and twenty mile trip to warn the settlers on the Holston and Watauga. Consequently Dragging Canoe's attack on these settlements was repulsed.

Things were not going well for the Cherokee resistance. Dragging Canoe was shot through both legs in one raid. The old chiefs desired peace but Dragging Canoe thought it would be far better to abandon the old towns, move south, and continue fighting. Dragging Canoe and his militants suffered from a lack of British aid, particular powder and shot, so there was no way to beat the settlers with their rifles in open warfare. Therefore, during the winter of 1776-77, Dragging Canoe and his followers built new settlements in the Chickamauga Creek area of north Georgia. The discontented from many tribes and even some renegade whites took refuge with him there. They became band of Cherokees and renegade whites became known as Chickamaugans. They called themselves *Anit-Yunwiyi*, or "the Real People." From their new settlements, the Chickamaugans could communicate quickly with militants among the Upper Creeks to the immediate south and with their British allies further below in Mobile and Pensacola. These connections permitted the persistence of Chickamauga militancy and overcame the problem of isolation from British supplies.

Rather than surrender with the older chiefs, the Chickamaugans waged war against the settlers for the next 17 years. Dragging Canoe's band of militant warriors - under the leadership of lieutenants, Benge, John Watts, Glass, Turtle at Home, Richard Justice, Doublehead, Black Fox, the half-breed Ooskiah - held out against the invaders and conducted guerrilla raids, from camps near present-day Chattanooga Tennessee and Mussel Shoals, Alabama. These towns were termed the "five lower towns" and were named Running

Water, Nickajack, Long Island, Crow town and Lookout Mountain Town. They were comprised the western frontier of the Cherokee with the first three towns being located along the Tennessee River in present day Tennessee, the latter two were located in corners of present day Georgia (Lookout Mountain Town) and Alabama (Crow town).

Doublehead - Dragging Canoe's steadfast ally - was the last Cherokee chief to exercise control over the upper Cumberland Plateau. He was born near the present town of Somerset, Kentucky, and had two known children by his wife of French-Indian mixed-blood. Chief Doublehead was named for his dual personality. Although he rose to prominence as an ambassador representing the Cherokee nation to President George Washington, the Chief also was a warrior. He killed and terrorized settlers, wreaking vengeance upon those unlucky enough to be within his reach. He did to whites what they had done to his people. According to some accounts, he was as viscerously indiscriminate as Sevier, Hamilton, and white Indian fighters. For almost twenty years, Chickamaugas such as Doublehead, and Shawnee like Blackfish, did everything they could to convince white people that Kentucky and Tennessee were neither for sale nor settlement.

In the spring of 1788, the brutal murder of eleven members of the Kirk family brought Indian fighters like Sevier and Hubbard to retaliate. In response to queries, Four Cherokee chiefs had gathered under a flag of truce raised by the vigilantes, purportedly to talk about the attack and gather information. They were summarily locked in a guarded room and tomahawked in cold blood by the eldest Kirk son, John Kirk Jr., in vengeance for the recent murder of his family. None of the Indians present had anything to do with the attack on the Kirk clan. Among them were two well respected peace chiefs, Old Tassel and Abram. The Chiefs simply bowed their head and received the blows.

Through all of this, Dragging Canoe, Doublehead, and the Chickamauga fought on but were forced to retreat slowly northward, until by 1790, they had joined forces with the Shawnee in Ohio against President Washington's field commanders, General Harmer and St. Clair. After the initial Indian victories of Little Turtle's War (1790-94), most of the Ohio Chickamauga returned south and settled near the Tennessee River in northern Alabama. From here, they had the unofficial encouragement and a supply of weaponry provided by Spanish government agents in Florida and Louisiana. Feeling like their efforts were bearing fruit, they continued to attack nearby American settlements. Some of their victims were fortunate enough to be given a chance to make a decision. In January of 1791, Chickamauga Chief Glass captured 16 men building a blockhouse at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, and released them with a warning not to return.

As he aged, Dragging Canoe moved from the position of warrior to that of diplomat. He worked to preserve Cherokee culture and establish an alliance with the Creeks and Shawnees. Dragging Canoe's focus in the early 1780's was to build alliances with anyone who would support his desire to drive the white settlers from the Cherokee hunting grounds on the Cumberland River, where he had warned the settlers would find the settlement to be "dark and bloody." The Chickasaws, Creeks, several northern tribes joined the Chickamauga and the Spanish, French, and English encouraged him at every opportunity against the settlers. But for some seemingly fortunate circumstances this alliance would have succeeded.

In 1791 a federation of Indian forces defeated General Arthur St. Clair, governor of the Northwest Territory. Shortly after a diplomatic mission to the Chickasaws, Dragging Canoe died on March 1, 1792, in the town of Running Water, one of the towns he had helped to found. Doublehead and his warriors, however, were still very active. Mutual hostilities continued, and a new round of violence exploded in central Tennessee and northern Alabama. Finally in 1794, the Chickamauga towns were destroyed and the resistance alliance broken for good. The white settlers with their overwhelming strength and superior fire power had beaten the resistance movement. Nevertheless, Cherokee militants would later join the Creek Red Stick resistance movement in the first decade of the nineteenth century, only to be defeated by a combined forces of Americans and Cherokees led by Andrew Jackson.

NANCY WARD (Nanye-hi)

Cherokee

(1738 - 1822)



The Cherokee Beloved Woman; War Woman; Prophetess; Granny Ward, ... these are a few of the names and titles given to Nancy Ward, the most powerful and influential woman in the Cherokee Nation during recorded history. She ruled over the powerful Council of Women and had a voting seat in the Council of Chiefs. During her lifetime the Cherokee moved from a matriarchal, clan-type of government to that of a republic.

Nancy War was born in 1738 at Chota and given the name *Nanye-hi* which signified "One who goes about," a name taken from *Nunne-hi*, the legendary name of the Spirit People of Cherokee mythology. Her birth came near the outbreak of a smallpox epidemic that resulted in the deaths of approximately one-half of the Cherokees. The identity of her father is not known, but the Cherokees practiced a matrilineal tradition, and Nanye-hi's mother was Tame Doe, of the Wolf Clan, a sister of Attakullakulla, civil chief of the Cherokee nation. In her adult years, observers described Nanye-hi as queenly and commanding in appearance and manner and as a winsome and resourceful woman. By age 17, she had two children, Five Killer and Catherine. Her husband was killed in a raid on the Creeks during the 1755 Battle of Taliwa, where she fought by her husband's side, chewing the lead bullets for his rifle to make them more deadly. When he fell in battle, she sprang up from behind a log and rallied the Cherokee warriors to fight harder. Taking up a rifle, she led a charge that unnerved the Creeks and brought victory to the Cherokees.

Because of her valor, the clans chose her as Ghighau, "Beloved Woman" of the Cherokees. In this powerful position, her words carried great weight in the tribal government because the Cherokees believed that the Great Spirit frequently spoke through the Beloved Woman. As Beloved Woman, Nanye-hi headed the Women's Council and sat on the Council of Chiefs. She had complete power over prisoners. Sometimes in her role as *Agi-ga-u-e* or "War Woman," she prepared the warriors' Black Drink, a sacred ritual preparatory to war.

Bryant Ward, an English trader who had fought in the French and Indian War, took up residence with the Cherokees and married Nancy in the late 1750s. Ward already had a wife, but since Cherokees did not consider marriage a lifelong institution, the arrangement apparently presented few problems. Ward and her English husband lived in Chota for a time and became the parents of a daughter, Elizabeth (Betsy). Eventually Bryant Ward moved back to South Carolina, where he lived the remainder of his life with his white wife and family. Nancy Ward and Betsy visited his home on many occasions, where they were welcomed and treated with respect.

Though a respected soldier herself, Nancy Ward, like most Cherokee women, were fearful of the effects of war upon their children and their gardens, which were among their primary responsibilities. They had seen their people suffer from, not only intertribal warfare, but also the devastation that British military brought to their nation in 1761 and 1762. They also resented and resisted the efforts of young soldier/hunters to diminish the power of women in the Cherokee Town councils.

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Nancy Ward felt the heavy weight of this unresolved tension when she entered the Chota Town Council Hall. She took her place of authority and honor and slowly surveyed the blackened faces of the young militants. So many had chosen their path, the path to war. The Shawnee delegate rose and put forth his arguments in favor of the Cherokees' allying themselves with Britain against the rebellious colonists. First, he reminded the Council of the aggression and intrusions of "the Virginians." Second, he sadly recounted how they, like the Shawnees, had declined "from being a great nation, were [now] reduced to a handful" as result of European aggression. Third, he asserted that among the Virginians "it was plain there was an intention to rub them out, and he thought that it better to die like men than dwindle away by inches." Nancy listened to the arguments. She eyed her cousin Dragging Canoe, the young militant, who was riveted to the Shawnee's speech. Much of what the Shawnee orator spoke ran true ... but what would be the consequences of following this path? **Now, Nancy had to choose. Which path would she take?**



Granny Ward

Nancy Ward's (Nan'yehi's) Decision

When militant Cherokees, led by Dragging Canoe, prepared to attack illegal white communities on the Watauga River, Ward disapproved of intentionally taking civilian lives. Having learned of a large scale plan to attack the Americans with the help of British troops, she informed traders William Falling and Isaac Thomas and provided them with the means of setting out on a hundred and twenty mile trip to warn the settlers on the Holston and Watauga. On at least two other occasions during the Revolutionary War period she sent warnings to John Sevier at the Watauga settlements of planned Indian attacks, thus giving them time to prepare a defense and counteroffensive. As a consequence the attack was repulsed.

Nancy Ward was loved and respected by the settlers as well as the Cherokees, even though she had to walk a very thin line between the militants and the neutralists among her people and was often regarded as a sellout by Cherokee militants. As Beloved Woman, warrior, and clan mother, Ward had absolute power over prisoners and on numerous occasions saved the lives of white people. One of the settlers captured by the Cherokee warriors was a woman named Mrs. Bean. The captive was sentenced to execution and was actually being tied to a stake when Ward exercised her condemned captives. Taking the injured Mrs. Bean into her own home to nurse her back to health, Ward learned two skills from her which would have far-reaching consequences for her people. Mrs. Bean, like most "settler women," wove

her own cloth. At this time, the Cherokee were wearing a combination of traditional hide (animal skin) clothing and loomed cloth purchased from traders. Cherokee people had rough-woven hemp clothing, but it was not as comfortable as clothing made from linen, cotton, or wool. Mrs. Bean taught Ward how to set up a loom, spin thread or yarn, and weave cloth. This skill would make the Cherokee people less dependent on traders, but it also Europeanized the Cherokee in terms of gender roles. Women came to be expected to do the weaving and house chores; as men became farmers in the changing society, women became "housewives." Throughout her life, Nancy Ward and many other Cherokee women of her generation never accepted the passive or subservient roles that European American women were expected to assume by their societies.

Another aspect of Cherokee life that changed when Ward saved the life of Mrs. Bean was that of raising animals. The Cherokee had long raised horses and pigs. Cattle were rare among them. Mrs. Bean owned dairy cattle, which she took to Ward's house. Ward learned to prepare and use dairy foods, which provided some nourishment even when hunting was bad. However, because of Ward's introduction of dairy farming to the Cherokee, they would begin to amass large herds and farms, which required even more manual labor. This would soon lead the Cherokee into using slave labor. In fact, Ward herself had been "awarded" the black slave of a felled Creek warrior after her victory at the Battle of Taliwa and thus became the first Cherokee slave owner.

From these accommodations to European-based ways of life, one might get the idea that Nancy Ward was selling out the Cherokee people. But her political efforts proved the contrary. She did not seek war, but neither did she counsel peace when she felt compromise would hurt her nation. In 1781 Ward entered into peace talks with Tennessee politician and soldier John Sevier at the Little Pigeon River in present-day Tennessee, she had called for peace but warned Sevier to take the treaty back to "his women" for them to ratify. It did not occur to the Cherokee that women did not decide matters of war and peace in the white man's world as they did in many southeastern Indian Nations.

Ward was also a negotiator for the Cherokee at the 1785 signing of the Treaty of Hopewell, the first treaty the Cherokee made with the "new" United States.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, it was already becoming apparent to the Cherokee that the Americans intended to get as much Cherokee land as possible and that the day might come when the Natives would be forced off their homelands. Ward, by now called "Nancy" by the many non-Indians she had befriended, feared that each time the Cherokee voluntarily handed over land, they were encouraging the settlers' appetite for it. She feared that someday their hunger for land would destroy her people. In 1808, the Women's Council, with Ward at its head, made a statement to the Cherokee people urging them to sell no more land. Again, in 1817, when Ward took her seat in council, her desperation was ill concealed. She told the younger people to refuse any more requests for land or to take up arms against the "Americans" if necessary.

When she became too aged to make the effort to attend further General Council meetings, Ward sent her walking stick in her place thereafter. Some contemporary sources say she "resigned" her position as Beloved Woman with this action, but the mere absence from council did not indicate the end of her term. Ward was well aware that Cherokee "removal" west of the Mississippi River was almost a foregone conclusion. Rather than face the sorrow of leaving her homeland, she decided to find a way to blend in to the white world.

Nan'yehi had become Nancy Ward when she married the Irish (or Scots-Irish) trader Bryant Ward. By now, her three children were grown, so she was accorded the indulgence of "modern conveniences" because of her advanced age and the great integrity with which she had long discharged her duty to her people. Therefore, when she and Ward took to the inn keeping trade, there was no disrespect voiced toward the Beloved Woman. Their inn was situated near the Mother Town of Chota, on Womankiller Ford of the Ocoee River, in eastern Tennessee.

Ward returned to Chota, her birthplace, in 1824. She was cared for by her son, Fivekiller, who reported seeing a white light leave her body as she died. The light was said to have entered the most sacred mound in the Mother Town. Ward was spared the sight of her people's exile to Indian Territory in 1838, but because her spirit was present at Chota, they knew she had preserved that connection to their eastern home. She is buried on a hill nearby. In 1923 a monument was placed on her grave by a Chattanooga Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Irony by any other name ...

The last woman to be given the title of Beloved Woman until the late 1980s, Ward remains a powerful symbol for Cherokee women. She is often referred to by feminist scholars as an inspiration and is revered by the Cherokee people of Oklahoma as well as the Eastern Band Cherokees of North Carolina.

Oconostota (Cherokee)

1715 - 1783



Oconostota was born in the Overhill towns of the Cherokee in the Little Tennessee Valley sometime around 1715. He was the son of Moytoy, the great Chickmaugan "Emperor" or Supreme Chief of the Cherokee, who ruled from 1730 to 1760. While much isn't known about his early life, Oconostota spent his youth as most Cherokee boys training to be a warrior and hunter. In this pursuit, Oconostota found his calling and, in the days of warrior-chiefs, would prove to be not only an able fighter, but a leader who would come to be remembered as one of the greatest in Cherokee history. He was a clever tactician and strategist and knew what it took to win on the battlefield. Whether it was fighting other tribes or European traders, he understood their weaknesses and strengths and knew how to stage a battle to win. His quick mind and wise decisions soon earned him recognition in the tribe as one of its greatest warriors. While he did not have the diplomatic and oratory skills of his colleague Attakullakulla, the warrior did have the natural skills of battlefield leadership and that was the catalyst that caused him to rise to prominence in the Cherokee Nation.

In 1730, Oconostota accompanied Attakullakulla to London where he talked and dined with King George. By 1750 a "red" or "wae" chief, Oconostota, became influential within the town councils of the Cherokee nation. It was during this time that another smallpox epidemic spread devastation in the Cherokee country and Oconostota charged that the disease had been brought by the English with

their trade goods. When his own face became pockmarked by the disease, Oconostota became increasingly hostile to the English and sought to align the tribe with the French, who were seriously interested in wooing the Cherokee away from the British. Unlike his colleague and rival Attakullakulla, Oconostota did not consider himself a British subject and often tried to maintain a working relationship with the French as a way of keeping his eye on the Creeks – a pro-French tribe that had made themselves enemies of the Cherokee, who were often seen as pro-British by other Native Americans. In fact, Oconostota first shows up in European records when he visited the French at Fort Toulouse.

All was not well with the Cherokee Nation, however, the French either couldn't or wouldn't maintain trade with the tribe and soon war erupted with the Creeks, which forced the Cherokee to turn to the British for help. During that time, the Lower Towns of the Cherokee Nation had to be evacuated and that gave Governor Glen of South Carolina the opportunity to recognize the supremacy of Chota and the Overhills towns as being the capitol territory of the Cherokee. In 1753, Oconostota had become a much respected man in South Carolina's colonial government and, at the request of Governor Glen, aided also by the Chickasaw, led 400 warriors against the pro-French Choctaws, who had raided and killed white settlers and traders in the region. Within a year, the Cherokee warrior was being called by the British governor as the "sole preserver...of every white man's life in the nation." It didn't last long as once again Oconostota sided with Attakullakulla and the other chiefs in wanting to break the trade monopoly held by the British with the tribe.

The matter was settled without a new trade agreement with Virginia, however, and new deals were struck with South Carolina in 1755 because the French and Indian War was in full swing and was not going to well for the British. The defeat of British General Braddock by the French and pro-French tribes had scared the Crown into seeking Oconostota's help in securing warriors for the front lines in the war. In exchange

for the warriors' service, Governor Glen would have Fort Loudoun built in the tribe's territory in order to protect Cherokee women and children from their enemies while the men were off in the north fighting the French.

Despite Oconostota's successful efforts to recruit Cherokee soldiers for the British and the Virginians, the alliance fell apart when Virginians killed thirteen Cherokee soldiers, returning from the war, who had stolen their horses, causing a number of undisciplined young men to retaliate by killing a number of Virginians. The Great Warrior of Chota found himself accused of trying to start a war with the British and they cut off ammunition to the tribe. When Oconostota and a delegation went to petition the colonial governor in Charleston, they were imprisoned. Attakullakulla secured his release, but the other Cherokee hostages were killed when Oconostota botched a raid to release them. By this time, a burning hatred was raging in Oconostota and he did what he had to do to be free of the British. Although the French were on their last leg in America, they managed to come up with enough ammunition and supplies to help launch the Cherokee into war with the British. After a botched hostage crisis, the Cherokee put Fort Loudoun under siege and killed almost all of the garrison. When Attakullakulla tried to warn them of a night attack, Oconostota threw him off of the council and exiled the Cherokee leader and his family to the woods.

As soon news of the Fort Loudoun massacre reached Charleston, the British and the colonists were enraged. The killing of white settlers in the back country, however, continued and caused problems for hopes of peace. A force of Virginians had been recruited and were heading towards Cherokee country. Oconostota worked out a truce and bought himself some time to make arrangements with the French. He ended up traveling to New Orleans where he was given a commission as a captain of the French Army, but otherwise returned empty-handed and had to face making peace with the British. He led an attack on British Col. James Grant, who had been dispatched to regain British honor by defeating the Cherokee, but Oconostota couldn't match his previous victories. Grant and his soldiers torched more than fifteen Cherokee towns and reduced the Cherokees to starvation.

When peace finally offered by the British, Oconostota accepted it. In his time as a warrior, however, he had restored the Cherokee as a great warrior nation among Native Americans and his voice became the voice of his people, stripping Standing Turkey and Attakullakulla of their authority, at least in British eyes. By the time of the Revolution, Oconostota was a great chief in his tribe, and according to Cherokee agent, Alexander Cameron, the formidable warrior commanded "not only a vast sway with his own people, but with other tribes." In late 1773, Oconostota was inducted into the St. Andrew's Society – an elite fraternal organization of Scots in Charleston where Capt. John Stuart was President at the time. Oconostota lobbied to get the British to help him make peace with the western tribes, but the Revolution placed him in an impossible position. As the revolutionary crisis escalated, Oconostota struggled to avoid open warfare with the Americans. Younger chiefs of the tribe, however, were angered at continued pressure on their lands - particularly the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals. They urged warfare, and the American Revolution gave them an opportunity.

In April 1776, a diplomatic party of fourteen Indians - Shawnees, Delaware, Mohawks, Nanticokes, and Ottawas - made a dramatic entrance into Chota painted black, carrying a Shawnee war belt that signified an invitation by the allied First Nations of the North for the Cherokee to join the British against the rebellious colonists. "After this day," wrote Oconostota's friend Stuart, "every young Fellow's face in the Overhill Town appeared Blackened and nothing was now talked of but War." **How would Oconostota respond to this invitation? Which side would he choose?**

Oconostota's Decision

1776 - 1782

In April 1776, a deputation of fourteen Indians - Shawnees, Delaware, Mohawks, Nanticokes, and Ottawas - made a dramatic entrance into Chota painted black, carrying a Shawnee war belt that signified an invitation by the allied First Nations of the Northwest for the Cherokee to join the British against the rebellious colonists. "After this day," wrote Oconostota's friend Stuart, "every young Fellow's face in the Overhill Town appeared Blackened and nothing was now talked of but War." The young men's chanting of the northern warrior's war song in the Chota Council House and Dragging Canoe's acceptance of the War Belt from the Shawnee constituted a vote of "no confidence" in the "Beloved Old Men of Chota" - Oconostota, Attakullakulla, and The Raven. The three then "sat down dejected and silent." They did not openly oppose the war, but their silence spoke nevertheless. By their silence, they recognized their loss of authority. The Cherokee militants came rapidly to power but only amidst division and doubt.

The war council at Chota forged a critical link in the emerging Indian alliance across the Eastern Woodlands, as Shawnees and the young Cherokees committed themselves to a united front against the American expansion, a united front that divided the Cherokee into two camps: one militant and insurgent led by Dragging Canoe, the other neutralist and under the leadership of Oconostota, Attakullakulla, and The Raven.

The first blow to the Cherokee war effort came when the Creeks refused to join them. Nevertheless, the militants swept down on the settlements of the white trespassers. Many southern colonists seem to have been waiting for just such an opportunity. Charles Lee, the Continental commander in the south, welcomed the war: now, the Americans could make an example of the Cherokee, defeat them, and seize their lands. Thomas Jefferson declared, "I hope the Cherokees will now be driven beyond the Mississippi." Seizures of Cherokee territory, illegal before the war, now became a patriotic act.

Retaliatory raids from Georgia, Virginia, North and South Carolina stormed through Cherokee county in the summer and fall of 1776. In the course of a few months, the Americans defeated the Cherokee and destroyed their towns and cornfields. Chota was spared by Colonel William Christian of the Virginia Army, according to tradition, "out of respect" to Nancy Ward, the *ghighau*, or War Woman of the Cherokees. But this interpretation does not accord with the fact that the Virginian general was aware that, in the words of Cherokee chronicler Turtle-at-Home, "the greater part of the Nation ... had been inclined to remain neutral." As the Virginian army approached Chota, the Raven sent a flag of truce, and Attakullakulla and Oconostota sued for peace. Christian demanded that Oconostota hand over Dragging Canoe and the British agent Alexander Cameron, but the peace faction could not compel their surrender. The massive retaliation visited on the Cherokees allowed the accommodationist chiefs to reassert a measure of authority among the majority of the Overhill people, while Dragging Canoe and younger warriors - in what came to be known as the Chickamauga Secession - moved farther south and west to the Chickamauga country to continue the war.

Cut off from British support and supplies and reeling from the American retaliation, Oconostota had no choice but to make peace overtures to the Americans. After a meeting at Long Island on the Holston with Colonel Nathaniel Gist, who had a Cherokee wife, Oconostota, Attakullakulla, and a delegation of thirty Cherokee traveled to Williamsburg to talk peace, one of Attakullakulla's last diplomatic acts. In May 1777, the Lower Cherokees came to terms with George and South Carolina at DeWitt's Corner, surrendering all remaining land in South Carolina except a narrow strip in the western border. Two months later, the Overhill Cherokees met to make peace

with Virginia and North Carolina at Long Island and ceded all lands east of Blue Ridge as well as a corridor through the Cumberland Gap. Together the two treaties stripped the Cherokees of more than five million acres.

These cessions of land did not bring peace to the Cherokees. As Cornwallis swept north in 1780, British agents intensified their efforts to get Cherokee warriors to act in concert with British troops. By December, the Virginians were convinced that the British had been successful. Thomas Jefferson dispatched John Sevier and Arthur Campbell at the head an army to Chota in December 1780 and used it as a base to destroy all of the neighborhood Cherokee towns, then burned Chota itself. The Virginians destroyed seventeen towns, a thousand houses, fifty thousand bushels of corn, and most of the Cherokee archives, including Oconostota's personal papers. The army continued burning and looting Cherokee country during the following year. By the spring of 1782, most of the Cherokee were starving. In 1782, the Virginia commander, William Christian described their plight:

"The miseries of those people [the Cherokee] from what I see and hear seem to exceed description; here are men women and children almost naked; I see very little to cover either sex but some old bear skins, and we are told that the bulk of the nation are in the same naked situation. But this is not the greatest of their evils; their crops this year have been worse than ever was known, so that their corn and potatoes, it is supposed will be all done before April; and many are already out, particularly widows and fatherless children, who have no men nearly connected with them."

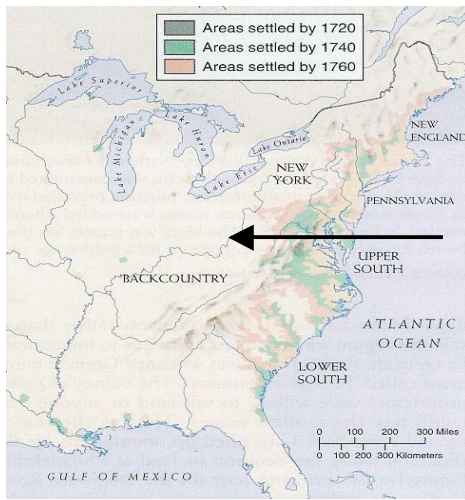
[William Christian to ..., Dec. 1782. Draper MS 11S10.]

The collapse of the Anglo-Indian war effort in 1781 unleashed a settler's invasion of the upper Tennessee country. The Cherokees appealed to Governor Alexander Martin of North Carolina, who in turn ordered Sevier to warn off the intruders, but the squatter invasion continued unabated through out 1782. Chota was rebuilt but it never achieved the stature that it once had.

In July 1782, now almost blind and suffering from tuberculosis, Oconostota with the consent of the Cherokee Nation resigned his 44-year-old authority as Great Warrior to his son Tuckese. The Cherokee, however, did not accept the new Great Warrior, who they saw as a man of little ability. Old and ill, Oconostota spent the winter of 1782-83 on Long Island of the Holston at the home of Joseph Martin, Virginia's Indian agent. Martin was married to a daughter of Nancy Ward, who also spent that winter in the Martin home on the Long Island of the Holston River. The two men were very close and, as death began creeping towards the old chief, he requested that Martin accompany him back to his beloved Chota. He and the Indian Agent traveled by canoe to the then-dying city. Oconostota told Martin he wished to be buried in the manner of the whites. The chief had been impressed with coffins he had seen whites buried in and, when finally laid to rest, he wanted to his head to face towards the "Long Knife" – his name for Virginia. When death was finally near, Martin fashioned the canoe into a makeshift coffin and, following a ceremony reserved for only the greatest of his tribe, Oconostota, the Great Warrior of Chota, was laid to rest in front of the city's Council House where his voice had once carried the weight of the Cherokee Nation.

It is hard for historians to put into words what Oconostota accomplished in his lifetime of service to the Cherokee. Hollywood and other fictitious portrayals of Native American leadership have always illustrated chiefs as being hereditary "kings" of their tribes. A Cherokee's abilities in war, trade, and diplomacy, brought them influence and the right to serve as a consultant to the tribal council. The power of these political structures was found in an individual's ability to influence others. Once such a position was attained, it had to be held and proven over and over. Oconostota in any European context would be likened to a famous general or diplomat. His ability to respond quickly to threats and his fearless courage of battle made him a natural leader among the Cherokee and other southeastern tribes. There were many contemporary descriptions of him in British and French writings of the day and even President George Washington wrote of him and the problems he could pose to American security.

Backgrounder: The Delaware Nation, 1754 - 1776



On the eve of the French and Indian War, the Delaware nation was split between those Delawares living in close proximity and alliance with the Shawnees in the Ohio River Valley and those Shawnees who continued to live in their native homeland of Pennsylvania, particularly in the Susquehanna, Wyoming, and upper reaches of the Lehigh Valleys. Many of the Pennsylvania Delawares were Christian Moravians or Quakers and lived in various towns in Pennsylvania established by the Moravian and Quaker missionaries. The Ohio River Delaware united with the Shawnee, Mingo, and the other tribes of the old French alliance under the leadership of the Ottawa Pontiac in what has been called Pontiac's Rebellion against their new British overlords (1763).

Pontiac secretly organized a general uprising, which caught the British totally by surprise. After it began in May, the rebellion captured nine of the twelve British forts west of the Appalachians. The Delaware, Shawnee, and Mingo surrounded Fort Pitt cutting it off from the outside world and then attacked the Pennsylvania frontier killing 600 colonists. In an effort to break the siege at Fort Pitt, Amherst wrote its commander, suggesting that he deliberately infect the tribes outside the fort by giving them blankets and handkerchiefs infected with smallpox, and the resulting epidemic spread from the Delaware, Shawnee, and Mingo to the Cherokee in Tennessee and then the entire Southeast. The uprising collapsed after it failed to take Forts Pitt, Niagara, and Detroit. The French refused to help and even urged their old allies to stop. In November, the Delaware and Shawnee signed a peace with the British at Coshocton and released the 200 white prisoners they were holding. Adopted into Delaware and Shawnee families, many of these prisoners refused repatriation and had to be forcibly repatriated to their white families.

In the meantime, the Pennsylvania Delaware's were under tremendous pressures from white colonists and the Iroquois Confederation. Connecticut had never renounced its claim to the land ceded by the Iroquois. With a terrible sense of timing, the Susquehanna Company brought the first Connecticut settlers to the Wyoming Valley (Wilkes-Barre) in the spring of 1763. In April, the newcomers decided to encourage the Delaware to leave the area by setting fire to the house of Teedyuskung, the Delaware sachem who had been the first to make peace with the British at Easton in 1756. Teedyuskung died asleep inside his burning house, his slumber aided by some rum provided to him free of charge by the whites. The Delaware village was also torched, and its residents forced to flee for their lives. When the Pontiac uprising began that May, the Ohio Delaware attacked settlements in the Juniata, Tuscarora, and Cumberland Valleys, and in the fall, they combined with the Seneca to raid the Wyoming Valley in retaliation for the murders and burnings in April. Pennsylvania once again offered a bounty for Delaware scalps, and Colonel John Armstrong attacked the Delaware village at Big Island. In October a Delaware war party killed 26 colonists during a raid near Allentown. Since the innocent were always easier to find, a mob of Lancaster colonists (The Paxton Boys) murdered 20 peaceful Christian Conestoga (Susquehannock) Indians in December.

Threats of mob violence forced the Moravians and Quakers to evacuate the converts from their Pennsylvania missions. For more than a year, 140 Christian Delaware were confined in a Philadelphia warehouse under the constant danger of lynching. Before being sent to New York, 56 had died from smallpox. William Johnson added to the Delaware diaspora by convincing the Mohawk to punish the Delaware for joining Pontiac, and Iroquois warriors destroyed Kanawhoughton and six other Delaware villages on the Susquehanna. With settlement taking their land in the Wyoming and Susquehanna Valleys, the last of the Pennsylvania Delaware left for Ohio in 1764. The Moravian missionaries made plans to follow them west. Shaken by Pontiac's rebellion, the British government issued the Proclamation of 1763 closing the frontier west of the Appalachians to further settlement. In the east, the Proclamation angered the colonists and started them on the path to revolution. In the west, the frontiersmen simply ignored it and settled illegally in western Pennsylvania beginning with the Redstone - and, appropriately enough - Cheat Rivers. The British military simply could not stop them. By 1774, there were 50,000 whites west of the Appalachians.

The Ohio tribes, including the Delaware, would call these squatters the "Long Knives" (*Mechanschican* in Delaware). They were Pennsylvania and Virginia frontiersmen who by this time had been fighting Native Americans for several generations, and no government (French, British, or American after 1775) was going keep them from taking the Ohio Country from the "Savages." Unable to enforce the law, the British realized its very existence was pushing the colonies towards revolt, and in 1768 they met at Fort Stanwix with the Iroquois to negotiate a treaty to open Ohio and western Pennsylvania to settlement. Without consulting the Delaware, Shawnees, Mingo, Wyandot and other nations that lived there, the Iroquois ceded the Ohio Country. They also sold their remaining lands in the Susquehanna and Wyoming Valleys, which resulted in a civil war (The Pennamite War in which Connecticut and Pennsylvania militias fought and killed each other for control of the area). When news of Fort Stanwix agreement reached Ohio, the Shawnee sent overtures of alliance to all the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley tribes including the southern nations, such as the Cherokee and Chickasaw.

In the initial steps towards the formation of the western alliance, meetings were held on the Scioto River in Ohio in 1770 and 1771, but the failure of the Pontiac Rebellion was still fresh in Indian memories, and William Johnson, the British Indian commissioner, was able to thwart the effort by threatening war with the Iroquois which left the Delaware, Shawnee, and Mingo to face the invasion by themselves. Having seen this before, the Delaware made preparations to move and in 1770 obtained permission from the Miami to settle in Indiana. The Moravian missionaries were the most peaceful element in the settlement of the Ohio Valley. Beginning in 1772, they followed 400 of their Delaware converts to Ohio and built three missions along the Tuscarawas and Muskingum Rivers. By 1775 the traditional Delaware had accepted the Moravian villages as equal members, and the influence of the Moravian Delaware at councils encouraged other Delaware to seek a peaceful accommodation with the Long Knives. Prominent Delaware leaders, especially White Eyes (head of the Turtle Clan), Captain Pipe (head of the Wolf Clan) and Killbuck (head of the Turkey Clan) worked mightily with, first, the British and, when the Americans declared their independence, with American Indian commissioner George Morgan to reach an accommodation with the whites and to pacify their Shawnee and Mingo neighbors and allies.

Both Virginia and Pennsylvania claimed the area around Pittsburgh, but Virginia's claim included Kentucky. The Iroquois had ceded this area at Fort Stanwix, but Kentucky was also claimed by the Cherokee. Treaties signed at Watonga (1774) and Sycamore Shoals (1775) extinguished the Cherokee claims but totally ignored the Shawnee. When Virginia sent survey crews to Kentucky in 1774, there were clashes with Shawnee warriors who were prepared to defend their hunting territory south of the Ohio. As tensions rose in April, Michael Cresap organized a party of vigilantes near Wheeling, which killed several Shawnee. The Delaware chief Bald Eagle was ambushed, scalped, and his body placed upright in a sitting position in his canoe to float down the river to his tribesmen. The following month, other frontiersmen massacred the family of Logan, a Mingo war chief, at Yellow Creek (Stuebenville, Ohio). The Shawnee chief Cornstalk went to Fort Pitt to keep the peace by getting the whites to "cover the dead," an important ritual of reconciliation in the web of diplomatic understandings known as the Middle Ground. The Delaware also offered to mediate, but Logan went to the Shawnee-Mingo village at Wakatomica and recruited a war party, which in gruesome retaliation killed 13 whites.

In retaliation but also with the goal of seizing land for himself, Virginia governor, Lord Dunmore invaded the Ohio country, settlers along the upper Ohio moved into the safety of their blockhouses, until the governor arrived with 2,500 militia. Dunmore and the Virginia militias destroyed Wakatomica as well as five other villages in the area. The Delaware stayed neutral, and the Detroit tribes refused the Shawnee war belt. This left Cornstalk's Shawnee and the Mingo alone to attack a portion of Dunmore's army near Point Pleasant (West Virginia) as it was preparing to invade Ohio. Forced to withdraw after a hard-fought battle and heavy casualties on both sides, the Shawnee signed a peace treaty in which they surrendered their lands south of the Ohio River. This opened Kentucky for white settlement. With the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, new towns sprang up at Boonesboro and Harrodsburg. The Battle of Point Pleasant has sometimes been called the "opening shot of the revolution," and in many ways, this is correct. The war in the east may have been about "no taxation without representation," but in the Ohio Valley, it was all about land ... Indian land.

The British urged the Ohio tribes to attack the settlements because the Americans were trying to take Ohio - a very obvious lie, since the Americans leaders and white settlers wanted everything, not just Ohio. Only the Detroit tribes, Seneca, Mingo, and some Shawnee, sided with the British at first, but their raids and indiscriminate American retaliation were enough to start a spiral towards total war. The Delaware remained neutral, and their head chief White Eyes (Koquethagachton) even addressed the Congress in Philadelphia during 1776, prompting Congress to advance a tentative offer to create a Delaware state in the Ohio Country, that would send representatives to Continental Congress. However, the new government had almost no control over the actions of the Long Knives west of the Appalachians.

The Delawares

1777 - 1829

Cornstalk kept his Shawnee neutral until taken hostage at Fort Randolph in 1777 and later murdered. The Shawnee retaliated with raids in Pennsylvania and Kentucky. In February, 1778 General Edward Hand left Fort Pitt with Pennsylvania militia for a punitive raid. He never found any hostile warriors but attacked two peaceful Delaware villages killing the brother, and wounding the mother of Captain Pipe (head of the Wolf Clan). Hand's infamous "Squaw Campaign" ended Pipe's neutrality, but for the moment, he was held in check by the other Delaware chiefs, White Eyes (Turtle Clan) and Killbuck (Turkey Clan). In September all three signed a treaty at Fort Pitt with the Americans - the first treaty between the United States and Native Americans.

Among other things, the Americans promised not to take any Delaware land; to protect them from the British; and if desired, they could have a representative in Congress. In return the Delaware became American allies and would permit the construction of a fort in their territory. Unlike Penn's 1682 treaty with the Delaware, this one was immediately broken. The commander at Fort Pitt, General Lachlan McIntosh, asked the Delaware to join him in an attack on Detroit. Since this would have involved fighting British-allies with whom they were at peace, the Delaware declined. However, to show his good will, White Eyes agreed to escort McIntosh to the proposed site of Fort Laurens (Bolivar, Ohio). He was murdered enroute, but the Delaware were told he died of "smallpox." Fort Laurens soon proved isolated and indefensible, but the Americans had killed their best friend on the Delaware council. Many Delaware did not accept the explanation, and the pro-British faction began to unite around Captain Pipe. Killbuck attempted to keep them neutral, but it did not help when frontiersmen tried in 1779 to kill a Delaware delegation enroute to Philadelphia for a meeting with Congress. As tensions built, many of the Munsee Delaware left Ohio for what they thought was the safety of the Seneca villages in New York. This placed them directly in the path of Colonel Daniel Brodhead's offensive up the Allegheny Valley in support of General John Sullivan's 1779 campaign against the Iroquois. The Munsee villages were also destroyed, and they retreated to southern Ontario. When the war ended, most stayed in Canada and did not return to the United States.

In the spring of 1780, the British launched an offensive to seize the Ohio valley as well as St. Louis and New Orleans. The result was a major escalation in the warfare in the west. That April, Captain Henry Bird left Detroit with 600 warriors to attack Kentucky. By the time he reached the Ohio River there were almost 1,200. Throughout the summer, the Americans took a terrible beating in Kentucky and Pennsylvania. By this time, most of the Delaware had joined Captain Pipe at Pluggy's Town (Delaware, Ohio) against the Long Knives. Only Killbuck remained loyal to the Americans who ignored his requests for a fort to protect Coshocton. Threatened by Wyandot and Mingo warriors, he relocated to Fort Pitt, and the insurgents took over the Delaware capitol. In the spring of 1781, Killbuck guided Brodhead's militia to Coshocton. Before the attack, a chief trying to negotiate surrender was tomahawked by a soldier while he was speaking to Brodhead (Militia discipline was this bad!). Coshocton was burned. Orders to spare women and children were generally followed, but 15 male prisoners were executed by tomahawk. By the summer of 1781, the only neutral Delaware were the Moravians. After a council of war at Chillicothe, new raids hit the American settlements.

The Moravian villages lay on one of the main warpaths, and as a result they were harassed by both sides. In the fall the British ordered their arrest, and a Wyandot war party gathered the Moravians and escorted them to Captive's Town on the upper Sandusky. Food was scarce, and some of them returned to Gnadenhuetten that winter to salvage the corn from their abandoned fields. In March a Delaware war party returning from a raid in Pennsylvania passed through on its way back to northern Ohio. Close on their heels were 160 Pennsylvania volunteers from Washington County, Pennsylvania commanded by Colonel David Williamson. Finding the Moravians at Gnadenhuetten, Williamson

placed them under arrest. In the democratic style of frontier militia, a vote was taken whether to take the prisoners back to Fort Pitt or kill them. The decision was to execute them. The Moravians were given the night to prepare. In the morning, two slaughter houses were selected, and 90 Christian Delaware - 29 men, 27 women, and 34 children - were taken inside in small groups and beaten to death with wooden mallets. Among the victims was old Abraham, a Mahican and the first convert the Moravians had made in Pennsylvania. Afterwards, the troops burned Gnadenhuetten and the other Moravian missions. Then loaded down with plunder from their victims, they took it home with them to their wives and children in Pennsylvania.

Word of the massacre spread to the other Delaware, and in June they joined the Wyandot to defeat a large force of Pennsylvania militia (Battle of Sandusky) sent to attack the Sandusky villages. The Wyandot captured the commanding officer, Colonel William Crawford, and honoring a request from Captain Pipe, they turned him over to the Delaware. Crawford suffered a slow, terrible death (burned at stake) to atone for his role in the Gnadenhuetten Massacre. The war continued in 1782 with the Shawnee inflicting a major defeat on Kentucky militia at Blue Licks (Daniel Boone's son was killed in this battle), and the Mingo burning Hannastown in Pennsylvania. In November George Rogers Clark attacked the Shawnee villages on Scioto River. The Treaty of Paris ended the Revolutionary War in 1783, but the war between the Ohio tribes and Long Knives continued with few interruptions until 1795. The British in 1783 asked their allies to stop the attacks, but so much blood had been spilt few listened. For their part, most of the frontiersmen did not consider the peace with the British as extending to "Red Devils." George Rogers Clark asked Congress for permission to raise an army to conquer all of the Ohio tribes. Politely thanked for his past services, the request was denied. Meanwhile, Simon De Peyster, the British agent at Detroit, was encouraging the formation of an alliance to fight the Americans.

With a new war threatening, the Delaware decided their old villages in east-central Ohio were vulnerable and relocated most of them to northwestern Ohio and southern Indiana. The new locations were crowded, and the Delaware habit of hunting for profit created friction with neighboring tribes. Some of the Delaware and Shawnee peace factions separated from the militants in 1784 and moved to Ste. Genevieve, Missouri in Spanish Louisiana. The Spanish found them useful as a buffer against the Americans and protection against Osage horse thieves. In 1788 the Spanish governor sent emissaries to the Shawnee and Delaware in Ohio inviting others to immigrate, and in 1793 Baron de Carondelet, the Spanish governor of Louisiana, made a formal land grant (25 miles square) at Cape Girardeau to the Missouri Shawnee and Delaware. They remained here until 1807 when American settlement began in the area. By 1815 most of the Cape Girardeau Delaware and Shawnee (Absentee Delaware and Shawnee) had left for Texas where they were welcomed by Spanish government as a defense against Comanche raiders. The departure of these moderates left the Delaware and Shawnee war factions in control back in Ohio.

After joining Tecumseh in his unsuccessful resistance to American domination, the Ohio Delaware in Indiana regrouped. Two centuries of standing in front of the European advance across North America had cost the Delaware 90% of their original population and left them scattered from Texas to Canada. The 1,000 Delaware in Indiana had no doubt what the outcome would be of a confrontation with the State of Indiana and, at the St. Marys Treaty in October, 1818, ceded their Indiana lands and agreed to move west of the Mississippi. Between 1820 and 1822, the Delaware left Indiana and moved to the James Fork of the White River in southwest Missouri. Only 100 Delaware remained behind on their small reserve at Pipestown on the upper Sandusky in Ohio.

In August, 1829 the Ohio Delaware ceded their reserve and agreed to join the Delaware west of the Mississippi. The thought of another 100 mouths to feed made the Delaware on the James Fork agree to exchange their Missouri lands for a new reserve in northeast Kansas just north of the Shawnee. The new location proved satisfactory, and in December, 1829 the Delaware arrived in Kansas and settled on the Missouri River north of its junction with the Kansas (Kansas City).

Buckongahelas (c. 1720 - May 1805) Delaware



Buckongahelas (c. 1720 - May 1805) was a regionally and nationally renowned Delaware chief, councilor and warrior. He lived during the days of the French and Indian War and when the young American republic began encroaching on Indian lands in the Ohio River Country. In the Lenape language, his name translates as a "Giver of Presents." He was also known as "Pachgantschihilas" and "Petchnanalas" meaning a "fulfiller" or "one who succeeds in all he undertakes." An American government official, who knew Buckongahelas, characterized him as the "George Washington" of the Delaware people. He stood at a height of 5 feet, 10 inches and was strong with powerful muscles. He apparently had a physiognomy resembling Benjamin Franklin.

Buckongahelas is known to have lived some time in a Delaware village on the site of what is now the city of Buckhannon in Upshur County, West Virginia. He had a son named Mahonegon who was killed by Captain William White, a native of Frederick County, Virginia, in June 1773. Local legend states that Mahonegon is buried under the current Upshur County Courthouse. White, a prominent Indian-hater, was never known to show mercy to Native Americans. Legend also has it that Buckongahela trailed his son's killer for a period of nine years (1773–1782), but this legend has no basis in fact because Buckongahela no longer resided in West Virginia at that time. White was probably killed by other Delaware seeking revenge for the Gnadenhütten Massacre on March 8, 1782 when Pennsylvania militia executed ninety-six peaceful Christian Delaware while they prayed. Whatever feelings he took away from the murder of his son, Buckongahelas admitted that there were good white men, but, in his words, "they bear no proportion to the bad." Indians, he continued, could place no faith in their words for they were "not like the Indians who are only enemies, while at war, and are friends in peace." Buckongahelas had come to know the Long Knives in the same way Indian haters had come to know Indians. He knew they were not to be trusted.

The Revolution thus opened a new chapter in the old tug of war between Ohio Indians that advocated accommodation with the advance of European settlement and those who favored aggressive resistance. Initially, these tensions and divisions ran mostly beneath the surface. Leading spokesmen for the Ohio Indians adopted a conciliatory tone in their dealings with both the British and the rebellious colonies; they were concerned, above all, to maintain regular diplomatic relations and avoid open war with either side. Negotiation, not war, appeared to them to be the surest means of holding onto Indian lands.

The revolutionary Americans, even when pressed to keep Delaware and Shawnee war parties off their borders, would not ratify any treaty that implied Delaware title to their lands north of the Ohio River. To do so would offend the still largely neutral Iroquois Six Nations, on whose spurious claims to much of the trans-Appalachian west included many colonial purchases - including those of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson - that had been made with them. The Iroquois had already sold Shawnee lands to Kentucky to various speculators. American support for the Six Nation's claims to the Ohio country against the more legitimate Shawnee and Delaware claims hindered attempts by Shawnee accommodationists - such as Cornstalk - and the Delaware accommodationist, such as White Eyes and Killbucks to increase their support among their followers for more peaceful policies.

Buckongahelas was not sure that seeking a peaceful accommodation with the rapacious American settlers was desirable and might not even be possible, given their Indian-hating ways. Several options were open to him and his like-minded Delaware who he led: He could follow the path of White Eyes and Killbucks and try to reach some agreement with the Americans that preserved Delaware lands in the Ohio Country. He and his people could migrate further west into the Illinois Country where the settlers edging north across the Ohio River from Kentucky might not bother them. Or, Buckongahelas and his followers could take up arms in alliance with the British against the Americans.

Buckongahelas' Decision

During the American Revolutionary War, Buckongahelas led his followers against the United States of America and again in the Northwest Indian War. In the latter war, he helped win the most devastating military victory ever achieved by Native Americans in the United States. Early in the American Revolutionary War, Buckongahelas broke away from the neutral and pro-American Delawares led by White Eyes, and established a town near the war leader Blue Jacket of the Shawnee. The two men became close allies. Speaking on a war belt in council with the British in Detroit in December 1781, the Buckongahelas declared that his warriors had been "making blood fly" on the American frontier for the past five years. The next year, the last of the war, witnessed even bloodier conflict. Indians routed American Forces at Blue Licks and Sandusky.

During the war, a number of Delawares who had converted to Christianity lived in dangerously exposed frontier villages run by Moravian missionaries. In April 1781, at the Ohio village of Gnadenhütten, Buckongahelas warned these Delawares that an American militia from Pennsylvania would come execute any Indians in their warpath. He urged these Christian Delawares to follow him and move further west to the Au Glaize settlement in present-day Indiana, well out of reaching of the encroaching Americans. Moving westward "from the rising sun," these people could live where the land was good and his warriors would protect them. A Moravian missionary, named John Heckewelder, accounts that Buckongahelas' oration to these Christian Indians was told "with ease and an eloquence not to be imitated." He continues that "Eleven months after this speech was delivered by this prophetic chief, ninety-six of these same Christian Indians, about sixty of them women and children, were murdered at the place where these very words had been spoken, by the same men he had alluded to, and in the same manner that he had described."

The United States compelled a number of Indian leaders to sign treaties after the Revolutionary War, claiming the Ohio Country by right of conquest. In the late 1780's, Buckongahelas joined a Shawnee-led confederacy that won several battles against the Americans (the Northwest Indian War), before ultimately being defeated at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. When the British failed to support the Indian confederacy after Fallen Timbers, Buckongahelas signed the Treaty of Greenville on Monday August 3, 1795. In this treaty, the Delawares gave up much land in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

On June 7, 1803, Buckongahelas signed the Treaty of Fort Wayne in Indiana; new boundaries were set for the Delawares and other nations. Lastly, he signed the Treaty of Vincennes on August 18, 1804, in Vincennes, Indiana. The Delaware ceded lands between the Ohio and Wabash Rivers. This treaty helped open settlement to the Ohio and Indiana territories. Buckongahelas made "X" signatures on these three treaties.

Buckongahelas spent his final years living with his people on the White River near present-day Muncie, Indiana. In May 1805, he died at the age of 85 from smallpox or influenza. It was believed by many local Native Americans to have been the work of witchcraft; a witch-hunt followed, leading to the execution of several suspected Delaware witches, and the rise to prominence of the Shawnee prophet and witch hunter Tenskwatawa who was Techumseh's brother and partner in the final great confederacy of the Northwest Indian nations.

George White Eyes (Delaware), ? - ca. 1777



Nothing is known about White Eyes's early life. He first enters the historical record near the end of the French and Indian War as a messenger during treaty negotiations. By 1766, he worked as a tavern keeper and trader in a Delaware town on the Beaver River, a tributary of the Ohio River in present-day western Pennsylvania. This occupation suggests he may have been well suited for the role of intermediary between Indians and whites. He may even have been able read or write in English and speak the language well enough to make an eloquent speech in English when he addressed the U.S. Congress in 1776.

After the French and Indian War, white colonists began settling near the Delaware villages around Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) in western Pennsylvania. In response, the Delawares removed to the Muskingum River Valley in present-day eastern Ohio. By this time, some Delawares had converted to Christianity and were living in villages run by Moravian missionaries. The missionary towns also moved to the Muskingum River in Ohio, so that the Delaware people, both Christian and non-Christian, could stay together. Not only were these converts kinsmen to the non-Christian Delaware, but the Moravian missionaries brought valuable skills to the Delawares with whom they worked, skills such as blacksmithing and livestock husbandry that helped the nation weather the scarcity of deer and other game in the early 1770's. Though not a Christian himself, White Eyes made certain that the Christian Delawares remained accepted members of the Delaware nation even though they lived apart in the largely Christian Delaware towns of Gnattenhutten, Shoенbrunn on the Muskingum River and Friedstadt on the Beaver River.

White Eyes established his own town, White Eyes's Town, near the Delaware capital of Coshocton. In 1774, White Eyes was named principal chief of the nation by the Delaware Grand Council. White Eyes had two goals for his people. First, he strove to gain Britain's, and later the U.S. Congress', recognition of Delaware possession of their lands north of the Ohio. In addition to landed independence, he sought Anglo-American economic cooperation under the guidance of white teachers. White Eyes was convinced that a European-style education was necessary if Indian leaders were ever able to deal effectively with the colonists. As game declined and European trade goods became scarce due to the colonist's Non-Importation Agreements against Britain, White Eyes began to emphasize the need for Delawares to engage in more intensive European agricultural practices, involving livestock husbandry and the cultivation of wheat with steel shod plows. This was a departure from the traditional Delaware economy that was marked by male-dominated hunting and by female-dominated cultivation of the "Three Sisters" (corn, beans, squash). Following the lead of the Moravian Delawares, Delaware Grand Council, with White Eyes' fervent support, outlawed alcohol.

In the early 1770s, violence on the frontier between whites and Indians threatened to escalate into open warfare. White Eyes unsuccessfully attempted to prevent what would become Lord Dunmore's War in 1774, fought primarily between Shawnee Indians and Virginia.

White Eyes served as a peace emissary between the two armies, helping to arrange the treaty that ended the war. When the American Revolutionary War erupted soon after Dunmore's War had ended, White Eyes was in the midst of negotiating a royal grant with Lord Dunmore that was intended to secure a Delaware territory in the Ohio Country. Dunmore was forced out of Virginia by American revolutionaries, and so White Eyes had to begin anew with the Americans to negotiate a recognized territory for a Delaware state.

“The Revolution thus opened a new chapter in the old tug of war between Ohio Indians that advocated accommodation with the advance of European settlement and those who favored aggressive resistance. Initially, these tensions and divisions ran mostly beneath the surface. Leading spokesmen for the Ohio Indians adopted a conciliatory tone in their dealings with both the British and the rebellious colonies; they were concerned, above all, to maintain regular diplomatic relations and avoid open war with either side. Negotiation, not war, appeared to them to be the surest means of holding onto Indian lands.” White Eyes also hedged his bets by proclaiming his solidarity with both the British officials and the Continental Congress. Immediately following his negotiations with the agents of Virginia Royal Governor Lord Dunmore, who, by 1775, was corresponding with White Eyes from his residence-in-exile aboard a British man-of-war in Chesapeake Bay, White Eyes conferred with representatives of Virginia’s Revolutionary government and the Continental Congress.

The revolutionary Americans, even when pressed to keep Delaware and Shawnee war parties off their borders, would not ratify any treaty that implied Delaware title to their lands north of the Ohio River. To do so would offend the still largely neutral Iroquois Six Nations, on whose spurious claims to much of the trans-Appalachian west included many colonial purchases - including those of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson - had been made with them. The Iroquois had already sold Shawnee lands to Kentucky to various speculators. American support for the Six Nation’s claims to the Ohio country against the more legitimate Shawnee and Delaware claims hindered attempts by Shawnee accommodationists, such as Cornstalk, and the Delaware accommodationist White Eyes and Killbucks to increase their support among their followers for more peaceful policies.

From 1776 through 1777, White Eyes struggled to keep the Delawares out of the war. In his efforts, he had a white ally and friend in the person of George Morgan, an ex-trader but now an Indian Commissioner at Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) for the Continental Congress. Morgan himself was suspect among the frontier whites, who suspected him of Tory leanings. A skilled operator in the “Middle Ground,” Morgan struggled to maintain loyal chiefs who could hold the Delawares, Shawnees, Mingos, Munsees, and Wyandots neutral. Morgan knew how to support the chiefs and work incrementally and slowly with gifts and recognition of Delaware values and ritual. White Eyes and his friend John Killbuck called Morgan “the wisest, faithfulest and best Man I [we] ever had any thing to do with.”

Morgan’s goal of peace and Indian neutrality through the diplomacy of the Middle Ground was frustrated by George Roger Clark and the other American military men at Pittsburgh, who pushed a military solution, one that inevitably put pressure on the neutral Delawares, the Shawnees, and the Senecas to choose sides. The American generals soon won the support of both the Continental Congress and Virginia governor Patrick Henry, who believed “Savages must be managed by working on their Fears.” In November 1777, George Morgan wrote to John Hancock that he feared backcountry whites sought a war with the Delawares “on account of the fine lands these poor people possess.” Caught between the militant American generals and the murderous white settlers, the neutrality that George White Eyes sought was becoming a “world too narrow.” **He too would soon have to choose. What would George White Eyes choose? Alliance with the American rebels? The British? Or, would he struggle to maintain neutrality?**

White Eye's Decision

White Eyes and Killbuck remained opposed to war. They argued among their people that war against the white settlers could not be won. Unlike most northerners, they believed that even the combined forces of the northern Indians and the British could not overpower the prolific, expansionist, and armed Americans. Even in the face of American general Hand's murder of six Delaware's in February 1778, White Eyes continued to counsel against war. White Eyes had no intention of fighting beside the Americans, but he was willing to guide them, to allow them to establish posts within Delaware territory, and to negotiate for them with their Indian enemies, if possible. He was willing to carry messages over the dangerous terrain between the new American posts in Delaware country and Fort Pitt.

White Eyes remained true to his conviction that he had to work with with the American rebels if he were to defend the best interests of his people at Coshocton. In April of 1776, White Eyes addressed the Continental Congress in Philadelphia on behalf of the Delawares, and eventually negotiated an alliance with the United States in 1778 at Fort Pitt. This treaty called for the establishment of a Delaware Indian state, with representation in the American Congress, provided that the Congress approved. The Delaware was the first independent nation requesting admission as a state in the Union - potentially, the fourteenth state of the United States. As it turned out, White Eyes would be dead before the matter proceeded further, and the possibility of a Delaware Indian state in the Union died with him.

An article of the treaty called for Delawares to serve as guides for the Americans when they moved through the Ohio Country to strike at their British and Indian enemies to the north (in and around Detroit). Accordingly, in early November of 1778, White Eyes joined an American expedition as a guide and negotiator. Soon after, the Americans reported to the shocked Delawares of Coshocton that White Eyes had contracted smallpox and died during the expedition. After the death of White Eyes and especially after the Gnattenhutten massacre, the Delaware alliance with the Americans collapsed.

Years later, George Morgan, Congressional agent and close associate of White Eyes, revealed in a letter to Congress that White Eyes had been "treacherously put to death" by American militiamen, and his murder had been covered up in order to prevent the Delawares from immediately abandoning the United States. No other details of what happened have survived; historians generally accept Morgan's claim that White Eyes had been murdered, though the reasons remain obscure. White Eyes had placed himself in harm's way during Dunmore's War to prevent bloodshed; a similar effort during the Revolution cost him his life. By the end of 1779, the murders had driven many, but not all, Choshocton Delawares and Shawnees into the arms of the militants, and the erstwhile neutral ground disintegrated in civil conflict.

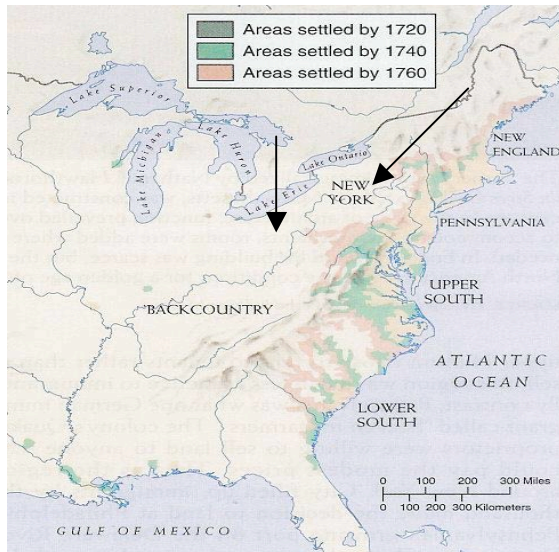
White Eyes rode horseback at the day of his murder, as was suggested by presence of a bridle, saddle and tack listed the "Inventory of Sundry Moveables" taken of his belongings after his death. This inventory of his belongings discloses a mixture of European and Delaware goods fit for a leader interested in Anglo-American ways. With his pair of scarlet "Breeches," he carried a buckskin pair of pants, buckskin leggings, and two breech cloths. With his four jackets (one of them scarlet, silk, and laced with gold trimmings) were a fur cap and a beaver hat. He hunted and fought with a rifle, walked in European shoes (He carried three pair with him.), sported

buckles and a silver medal etched with the portrait of George II, warmed himself in one of his two green goats, painted his face, smoked from a pipe-tomahawk, treated with a built of wampum in his hand, and saw the world (or perhaps only for his close work) through the lenses of his spectacles. By frontier standards - both sides of the frontier - he had been traveling well clothed. His possessions indicate not only his material dependence on Western goods, but also the importance, economically, of his position as a broker with the Americans on behalf of his people. Despite his relative affluence, as a chief, he was obligated to get goods from the Americans and pass them on to his people as he doubtlessly had during his tenure as a Delaware leader.

On March 8 and 9, 1782, a group of Pennsylvania militiamen under the command of Captain David Williamson attacked the Delaware Moravian Church mission founded by David Zeisberger at Gnadenhutten. The Americans struck the natives in retaliation for the deaths and kidnappings of several Pennsylvanians. Although the militiamen attacked the Christian Indians, these natives were not involved in the previous incident. The Christian Delawares had abandoned Gnadenhutten the year before, but had returned to harvest crops that were still in the fields. On March 8, the militiamen arrived at Gnadenhutten. Accusing the natives of the attack on the Pennsylvania settlement, the soldiers rounded them up and placed the men and women in separate buildings in the abandoned village overnight. The militiamen then voted to execute their captives the following morning. Informed of their impending deaths, the Christian Delawares spent the night praying and singing hymns. The next morning the soldiers took the Delawares in pairs to a cabin, forced the natives to kneel, and proceeded to crush their skulls with a heavy mallet. In all, Williamson's men murdered 28 men, 29 women, and 39 children. There were only two survivors, who alerted the missionaries and Christian Indians of what had occurred. A number of White Eye's Christian relatives perished in this massacre.

White Eyes was married. His wife was reportedly murdered by white men in 1788. Their son, George Morgan White Eyes (1770?-1798), was educated at the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) at the expense of the American government. George contracted an illness and died before reaching the age of thirty.

THE IROQUOIS (The Haudenosaunee, The Great League, The Six Nations Confederacy)



The original homeland of the Iroquois was in upstate New York between the Adirondack Mountains and Niagara Falls. Through conquest and migration, they gained control of most of the northeastern United States and eastern Canada. By 1680, their empire included most of what was to become the Northeastern United States. Except for the Iroquois who had moved to the Ohio River Valley and those on the St. Lawrence River Valley in Canada, most Iroquois lived in their upstate New York towns. During the hundred years before the American Revolution, the Iroquois lost much of their land and many of their people in wars with the French and the British as well as with other Indian nations.

The Iroquois Confederacy was, and still is, a political union of separate Indian nations, who speak the same language and who act together as a single nation in making war and peace, and making treaties and alliances with other nations. In the beginning, there were five separate Iroquois nations: the **Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga** and **Seneca**. In 1722, the Tuscaroras came north from the Carolinas to join the Confederacy. When the **Tuscaroras** joined them, the Confederacy became known as the Six Indian Nations or Six Nations Confederacy. The people of the Six Nations call themselves Haudenosaunee, which means "people of the long house."

Each nation in the Iroquois Confederacy agreed to settle their differences and work together by turning over difficult problems and decisions for settlement and solution by the chiefs of the Iroquois nations meeting together the **Iroquois Grand Council** convened in the town of Onondaga. The Grand Council had the power to deal with foreign nations, such as the British and other Indian nations, and to settle disputes between and among the Five Nations. It worked something like a combination between the present-day U.S. President, Congress and the Supreme Court. The Grand Council of the Iroquois Confederacy could make laws, make treaties with other nations, and settle legal fights among the Iroquois. The members of the Grand Council were usually men who were called **sachems**. However, only the Iroquois women were allowed to select the men who became sachems in the Grand Council. The Iroquois Confederacy was a "matriarchy," a society in which women owned the land, raised and harvested the crops, and choose the sachems who would make the important decisions for each Iroquois nation as well as for the entire Confederacy. The wealth, power, and independence of Iroquois women made Iroquois society very different than European and colonial white society. In white societies in Europe and colonial North America, men owned the wealth and the land, ruled over women and children, and made all the important decisions for them.

A hundred years before the American Revolution, the Iroquois were very strong, having just had asserted dominance over much of Northeastern North America. The British, who were beginning to settle the sea coast of New England and New York, knew that they must keep the peace with the Iroquois Confederacy or be wiped out by them. They also wanted to grow rich by trading with the Iroquois for the furs and hides that they got from other Indian nations. So in 1676, the British made a deal with the Iroquois that become to be known as "**The Covenant Chain.**" By the terms of the Covenant Chain, the colony of New York was charged with managing all Indian affairs, and the British recognized the Iroquois as the rulers of the Indian nations who lived within the boundaries of the British Colonies as well as the rulers but also as the rulers of the Indian nations in the Ohio River and the Cherokees who lived in what is now

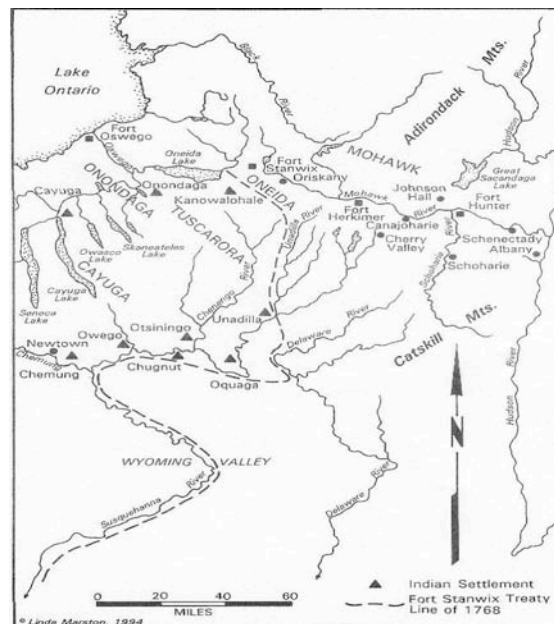
Georgia and Tennessee. These tribes then become “dependents,” or “younger brothers,” whose lands the Iroquois Great Conch, if they wished, could give away or sell to the whites. The weaker Indian nations hated the Covenant Chain. They didn’t like being bossed around by the Iroquois. They especially didn’t like the fact that the Iroquois could sell or give away their lands to the British settlers. Some Indian nations, such as the Delaware and Shawnee in the Ohio Valley, worked laboriously, even to the point of war, to break free of the Covenant Chain.

Until Britain kicked France out of North America in 1763, the Iroquois stayed **neutral** in the wars between France and England, not fighting for either side and “**playing off**” the British against the French. Most of the Confederation remained neutral during the French and Indian War (1754-1763), but the Mohawks under British Indian agent Sir William Johnson fought alongside the British in 1762 and some of the Senecas in the Ohio Valley, under leaders such as Guyasuta, fought alongside the French against the British. Following the French and Indian War, some Senecas joined Pontiac's campaign to drive English settlers out of the Ohio region, but Sir William Johnson was successful in keeping the Seneca Nation as a whole and the rest of the Iroquois from joining Pontiac's army.

With France gone, the Iroquois no longer had a great power to their north that they could “play off” against Britain. Furthermore, many colonial American settlers began settling illegally on Iroquois lands. Iroquois wanted to solve this problem by turning this stream of white settlers away from the Iroquois lands in New York and west towards the Indian lands in Kentucky and the Ohio Valley. To do this, the Iroquois used their powers as the “elder brothers” of the Covenant Chain, and sold Kentucky to the British in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1768), despite the fact that this territory belonged to the Shawnee, Delaware, and the Cherokee nations. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix angered the Cherokee, the Delaware, and the Shawnee, who soon declared their independence from their Iroquois “big brothers.”

After the American Revolution broke out in 1775, the official policy of the Iroquois was to wait and watch. The Iroquois Grand Council stated to both the Americans and the British that they would stay out of the fight if Britain and the Americans allowed them to trade with both sides, if both sides would allow the Iroquois to travel freely, and if neither side would trespass on Iroquois lands. A few hotheaded warriors began fighting alongside one side or the other - more frequently on the side of the British than on the side of the Americans. The Tuscaroras and the Oneidas favored the side of the American rebels, while the Mohawks favored the British. Religion also began to split the Iroquois Confederacy. In 1776, many Mohawks were members of the British Church of England, which made them pro-British. Many Oneidas and other Iroquois were members of the American Presbyterian and Congregational churches and, therefore, favored the American rebels. These religious differences split Iroquois communities and families right down the middle. Only the Grand Council could keep the Iroquois united and neutral.

But suddenly, a terrible thing happened. In 1777 a small pox epidemic in the Iroquois capital of Onondaga killed almost all of the sachems on the Grand Council. At this most important time in the history, the Iroquois Confederacy was deprived of their most important leaders, leaders who could hold the Confederacy together and decide on how to deal with this fight between the British and the Americans. Then, the British invited all of the Iroquois to a big meeting at Oswego on the shores of Lake Ontario and asked them to fight with them against the rebels. **What would the Iroquois do? Join the British? Join the Americans? Or, stay neutral?**



Map 6. Oquaga and Iroquoia. Adapted from Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1972), p. xii.

The Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) 1777 - Present

Their decision to side with the British during the Revolutionary War was a disaster for the Iroquois. In retaliation for the Iroquois breach of neutrality, American forces invaded confederacy lands in 1779, burning crops and villages and scattering the population. The American invasion of their homeland in 1779 drove many of the Iroquois into southern Ontario where they have remained. With large Iroquois communities already located along the upper St. Lawrence in Quebec at the time, roughly half of the Iroquois population has since lived in Canada. This includes most of the Mohawk along with representative groups from the other tribes. Although most Iroquois reserves are in southern Ontario and Quebec, one small group (Michel's band) settled in Alberta during the 1800s to work in the fur trade.

In the United States, much of the Iroquois homeland was surrendered to New York land speculators in a series of treaties following the Revolutionary War. Despite this, most Seneca, Tuscarora, and Onondaga avoided removal during the 1830s and have remained in New York. There are also sizeable groups of Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, and Caughnawaga still in the state. Most of the Oneida, however, relocated in 1838 to a reservation near Green Bay, Wisconsin. The Cayuga sold their New York lands in 1807 and moved west to join the Mingo relatives (Seneca of Sandusky) in Ohio. In 1831 this combined group ceded their Ohio reserve to the United States and relocated to the Indian Territory. A few New York Seneca moved to Kansas at this time but, after the Civil War, joined the others in northeast Oklahoma to become the modern Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma.

In the nineteenth century the Iroquois Confederacy continued as both a political alliance and a cultural entity. In 1799 the Seneca prophet Handsome Lake began his mission to restore the traditional practices of the Haudenosaunee and to lay the foundation of the modern Iroquois traditional religion. He also restored the Confederacy Council Fire to Onondaga in central New York State. Shortly thereafter the nations on the Grand River, unable to travel the great distance to Onondaga to conduct their governance, kindled a confederacy fire at their home in Canada. Since that time the confederacy has conducted Grand Councils in both longhouses. Although the two councils unite and act as one whenever business must be conducted that affects them both, the Grand River Council is the primary political organization in negotiations with Canada and its political subdivisions, while the Grand Council at Onondaga is the primary negotiator with the United States and its subdivisions.

Although there have been some changes, the chiefs of the confederacy continue to meet in council and to host gatherings at which the Great Law is recited, both at Grand River and at Onondaga. The political culture of the Haudenosaunee, now some five or more centuries old, continues to function to this day with a resilience that has enabled their continued existence as a distinct people.

Cornplanter (Kaiiontwa'kon,)

Seneca Iroquois

1740 - 1836



Cornplanter (Kaiiontwa'kon, "By What One Plants") was a great Seneca general and statesman. He was born at Canawagus on the Genesee River in present-day New York State around 1740. His father was an Albany trader named John Abeel or O'Bail, and Cornplanter was known to the English as John O'Bail or Captain O'Bail. His half brother, Handsome Lake, was an Iroquois Confederacy chief, and future prophet and visionary who later was to found a new religion among the Iroquois. Cornplanter's nephew was a leader known as Blacksnake, or Governor Blacksnake. This three Senecas would be instrument in the rebirth of the Seneca after the Revolutionary War.

Cornplanter, Blacksnake, and Handsome Lake were apprenticed to war. Cornplanter became a noted war captain, and Blacksnake became one of the official war-chiefs of the Seneca nation. Handsome Lake, who became a sachem and later a religious prophet, never gloried in the number of men he killed as his brother Cornplanter, somewhat guiltily did. "When I was in the use of arms," Cornplanter recalled, "I killed seven persons and took three and saved their lives." Later in his life, Blacksnake also would recount with relish his exploits as a warrior.

Cornplanter most likely participated in the French and Indian War (1754-1763) on the side of the French as did his kinsman Guyasuta. He also was alleged to have taken part in 1755 in the ambush of General Braddock's army in which George Washington served as a colonel. He also probably participated in Pontiac's' Rebellion after the French and Indian War.

After Pontiac's rebellion, individual Seneca warriors, possibly even Cornplanter, were sympathetic to the Ohio Indians. Chafing under the eyes of the British garrisons, the Senecas watched with sullen resentment as the rowdy whites of the frontier crowding in upon their own lands. Many of them, including Cornplanter, joined the Shawnee, Delaware, and Wyandot in the brief and bloody Lord Dunmore's War - a war that soured the Ohio Indians to the British Empire and almost provoked the Six Nations to attack the colonial frontier. A thousand Indians - Shawnee, Delaware, Wyandot, Cayuga, Seneca, Ojibway, and others - clashed with Lord Dunmore's Virginians in 1774 at Point Pleasant on the Ohio River. Outnumbered, but barely beaten, the Indian alliance was forced to retreat from the field. The Six Nations Confederation council at Onondaga, despite the fact that many of their warriors were in the field battling Dunmore's Virginians, refused officially approve the war. The Onondaga Council used this occasion as a means of punishing the independent-minded Shawnees, who had objected to the Six Nations sale of their hunting grounds in Kentucky at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix and who also were attempting to organize a competing confederacy of their own. In fighting the British, Cornplanter put himself at odds with official Iroquois policy.

After the American Revolution broke out in 1775, the official policy of the Iroquois - in response to both British and American requests for their neutrality - was to wait and watch. A few hotheaded warriors committed themselves to fighting alongside one side or the other - more frequently more frequently for the British than for the American rebels. The Stockbridges, the Tuscaroras and the Oneidas were tilting

heavily toward the American cause while the Cahnawaga Mohawks in Canada gravitated toward the British. The Iroquois made their neutrality strictly contingent upon whether the warring British and American rebels refrained from interfering with their trade, their travel, and their land. The tribe, in essence, had begun the classic play-off policy of playing one European power off against the other: American rebels against the British.

This neutrality was difficult to maintain. American General Philip Schuyler's arrest, imprisonment, and then parole of Guy Johnson, the British Indian Commissioner, right in the heart of the Mohawk Valley, deeply offended the Iroquois who considered it an invasion of Mohawk territory and, therefore, a violation of their neutrality agreement. At the same time, disaster struck Onondaga in 1777 in the form of a plague that rendered the Onondagas unable to host confederacy meetings at a critical moment in the war. In the absence of confederacy advice or veto, significant numbers of Iroquois warriors joined the war effort in support of Britain. Cornplanter vigorously opposed Iroquois participation in the war on either side and had admonished his warriors against fighting, arguing, according to Governor Blacksnake, that "War is war. Death is the Death. A fight is a hard business."

Cornplanter, Handsome Lake, and Blacksnake were present when the Iroquois warriors and their families met in the early summer of 1777 with the British at Oswego, the fort and trading post on the south shore of Lake Ontario. They were invited by the British to hear British officials make a formal request that the Six Nations enter the war on their side. The Oneidas and Tuscaroras were not present because they either had remained neutral or had already thrown their lot in with the Americans. After plying the hundreds of Iroquois assembled there with food and presents of clothing and hardware, the British commissioner outlined the origin of the rebellion: The Americans were "disobedient children" who required a "Dressing and punishment" from their father, King George.

Now, it was up to the Iroquois warriors to decide which side they were on. This choice traditionally was not a matter of deliberation by the sachems of the confederation council, but by the warriors who would do the fighting. The warriors council met that afternoon but soon split into a war and a peace party. A powerful Mohawk leader rose first and spoke for allying with Britain and tarred the neutrality policy as a recipe for disaster: "if [we] shoul[d] lie down and sleep and we shoul[d] be liable to cut our throat by the Red coat man or by America." Cornplanter and Red Jacket afterwards argued that the war was a family quarrel among the Europeans, that the Iroquois did not know what it was all about, and that interference in the conflict would be a big mistake. The Mohawk leader who opened the conference, then rose again and called Cornplanter and Red Jacket "cowards." The meeting broke up in confusion, and the argument was soon taken up by all the Iroquois assembled at Oswego. The people, warriors, and women divided into two parties, and there was a heated discussion of the issues in private councils. The Seneca generally supported Cornplanter's cautious view that it was not wise to take sides in a civil war among white people. Handsome Lake "spoke strongly against war - thought they had better remain neutral." recalled Blacksnake; and so did Gwaysuta and Red Jacket. The Mohawks, however, repeatedly accused them of being "cowards," and the Seneca warriors, as Blacksnake later put it, "can not Beared to be called coward." The British in continued to ply the Iroquois with rum and dry goods and waved a wampum belt that they purported to be the ancient covenant between the Six Nations and the British.

At that moment, Cornplanter was under enormous, but conflicting, pressures: the generosity of the British, the mixed feelings of the Senecas, as well as Cornplanter's closest confidants, his recent memories of the disastrous consequences of previous Iroquois involvement in European wars, as well as the repeated Mohawk insults to their standing as warriors.

Which path would Cornplanter choose: continued neutrality or alliance with Britain?

Cornplanter's Decision

At first, Cornplanter had vigorously urge that the Iroquois adopt a neutral stance with regard to the British and American combatants in the Revolutionary War . He had admonished his warriors against fighting. Cornplanter told his warriors, according to his cousin Governor Blacksnake, "war is war Death is the Death a fight is a hard business." But, at the Iroquois meeting with the British at Oswego in 1777, the powerful orator and warrior, Joseph Brant, leveled his white-hot speech at Cornplanter, calling him and his Seneca relatives 'cowards.'" As Cornplanter's cousin Governor Blacksnake later put it, Senecas and Cornplanter especially "can not Beared to be called coward." Cornplanter reluctantly agreed to accept his nomination by the warriors (along with the respected Seneca war chief Old Smoke) to lead the Iroquois warriors in support of the British. Accordingly, Cornplanter led his soldiers against the American rebels throughout the course of the war.

Cornplanter was second in command of the Indian army at the Battle of Wyoming in June 1778. More than 300 Americans were killed in this action (and fewer than ten Indians and Loyalist rangers) and eight American rebel forts and a thousand dwellings were destroyed by Cornplanter's army. On August 2, 1780, Cornplanter, Brant, Old Smoke, and the Cayuga war chief Fish Carrier led about four hundred Indians and American Loyalists (Americans colonists fighting on the side of Britain) on a scorched-earth campaign against the Canajoharie District in the Mohawk Valley. Cornplanter's army captured fifty to sixty prisoners, and destroyed two forts and fifty-three houses. They also burned the house of John Abeel, who was captured and then recognized as Cornplanter's father. Cornplanter was very embarrassed and apologized to his father for burning his home. Cornplanter offered to take his father home to the Seneca country or, if he preferred, to send him back to his American family. Abeel thanked his son but said he would prefer e to return to his American family in the Mohawk Valley.

In October 1780, Cornplanter was among the leaders in a series of attacks on forts and settlements in the Schoharie Valley in what is now eastern New York State. This action was in response to the Clinton-Sullivan campaign of the previous year in which Generals Sullivan and Clinton's armies had burned two hundred Iroquois houses and an estimated 150,000 bushels of grain in addition to killing forty Iroquois and capturing sixty. Cornplanter's counterattack prompted New York Governor George Clinton to comment that New York's western frontier was now at Schenectady, startlingly close to the American heartland of New York.

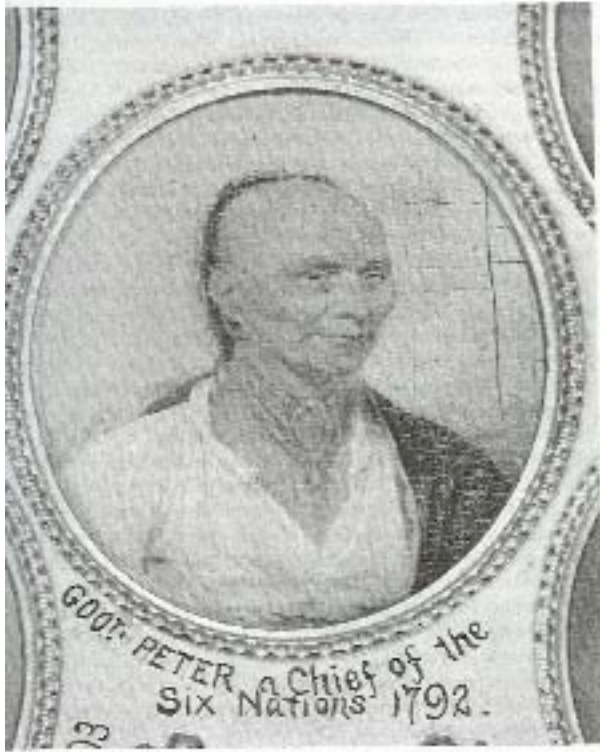
At the end of the Revolutionary War Cornplanter organized and led a delegation of Indians to Fort Stanwix, where in 1783 a treaty was negotiated between the United States and the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy. The United States agreed to the treaty, but the treaty gave away so much Iroquois land, that the Iroquois Confederation Council rejected it. In a speech delivered to President Washington at Philadelphia, Cornplanter stated: "When our chiefs returned from the treaty at Fort Stanwix, and laid before our

council what had been done there, our nation was surprised to hear how great a country you had compelled them to give up to you, without your paying to us any thing for it... We asked each other, what have we done to deserve such severe chastisement?" Cornplanter participated in a series of treaties in 1784, 1789, 1794, 1797, and 1802, all of which ceded large areas of Seneca territory to non-Indians. Because of these cessions, Cornplanter became extremely unpopular among his own people and at one point, Cornplanter stated that "[t]he great God, and not man, has preserved the Cornplanter from the hands of his own nation."

In 1790 Cornplanter and several other Seneca chiefs met with George Washington to protest the terms of the Fort Stanwix Treaty, stating, "you demand from us a great country, as the price of that peace which you had offered us; as if our want of strength had destroyed our rights... Were the terms dictated to us by your commissioners reasonable and just?" The Senecas went on to say that there was no reason why further land cessions should be expected. Cornplanter probably persuaded George Washington to adopt treaty making as the preferred method of dealing with Indian tribes while urging fair and honest treatment of the Indians generally. Congress passed the 1790 Non-Intercourse Act with the intention of upholding President Washington's promises that the federal government would protect Indian lands against fraud and theft.

On November 4, 1791, the United States suffered what was probably its worst military defeat at the hands of Indians; Six hundred and thirty soldiers under General Arthur St. Clair were killed in a complete rout by the Shawnees and their allies on the Ohio-Indiana border. Subsequent attempts to arrange peace negotiations with these Indians were not successful, and George Washington now turned to the Six Nations Confederacy to act as peacemakers. The following year Cornplanter, at considerable risk to his own life, led a Six Nations delegation to a meeting on the Auglaize River with the victorious Shawnees in an effort to make peace on behalf of the United States. The Shawnees were not in a peacemaking mood. They treated Cornplanter and his delegation with contempt for what they saw as their subservience to the Americans. Although he was not successful in this peace initiative, Cornplanter received a grant of one square mile of land from the State of Pennsylvania for his efforts and for his assistance in dissuading the Iroquois Confederacy from joining the Shawnees in the fighting in Ohio.

Cornplanter was living on this "Cornplanter Grant" in June of 1799 when his half brother Handsome Lake, who was living in the same house, arose from an alcohol-induced coma and announced he had experienced a vision. From then on, Handsome Lake began to form a new religion. The two men continued to live there until 1803 when a dispute with Handsome Lake sent the latter to Coldspring on the Allegheny Reservation, where he embarked on his lifelong mission to revive the ancient ways and values while adapting to the new world of the reservation. Cornplanter continued to live on his Pennsylvania grant for the rest of his life. Cornplanter died on February 18, 1836, and was buried at the Cornplanter Grant. In 1964 the cemetery in which he was buried was moved to higher ground to make way for the reservoir that would be created by construction of the nearby Kinzua Dam.



PETER AGWRONDOUGWAS

“Good Peter”

Oneida Iroquois (? - 1793)

Peter was and Oneida chief of the Eel Clan and a resident of Oquaga a town located on the banks of the upper Susquehanna near present-day Windsor in Broome County, New York. Oquaga was described by the British Indian agent William Johnson as “cosmopolitan,” and one of the most important Iroquois villages on the eve of the Revolution. The town was a crossroads sitting astride major Indian roads, and a rendezvous for the traders from Albany and Schenectady. Oquaga was a multiethnic settlement, that attracted immigrants from throughout the eastern woodlands. By the mid-1750’s, Tuscaroras, Nanitokes, Cayugas, Mahicans, Shawnees as well as Oneidas lived in the town, and Oquaga continued to attract refugees displaced by war and people escaping the pressure of European settlement. By the eve of the Revolution, Oquaga, like other towns in the upper Susquehanna Valley, was a very mixed refugee settlement, a shelter of the Iroquois’ Great Tree of Peace, that helped offset the stress and social disintegration that accompanied displacement of people from their original homelands, besides placing barriers to white settlement on the southern end of Iroquoia. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 opened Iroquois lands for purchase by wealthy Euro-American landlords who were given large land grants by the British government and settled German and Scotch-Irish tenants on these holdings. The Stanwix land boundary line lay to the east of Oquaga, but the tenants built fences, farms, cut roads, operated ferries

and thereby created an farming society that tied they and their Iroquois neighbors to the the Atlantic world economy. The town of Oquaga itself was a mixture of traditional Iroquois long houses and more contemporary log cabins with stone floors and glass windows. Each house in Oquaga had a garden in which the residents grew both traditional Iroquois as well as European and South American Indian crops: corn, beans watermelons, potatoes, cucumbers, cabbages and turnips. They maintained apple orchards and raised cows, pigs, chickens and horses - in somewhat the same manner as their European neighbors on the other side of the Stanwix Treaty line.

Fundamental changes in the Iroquois world, however, made Peter and the other townspeople of Oquaga vulnerable to other, more destructive European imports: alcohol and Christianity. From 1748 through 1777, Christian missionaries operated a Christian mission (and later, in 1761, a school) at Oquaga. They changed town life by converting large numbers of Oquagas. This had the effect of aggravating and exploiting existing political and social divisions within the community. For example, Christianity gave Christian Iroquois warriors religious support for mounting challenges of hereditary chiefs, who derived their power from appointment by the clan mothers on the basis of traditional Iroquois social and religious beliefs. Sometimes, the towns people got close to missionaries as a means of escaping traditional alliances or challenging traditional power relationships, but it was never a simple division between “Christian” and “pagan,” that is, traditional Iroquois beliefs. Rather, it was the controversy between the established Church of England (Anglicans) and the “new light” evangelical religion of New England Presbyterians and Congregationalists that split the Oquaga community.. The rivalry between the two Christian denominations fractured the Iroquois into three contenting religious camps: those who followed the traditional Iroquois religion, those who belonged to the Anglican church, and those that followed the “New Light” Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

In 1748, the missionary Elihu Spencer came to Oquaga and secured the conversion of Isaac Dekayensere and Peter Agwronougwas, who henceforth became known as Good Peter. A significant number of young Oquaga men were sent south to attend Christian boarding schools in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and soon the people at Oquaga, in the words of Jonathan Edwards, “made religion their main concern, rather than war, or any other worldly affairs.” During the French and Indian War (Seven Year’s War, 1754-1763), the people of Oquaga supported the British against the French, which prompted British Indian agent Sir William Johnson to build a fort, or blockhouse, in Oquaga. Good Peter vehemently objected to its construction, requesting that the fort “be pull’d down & kicked out of the way” because “these forts which are built among us disturb our Peace and are a great hurt to Religion, because some of our Warriors are foolish & some of our Brother Soldiers [British soldiers] don’t fear God.”

After the war, the Presbyterian Minister Samuel Kirkland became a major force in the religious and political lives of the Iroquois. As a result, significant splits developed among Isaac Dekayensere, who held to the beliefs of the Church of England (Anglican), and Good Peter, who held to the “New Light” Christianity of Kirkland as well as with a significant portion of the traditional Oquagas who, in the words of a contemporary, “had a school of their own, taught by an old sagacious chief where he educated their boys and young men in Indian learning [traditional religion], which I was told they kept secret from their minister, or at least he did not understand it.” By October of 1774, these religious differences polarized Oquaga. “Old Isaac,” as Dekayensere came to be called, allied himself with British Indian Commissioner William Johnson and the Iroquois Brant families - both staunch Church of England followers (Anglicans), and Kirkland complained that Isaac and his followers were intent upon driving out the Presbyterians and introduce “the K___’s [King’s] religion (so called.” By the eve of the American Revolution, religion had become entangled with local Iroquois power struggles, and Oquaga was pulled between Kirkland’s Presbyterian mission at Kanawalohale and the Anglicanism of Johnson and the Brants.

British Indian Commissioner William Johnson died suddenly in 1774 and his place was taken by his son-in-law Guy Johnson who, was ordered by British General Thomas Gage to use “all means to Rout them [Kirkland and the Presbyterian missionaries], as that is the only Method that can be fallen upon to keep them from Mischief.” The tug-of-war between Kirkland and the Johnsons and the Oquaga community, a split that was exacerbated by the outbreak of the war and the growing encroachment on Iroquois lands by white settlers. In June 1775, the Twelve Oneida sachems issued a declaration of neutrality in response to the fighting between British and colonists that had broken out in the Boston area. The next month, the Continental Congress hired Kirkland to seek the friendship of the Iroquois Confederation. Kirkland’s political mission seemed to have had some success. By June 1776, the Oneidas and the Tsupcarora divisions of the Confederacy - though they still hoped “to be still and bear no part in your [British/colonist] dispute” - feared that it was no longer possible for them to remain neutral. Shortly thereafter, the Oneida Oquaga chiefs requested that the Continental Congress provide them powder, lead, and flints for their guns ... just in case.

Over the previous five years, large number of the more pro-British Mohawks began moving to Oquaga to escape the political turmoil and disease that was raging in their valley. The Mohawks were becoming increasingly enraged by repeated trespassing and squatting of white settlers on Iroquois land and their numbers began to tip the balance of sentiment in Oquaga toward the British. This shift in Oquaga’s population alarmed the white settlers in northern New York who raised three companies of rangers to patrol the Fort Stanwix Treaty Line with orders to shoot any Indian they found wearing paint and feathers. Old Isaac asked the rangers for assurances of safe conduct when the Oquagas were out hunting. Good Peter informed the rangers that Iroquois men had always worn paint and feathers, and they were not about to stop now.

In December 1776, a powerful Mohawk leader, with strong connections to the Johnson family as well as strong family connections in Oquaga, stopped at Oquaga and called the warriors to arms. He told them “to defend their Lands & Liberty against the Rebels, who in a great measure began this Rebellion to be sole Masters of this Continent.” Riven already by religious differences and uncertain how to resolve the dilemma of what to do about white incursions on their lands, the Oquagas were forced with a choice imposed upon them by pro-British Mohawks and the Oneidas in their community that were leaning toward supporting the colonists. **Good Peter now had to choose sides. Or did he? Was neutrality still possible? Which path would he take?**

Good Peter's Decision¹

In December 1776, after his return from England, Joseph Brant, the great Mohawk leader who had strong connections to the Johnson family as well as strong family connections in Oquaga, stopped at Oquaga and urged the warriors to take up arms against the American rebels. He told them "to defend their Lands & Liberty against the Rebels, who in a great measure began this Rebellion to be sole Masters of this Continent." Riven already by religious differences and uncertain how to resolve the dilemma of what to do about white incursions on their lands, the Oquagas were forced with a choice imposed upon them by pro-British Mohawks and the Oneidas in their community that were leaning toward supporting the colonists. When Brant returned to Oquaga, he raised the British flag, turning the village into a recruiting station for Indians and white Americans loyal to the British king. In time, about a hundred white Loyalists from an area between the Hudson and the east branch of the Susquehanna joined the Mohawk, calling themselves "Brant's Volunteers." From Oquaga, Brant's warriors ranged the surrounding countryside, started to wage war against the American rebels in the Susquehanna Valley. In the eyes of the Anglo-American rebels, the village finally had shown its true British colors. Oquaga was now a military headquarters, a staging area for summer raids against the rebel white settlements. It is unlikely that all the Oquagas were behind Brant. Admittedly, the Anglican faction, the Mohawks, and others alarmed over the American encroachments on their land were certainly ready to follow Brant and believed his assurances that the British would redress their grievances after a successful war. Yet, the community was not yet unanimous in their support of Brant and the King. However, Good Peter and others of the Presbyterian faction were forced to flee to Oneida, the inhabitants of which were either neutralists or pro-American.

In August 1777, a bloody Iroquois civil war exploded at the bloody Battle of Oriskany in which Oneida and other pro-rebel Iroquois fought alongside the Americans against the Mohawks and other pro-British Iroquois. Even then, a number of Oquagas sent peace feelers to the rebel New York Committee of Safety which treated the message as an insult and responded that, unless they chiefs reigned in their young men, they would be treated as enemies. "Tell the Indian," retorted the American Governor of New York, "that, if their young Men are fond of fighting and choose to be in War, they can come & join us [the American rebels] who are their Brethren born in the same Country, against our common Enemies and we will pay them as we do our own young Men who go out & fight for us." But, the New York Committee of Safety declared on September 3rd that the Oquaga Indians, most of whom by now probably were Mohawk, "be considered and treated as open Enemies" and that Oquaga was now a military target for the American rebel forces.

In October 1777, General George Washington ordered Colonel Phillip Van Cortland and Lieutenant Colonel William Butler of the Fourth Pennsylvania Regiment to march against Oquaga. Their troops meet no resistance - "the Enemy, according to Butler, "having that day left the Town, in the greatest Confusion" - and they entered Oquaga at night. "It was the finest town I ever saw," said Butler, "on both sides of the [Susquehanna] River there were about 40 good houses, Square logs, Shingles, and stone chimneys, good Floors, glass windows, &c, &c." The Americans took away the Oquagas' furniture and other belongings, burned the town the next morning and destroyed some two thousand bushels of corn, leaving only one house standing which belonged to a "friendly Oneida," probably Good Peter. Years later, a veteran of the expedition related that "when they were mowing the corn, they found several small children hid there, and he boasted very much, what cruel deaths they put them to, by running through with bayonets and holding them up to see how they would twist and turn."

Good Peter was outraged by the sacking of his town and told American Indian commissioner Volkert P. Douw at a council in pro-rebel Oneida that many of the Indians from Oquaga had fled, some into the woods, others taking refuge at Oneida:

Many of the Indians who lived at *Ochguaga* [Oquaga] are as true Friends to be thirteen united States as any of us.
They were in the same Situation as many of your Friends who are now in New York and elsewhere, who could not

¹ Most of this text is excerpted with modifications from Colin G. Calloway's *The American Revolution in Indian Country; Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1992), pp. 123 ff.

remove where the Enemy took possession [New York was occupied by the British at that time]. Their houses and other property are now destroyed and many of those Friends are our Blood Relations. They will now come to us for Relief and protection.

Peter admitted that many Oquagas might have been “misled by Want” and “false Insinuations” to act against the American rebels, but the Oneidas hoped to make them see the error of their ways and “make them hearty Friends to the united States.” Peter requested a guarantee of protection for them. Douw gave them a certificate of protection for those Oquagas who had remained friendly to the United States, but said that he must defer to Congress on the fate of those who had joined Brant. Seventeen Indian families from Oquaga took refuge with the Oneidas; the rest dispersed “for other parts of Indian Country.” More than 150 Oquagas retreated even farther from home and joined fellow Iroquois at the British Fort Niagara and served on campaigns with the British and Loyalists stationed there. Although some Oneida sachems remained pro-British, the warriors led by Presbyterian minister Kirkland’s friend and confidant, Shenandoah, supported the Americans. Driven from their homes into squalid refugee camps around Schenectady. There, Good Peter spent the remainder of the war.

The destruction of Oquaga deprived Brant of his forward base, although he was back there from time to time, and some of the residents may have returned until the American General Sullivan’s invasion of Iroquoia in 1779. But, the destruction of Oquaga did not bring the security that white frontier communities desired. The Mohawks and their Seneca allies retaliated with a series of attacks, notably the infamous assault on whites in the Cherry Valley, which Red Jacket, Cornplanter, and Handsome Lake probably participated. British, Indian, and American forces continued to devastate the upper Susquehanna River Valley, destroying their enemies’ crops and supplies even while short of food themselves.

A few people, such as Tuscarora Old Seth and his family, returned to Oquaga after the war, but many Oquagas retreated even farther from home after the war, joining new communities erected by Joseph Brant on the Grand River in Ontario. The Oneidas and Tuscaroras who joined and fought alongside the Americans petitioned the United States Congress to compensate them for losses that included frame houses, wagons, livestock, farm equipment, kitchen utensils, silverware, clothing, teacups and saucers, punch bowls, k rugs, looking glasses, jewelry, and other items large and small, that constituted the material culture of their flourishing communities. The U.S. Congress eventually provided financial compensation, but by that time most of the Oneidas’ lands together with those of their Oquaga relatives, friends, and enemies, had been swallowed up by private land speculators, the State of New York, and the United States.

At the Treaty of Fort Herkimer in June 1785, despite vehement objections from Good Peter, Governor George Clinton secured the Indian’s acquiescence in the transfer to New York of lands east of the Chenango River, which included Oquaga. Indians who tried to return to the upper Susquehanna found new settlers living on their lands, growing corn in their gardens, sometimes living in their houses if they had not been destroyed, sometimes drinking from the pewter and crystal, eating from the plates with the silverware that the Oquagas had left behind in their confused flight from Butler’s American army. In 1791, two years before Good Peter’s death, there were three hundred New Englanders living near the site of Oquaga, in a town they called Windsor.

Good Peter Agwrongdougwas died in 1793. By that year, most of the Oquagas, who had backed the British, the losers in the Revolution, found themselves driven from their lands to new homes in Canada; most of their Oneida neighbors, who had backed the American rebels, the winners, also found themselves pushed from their lands to new homes in Wisconsin and Ontario, despite repeated treaty guarantees that they would not be deprived of their lands. After the war, the Oneidas split into two communities: the warriors of the Christian party of Shenandoah and Kirkland at Kanowalohale and the chiefs, or pagan , party at Oriske. In time, they separated even further, the warriors moving to Wisconsin and the sachems to Ontario. Some other Oneidas continued to live in their New York homelands, but their lot was not easy. the cooperative relations, such as the fur trade and the proximity of white and Indian villages required, were impossible. White settlers now associated Indians with the brutality and destruction of the war, and race relations never recovered. Oquaga mirrored the Iroquois League Tree of Peace, as a haven and refuge for many people. Like the League, it could not survive the nationalist and tribal rivalries that the Revolution imposed upon it.



GUYASUTA (GEYE-ah-SOO-tah) 1725 - 1794.

Guyasuta was an Iroquois Seneca leader and diplomat. He was born in New York, but his family moved across the mountains to the Ohio River when he was young to live with other Iroquois who were settling in that region. Guyasuta quickly became an important Iroquois Seneca chief and diplomat, known to Europeans and Indians alike as “able, prudent, and wise.”

All throughout the 18th Century (1688 - 1763) the British and the French fought to control North America. Guyasuta’s Western Seneca countrymen in the Ohio Valley most often took the French side against the British. Both the French and the British claimed the Ohio River Valley as their own; but the Indians were really in control. The Indians allowed these Europeans to think they owned the Valley because the Indians needed to trade with the Europeans to get European-made goods, such as cloth, firearms, and products made of steel and iron that they couldn’t make themselves. By the 1750’s, the French were building a string of forts in the Ohio River Valley on land that the English in the American colonies thought was their own land. Even though he was pro-French, Guyasuta in 1753 went with the young Colonel George Washington, an Englishman from Virginia, to persuade the French to leave the Ohio River Valley. Washington failed in this mission and precipitating the great world war between France and England, a war that we now call the Seven Years War or the French and Indian War.

During the Seven Years War, Guyasuta and his fellow Western Senecas fought alongside the French against the British. Guyasuta was among the army of French and Indians that defeated the English General Braddock and the Virginia Colonel George Washington in 1756 near Pittsburgh. However, after seven years of fighting, the British defeated the French and forced them to withdraw from North America. Numerous Indians were killed as result of this war. By virtue of their victory in the Seven Years War, the British asserted that what is now Canada and the Ohio River Valley belonged to them. Guyasuta and other Indian people knew that they had settled in these places long before the British. This was their country despite what the British said.

After n 1763, the British took control of the land the French claimed in the Ohio Valley. They put into place new trading rules that were so stingy and disrespectful of Indians that it became hard for Indian hunters to feed their families and keep their honor. An Ottawa chief named Pontiac decided that the American Indians should drive the stingy and disrespectful British away. They hoped the French would return and give them better trade deals and more respect. In this war, which was known as Pontiac’s War (1763-1765), many leaders, including Guyasuta, joined this fight, a war that soon forced the British to change their parsimonious and disrespectful trading policies. Because so many Iroquois were killed in this war, Guyasuta began to feel that going to war alongside the Europeans was stupid and would destroy the Iroquois no matter on whose side they fought. Therefore, even though he fought against the British, Guyasuta worked hard to make peace between the British and the Indians.

Between the peace treaty between the Ohio Indians and the British and the beginning of the American Revolution, Guyasuta worked hard to keep peace in the Ohio Valley with the colonial elite, such as George Washington who were illegally purchasing Indian lands as well as with poorer whites who were settling on Indian lands without Indian permission.

To help settle difference between Indians and whites, Goyasuta carried messages back and forth between the Indian nations of the Ohio Valley and the British colonists in New York and Virginia. He worked hard to prevent the more angry Ohio Indian nations, such as the Shawnees and the Mingoes, from going to war with the colonial American settlers. In addition, Goyasuta worked with the British to keep traders from selling alcohol to the Indians because he felt that drinking alcohol by white settlers and Indians would make them more willing to fight each other. Alcohol too often fueled the frontier wars of the eighteenth century.

When the American Revolution broke out in 1775, Goyasuta, the Senecas, and the other Iroquois decided to remain “neutral,” deciding not to fight either on the British or on the American side. The Iroquois felt the American Revolution was a “family feud” between Britain and their American colonial cousins, and they felt the best thing for the Indians was not to get involved in this family fight. Because he worked hard to keep all the Iroquois neutral, the American rebels made Goyasuta a colonel in their Continental Army. But, in 1777, Goyasuta and the other Iroquois were invited to a grand conference by the British, who extravagantly rained presents on the Iroquois and other Indians who gathered there. The British agents then asked all the Iroquois to join the British in their fight against the American rebels. The Iroquois soon split into a party that wanted to go to war on the side of the British and a peace party that wanted to stay neutral. Goyasuta and his cousin Cornplanter argued they didn’t want to go to war against either the British or the Americans. As a diplomat and a statesman, Goyasuta knew that he could deal fairly with both sides in the war between the British and the American rebels. However, a powerful Mohawk Iroquois arose during the conference with the British and called Goyasuta and Cornplanter “cowards” because they didn’t want to go to war. Goyasuta didn’t want to be called a coward. It dishonored him in the eyes of his fellow Iroquois. Moreover, the American rebels had honored Goyasuta by making him an officer in their army even though they didn’t make him fight on the American side. Could he fight against the Americans who had honored him? Furthermore, Goyasuta remembered the many Iroquois men, women, and children were killed in the Seven Years War and then later in Pontiac’s Rebellion. **What side would Goyasuta chose? The American side? British side? Or would he remain Neutral?**

Guyasuta's Decision

Guyasuta was present when the Iroquois warriors and their families met in the early summer of 1777 with the British at Oswego, the fort and trading post on the south shore of Lake Ontario. It was up to the Iroquois warriors to decide which side they were on. This choice traditionally was not a matter of deliberation by the sachems of the confederation council, but by the warriors, such as Guyasuta, who would do the fighting. The warriors council met that afternoon but soon split into a war and a peace party. Joseph Brant, the powerful pro-British Mohawk leader, rose first and spoke for allying with Britain and tarred the neutrality policy as a recipe for disaster: "if [we] shoul[d] lie down and sleep and we shoul[d] be liable to cut our throat by the Red coat man or by America." Cornplanter and Red Jacket afterwards urged that the war was a family quarrel among the Europeans, that the Iroquois did not know what it was all about, and that interference in the conflict would be a big mistake. The Mohawk leader who opened the conference, then rose again and accused Cornplanter and Red Jacket and other cautious Senecas, such as Guyasuta, "cowards." Blacksnake later reported that Brant's charge stung Guyasuta as deeply as it did Cornplanter and Red Jacket. The Seneca warriors, as Blacksnake later put it, "can not Beared to be called coward." But, Guyasuta probably decided to join the British cause against the rebels as much out of a sense of what was the best for his people. It was inevitable, however, that the Senecas would eventually enter the contest on the side of Britain. There were too many grievances against the Americans who were trespassing on Indian lands. Furthermore, although the war disrupted normal economic life, fighting against the American rebels promised generous rewards from the British.

With the decision of the Iroquois Confederacy of the Six Nations in the summer of 1777 to abandon neutrality, Guyasuta began to work actively for the British, and Indian, causes. Later in the summer, he was one of a large group of Indians who accompanied Barrimore Matthew St. Leger against the American rebels at Fort Stanwix (Rome, N.Y.). The siege of this fort at the western end of the Mohawk valley was in its initial phase when word came from Mary Brant [KoñwatsiĀtsiaiéñni] that 800 militiamen were marching to attack the besiegers. It was primarily the Indians, rather than the British troops, who were sent to meet them, and they defeated the American rebels in the bloody Battle of Oriskany nearby. Guyasuta soon was in the field again. In December 1777, Simon Girty reported that the Seneca chief or members of his war party had killed four people near Ligonier, Pa. When in 1779 a rebel army commanded by Daniel Brodhead marched from Fort Pitt up the Allegheny River Valley, burning Seneca villages, Guyasuta appeared at Niagara demanding 100 soldiers to aid against the invaders. The hard-pressed British commander refused, and Brodhead's destructive expedition went largely unopposed.

Guyasuta was sent from Niagara in 1780 on a familiar diplomatic task. Anxious to keep the alliance of the western Indians from falling apart, Guy Johnson dispatched Guyasuta on a tour of the Ohio country to call a conference at Detroit.

Most of the chiefs of the region were absent because they were carrying the war into Kentucky with Henry Bird's expedition. So Goyasuta left the messages with the Wyandots for delivery later in the summer. There is some evidence that Goyasutathen commanded a party of 30 Wyandots who raided near Fort McIntosh (Rochester, Pa) in July. In the spring of 1781 Goyasutawas again on the diplomatic trail, but illness detained him for some time at Cattaraugus (near the mouth of Cattaraugus Creek, N.Y.). The aging chief went to war once more, leading the party which on 13 July 1782 burned Hannastown, Pa, and then went on to attack Wheeling (W. Va).

For all intents and purposes, the American Revolution was over, and the Senecas soon made their peace with the United States. There is one report that the Americans tried to use Goyasuta as a peacemaker in the Ohio region, but for the most part this role devolved on Cornplanter, probably a nephew of Goyasuta. The Ohio Indians, however, were intent on continuing their war with the Americans, a war which the diplomacy of Cornplanter and Goyasuta was powerless to stop. As events moved towards a climax, Goyasuta carried personal and public messages to the American commander, Anthony Wayne, at Pittsburgh in 1792, and accompanied Cornplanter to a meeting with Wayne in 1793. Wayne was organizing and training his force so that they could invade the Ohio country and subdue the Indian coalition under Blue Jacket. Wayne defeated Blue Jacket and his confederation of Ohio Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers (near Waterville, Ohio) in August 1794.

After the war, Cornplanter's diplomatic efforts on behalf of the Americans earned him a grant of land in Pennsylvania. Cornplanter and his Seneca followers, including Goyasuta, settled on this tract of land in the 1790's. There Goyasuta died and was buried, probably in 1794.

Joseph Brant (Thayendanega)¹ Mohawk, Iroquois 1743 - 1807



Joseph Brant led the Mohawk and many of the others of the Iroquois Nation from the American Revolution until his death in 1807. The Mohawks are a division of the Iroquois Confederation, or "Six Nations."

The parents of Joseph Brant were Mohawks whose home was at Canajoharie on the Mohawk River in New York. Brant, however, was born on the banks of the Ohio River in 1742 while his parents were on a hunting excursion to that region, and was given the Indian name of Thayendanega, meaning "he places two bets". His father was Nicklus (or "Nicholas") of the Wolfe family, who, although not a chief, was an Mohawk leader.

Brant's sister, Molly Brant's, became the wife of William Johnson (1715 - 1774), the British agent for the Mohawk gave Joseph his first opportunity for advancement, not only within the Mohawk Confederation, but also within the British Imperial world. After Johnson's European wife Catherine died in 1759, he married his former Indian mistress, Molly Brant in an Indian ceremony later that year. It was due largely to Johnson's relationship with Molly that Brant received the favor and protection of Sir William and through him the British government, which set Brant on the road to promotion.

In the Eighteenth-Century world, one did not rise to power and affluence without a powerful and affluent patron. Johnson sent the young Brant to Reverend Wheelock's school in Lebanon, Connecticut for an English-style education with an Anglican twist. Brant and a number of young Mohawks were selected by Johnson to attend Moor's Charity School for Indians at Lebanon, Connecticut - the school which in future years was to become Dartmouth College. Here he learned to speak and write English and studied Western history and literature, Greek and Latin. He left school to serve under Sir William from 1755-1759 during the French and Indian War (1754-1763).

Allied with the British, Brant joined pro-British Iroquois war parties against the French during the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Formerly, the Iroquois Confederation were able to extract concessions and favors from the British in New York by playing them off against the French in Canada. Once the French lost Canada in 1763, the Iroquois faced the British and their colonists alone. After the war, Brant became Sir William's close companion and helped him run the Indian Department, administered by the British out of Quebec. He also became an interpreter for an Anglican missionary and helped translate the prayer book and Gospel of Mark into the Mohawk language.

About 1768 he married Christine, the daughter of an Oneida chief, whom he had met in school. Together, they settled on a farm near Canajoharie which Joseph had inherited. While here, Brant assisted in revising the Mohawk prayer book and translating the Acts of the Apostles into the Mohawk language. He also joined the Anglican Church, was a regular communicant, and evinced a great desire to bring Christianity to his people. His wife died of tuberculosis about 1771, leaving him with a son and a daughter. In 1773, he married his wife's sister, Susannah, who died a few months afterward, also of tuberculosis. In Wheelock's school, Joseph learned to read, write, and speak English, probably some Latin and Greek, but he left the school after two years due to Wheelock's stern and aversive discipline. Nevertheless, Brant remained at least a token member of the Church of England (Anglican) all his life

Afterwards, William Johnson's patronage and Brant's friendship with Guy Johnson, William's nephew, elevated Brant to the center of power in the Mohawk and British imperial world. Brant also joined the Freemasons, an organization that gave him links to prominent

Anglo-Americans. Brant's own eloquence and leadership abilities also secured for him a substantial following among his people.

In 1774, Brant sailed to England where he was presented to King George III. His bearing, eloquence, and conviviality also won him the admiration of English society. While in England, Brant also observed first hand the burgeoning military and industrial strength of England, the size of its armies and navy, and the huge populations that crowded into its cities. Brant was well received in England, and was admitted to the best society. Brant's own education and his close association with educated men and his naturally easy and graceful manner facilitated his reception, and as he was an "Indian King" he was too valuable a person to be neglected. The members of the British cabinet and the nobility fawned over him; gave him expensive presents; invited him to their great estates, and arranged to have his portrait painted by famous artists like Reynolds, Romney, and others. Among his particular friends was the English diarist Boswell. Also during this trip Brant received the Masonic degrees in either Falcon Lodge or Hiram's Cliftonian Lodge in London in April 1776. He had the distinction of having his Masonic apron given to him from the hand of King George III.

Brant returned home in 1775 to find the colonists in rebellion against the king. He also arrived to find that his friend and patron William Johnson had died, and had been replaced as the Crown's representative to the Iroquois by William's nephew, Guy Johnson. Johnson fled the Mohawk Valley when the war started and took Brant's sister and her family to Canada to protect them from the revolutionary committees searching the New York backcountry for British sympathizers. Brant also found that the war was splitting the Iroquois into those who favored the Americans and those who favored Great Britain. Sometimes the split fell along religious lines with Presbyterian Iroquois siding with the rebels and the Anglicans siding with the British. Brant was a fervent Anglican.

In August, 1775, the Six Nations staged a big council fire near Albany, New York,, after news of Bunker Hill had made war seem imminent. There they met with the American commissioners who urged the Iroquois to remain neutral, because the Revolution was "a family quarrel" between them and England. After much debate, they decided , in the words of their spokesman Little Abraham, "the determination of the Six Nations [is] not to take any part; but as it is a family affair, to sit still and see you fight it out." The Iroquois, however, set conditions on their neutrality, among which were that the fighting was to be confined to the coast, Iroquois land would not be invaded, and the Iroquois were to be granted free passage through their country was not to be impeded. These provisions did not satisfy Brant, and even Little Abraham expressed some doubts, but both knew, that in the event of war, Iroquoia would be a major battleground.. He feared that the Indians would lose their lands if the colonists achieved independence, but he was even more committed to preserving the unity of the Iroquois Confederation. **Which way would Brant now turn?**

Joseph Brant's Decision

Joseph Brant's decision was almost a foregone conclusion, given his privileged position within the British imperial system. His devout Anglican faith - the "King's faith" - also disposed him to take up arms against the rebels, many of whom were Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The Johnsons and Brant used all their influence to engage the Indians to fight for the British cause, and ultimately succeeded in bringing four of these tribes, the Mohawks, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas into an alliance with England -- the Oneidas and Tuscaroras ultimately sided with the Colonists. By the time he gave his oration at the British/Iroquois council at Oriskany in 1777, he had already committed himself to the British alliance, and his oratory at that conference swung many Iroquois to the British side of the conflict.

About the year 1776, Brant became the principal war chief of the confederacy of the Six Nations, due perhaps to the patronage of the Johnsons and the unusual circumstances in which he was placed. With this high office of leadership, he also received a captain's commission in the British army in charge of the Indian forces loyal to the Crown. Immediately after receiving this appointment, Brant made his first voyage to England. By making this trip, he gained time, and was enabled to observe for himself the power and resources of the King and British government. He also went to protest the policy of Guy Carleton, commander of the British forces in Canada, who refused to invite the Six Nations to join the war against the Americans, except to use 40 to 50 men as scouts.

Brant was well received in England, and was admitted to the best society. His own education and his close association with educated men and his naturally easy and graceful manner facilitated his reception, and as he was an "Indian King" he was too valuable a person to be neglected. The members of the British cabinet and the nobility fawned over him; gave him expensive presents; invited him to their great estates, and arranged to have his portrait painted by famous artists like Reynolds, Romney, and others. Among his particular friends was the English diarist Boswell. He received official assurances that the Indian Loyalists would be utilized to a greater extent in the American conflict than that indicated by Carleton. Also during this trip Brant received the Masonic degrees in either Falcon Lodge or Hiram's Cliftonian Lodge in London in April 1776. He had the distinction of having his Masonic apron given to him from the hand of King George III.

Brant returned from England in time to see some action in the Battle of Long Island in August 1776. He then departed for his homeland, traveling by night to elude the Americans guarding the Hudson highlands and the area around Albany. He told the young Iroquois braves of his trip to England and of the strength and friendship of the British. He denounced the Iroquois' 1775 decision to remain neutral and called the Americans the enemy of all Indians. A tradition says that he promised each of his warriors an opportunity "to feast on a Bostonian and to drink his blood". The speech was received with wild enthusiasm and Brant departed on a tour of regional Iroquois villages to similarly stir up support for the British cause.

On his return to the colonies, he saw action in the Battle of Long Island in August 1776. He led four of the six nations of the Iroquois League in attacks against colonial outposts on the New York frontier. The Iroquois League was a confederation of upper New York State Indian tribes formed between 1570 and 1600 who called themselves "the people of the long house." Initially it was composed of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. After the Tuscarora joined in 1722, the league became known to the English as the Six Nations and was recognized as such in Albany, New York, in 1722. They were better organized and more effective, especially in warfare, than other Indian confederacies in the region. As the longevity of this union would suggest, these Indians were more advanced socially than is often thought. Benjamin Franklin even cited their success in his argument for the unification of the colonies. They lived in comfortable homes, often better than those of the colonists, raised crops, and sent hunters to Ohio to supply meat for those living back in New York. These hunters were usually young braves or young married couples, as was the case with Joseph Brant's parents.

Brant commanded the Indians in the Battle of Oriskany on August 6, 1777. In early 1778 he gathered a force of Indians from the villages of Unadilla and Oquaga on the Susquehanna River. On September 17, 1778 they destroyed German Flats near Herkimer, New York. The patriots retaliated under the leadership of Col. William Butler and destroyed Unadilla and Oquaga on October 8th and 10th. Brant's forces, along with loyalists under Capt. Walter N.

Butler, then set out to destroy the town and fort at Cherry Valley. There were 200-300 men stationed at the fort but they were unprepared for the attack on August 11, 1778. The attackers killed some 30 men, women, and children, burned houses, and took 71 prisoners. They killed 16 soldiers at the fort but withdrew the following day when 200 patriot reinforcements arrived. The settlement was abandoned and the event came to be known as the "Cherry Valley Massacre." Brant won a formidable reputation after this raid and in cooperation with loyalists and British regulars, he brought fear and destruction to the entire Mohawk Valley, southern New York, and northern Pennsylvania. He thwarted the attempts of a rival chief, Red Jacket, to persuade the Iroquois to make peace with the revolutionaries. In 1779, U.S. Major General John Sullivan led a retaliatory expedition of 3700 men against the Iroquois, destroying fields, orchards, granaries, and their morale. The Iroquois were defeated near present-day Elmira, N.Y. In spite of this, Indian raids persisted until the end of the war and many homesteads had to be abandoned. The Iroquois League came to an end after admitting defeat in the Second Treaty of Ft. Stanwix in 1784.

Around 1782, Brant married his third wife, Catherine Croghan, daughter of an Irishman and a Mohawk. With the war over, and the British having surrendered lands to the colonists and not to the Indians, Brant was faced with finding a new home for himself and his people. He discouraged further Indian warfare and helped the U.S. commissioners to secure peace treaties with the Miamis and other tribes. He retained his commission in the British Army and was awarded a grant of land on the Grand River in Ontario by Governor Sir Frederick Haldimand of Canada in 1784. The tract of 675,000 acres encompassed the Grand River from its mouth to its source, six miles deep on either side. Brant led eighteen hundred Iroquois Loyalists from New York State to this site where they settled and established the Grand River Reservation for the Mohawk. The party included members of all six tribes, but primarily Mohawk and Cayugas, as well as a few Delaware, Nanticoke, Tutelo, Creek, and Cherokee, who had lived with the Iroquois before the war. They settled in small tribal villages along the river. Sir Haldimand had hurriedly pushed through the land agreement before his term of office expired and was unable to provide the Indians with legal title to the property. For this reason, Brant again traveled to England in 1785. He succeeded in obtaining compensation for Mohawk losses in the U.S. War for Independence and received funds for the first Episcopal Church in Upper Canada, but failed to obtain firm title to the Grand River reservation. The legality of the transfer remains under question today.

Brant continued with his missionary work. He felt that his followers could learn much from observing the ways of the white man and made a number of land sales of reservation property to white settlers to this end, despite the unsettled ownership. He tried unsuccessfully to arrange a settlement between the Iroquois and the United States. He traveled in the American West promoting an all-Indian confederacy to resist land cessions. Late in his life, he continued the work he had begun as a young man of translating the Creed and important passages of the Old and New Testament into the Mohawk language. He was a man who studied and was able to internalize the better qualities of the white man while always remaining loyal and devoted to his people.

Joseph Brant died at his last residence in what is now Burlington in 1807, Ontario and was buried there. Later his remains were transferred by an Indian relay, where various warriors would take turns to carry him for reburial (a distance of approx. 25 miles) at the church known as The Chapel of the Mohawks in what was once Brant's Mohawk Village (around 1790) and is now part of the city of Brantford.



Molly Brant (*Konwatsi'tsiaiénni*) Mohawk Iroquois 1736 - 1796

Molly was born in 1736, possibly in the Ohio Valley, her family having immigrated there from New York. Her parents seem to have been Margaret and Peter who were from Canajoharie, the upper Mohawk village. They were registered in the chapel at Fort Hunter, the lower village, as Protestant Christians. Peter died while the family was living on the Ohio River, so Margaret and her two children, Molly and Joseph, returned to Canajoharie. Margaret then married Nicklaus Brant, who may have been part Dutch. Both Molly and her brother Joseph, the future great leader of the Iroquois, took Brant's name. Some scholars have suggested that the use of Nickus Brant's surname indicates some nonnative ancestry. If we consider traditional Iroquois society, however, the identity of the father is insignificant in comparison to that of the mother. Iroquois clans are matrilineal, meaning that kinship and descent is based on the maternal or female line.

Nickus Brant, Molly's step father, owned a substantial frame house, lived and dressed in the European style, and, interestingly enough, included the Superintendent for Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson, as a close personal friend. Although not much is known of Molly's life at Canajoharie during the 1740s and 1750s, spanning her infancy through her teenage years and into her early twenties, it is likely that she lived in Nickus Brant's house. She was well educated in the European ways of life, with her formal education likely taking place in an English mission school, as she learned to speak and write English well. It is also likely that she met William Johnson on more than one occasion through this period.

Molly Brant's political career began when she was 18 years old. In 1754-1755, she accompanied a delegation of Mohawk elders to Philadelphia to discuss fraudulent land transactions. This trip may have been part of her training in the Iroquois tradition, because she was to become a clan matron and among the "principal women" of the Mohawk. The Mohawk women not only chose the chief, they also held economic power, controlling the use of agricultural land; they therefore controlled the food supply, which provided them with the ability to veto decisions of the warriors. They were thus able to exercise considerable political power in Iroquois society. Iroquois women in their own society enjoyed more power and higher status than did European colonial women in their societies.

William Johnson was tremendously successful in carving out a wealthy and powerful place for himself in eighteenth century North America. He acquired vast amounts of land in the Mohawk Valley, was a successful colonial trader, and adapted well to Native ways. Johnson was eventually appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the province of New York, and was knighted for his efforts during the French and Indian War (1755-1760). It was at the start of this war, under Johnson's orders, that Fort William Henry was constructed at the southern tip of Lake George, becoming the northernmost British outpost in the interior of Colonial America. The fort also became the scene of one of the most famous and brutal massacres in North American history, immortalized in James Fenimore Cooper's epic *The Last of the Mohicans*. It was at the end of this French and Indian War that Molly Brant and William Johnson began their official association.

William Johnson had previously cohabited with a German woman named Catherine Weissenberg. Although he had hired her as a housekeeper at Fort Johnson, they had three children together. Johnson regarded Weissenberg, who had been an indentured servant, as beneath his social status, but she died in 1759, the same that Molly gave birth to her and Sir William's first child, the first of eight who survived. About the same time, William Johnson became the patron of Molly's brother, Joseph, sending him to a proper English school in Connecticut.

Molly was obviously able to successfully transfer both power and status of her leading position in Mohawk society to her position in the half-European/half-Iroquoian society of the Mohawk valley, as she apparently dominated the Johnson household at Johnson Hall. There are numerous references to her purchasing orders, and to her general control over the estate. It has also been suggested that she took responsibility for the daily affairs of the Indian Department when Sir William was away. Although she was entirely capable, Molly did no housework, as that was the task of the indentured servants and black slaves who worked on the estate and surrounding farm. Her influence among the Mohawk people benefitted Sir William in his position as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and it is certain that his position enabled her to maintain her power and influence in Mohawk society.

Molly Brant was also known as an expert herbalist, bringing her healing abilities to the household. The large herb garden at Johnson Hall is testimony to her interest in what was a lifelong pursuit. She was, however, unable to prevent one untimely death. Suddenly, in July 1774, at the age of 59, Sir William Johnson died. Neither the emotional nor the political turmoil in Molly Brant's life at this time can be gauged. It can be assumed that she took this in stride, moving her family of eight children, who ranged in age from infancy to 15 years, to Canajoharie. It is probable that a number of the servants and slaves from Johnson Hall went with Molly and her family, since Sir William provided generously for them all in his will: a lot in the Kingsland Patent, a black female slave, and £200, New York currency. Molly wasted no time in reestablishing her influence among the Mohawk, for she established a trading business immediately

The American Revolutionary War, or War of Independence, brought about fundamental changes in the lives of Molly Brant and her family. The outbreak of the Revolution unsettled Mohawk country. An organized revolutionary movement developed in the Mohawk Valley in May 1775. In the early summer, Guy Johnson and Daniel Claus, sons-in-law of Sir William, took their families and left the Mohawk Valley, along with many other friends who were loyal to Britain. Sir John Johnson, Sir William's heir, remained at Johnson Hall, firmly believing that the problem between Britain and its North American colonies would be settled peacefully. During the initial stages of the war, most of the Six Nations of the Iroquois remained neutral; some, however, took sides immediately. For a while, Molly Brant remained in Canajoharie, tending her various enterprises and participating as a leader of the Mohawks. Her brother, Joseph, held deep doubts about the wisdom of siding with the Americans. Nevertheless, choosing the British would mean leaving her beloved Mohawk Valley (and her many businesses) for Canada, just as the William Johnson's family had done. As a Mohawk clan matron, she could not refuse to make a choice, whether that choice be for the rebels, the British, neutrality, or yet again emigrating from her beloved valley. **Which path would Molly take?**

Molly Brant's Decision

The American Revolutionary War brought about fundamental changes in the lives of Molly Brant and her family members. During the initial stages of the war, most of the Six Nations of the Iroquois remained neutral; some, however, took sides immediately. Molly's brother, Joseph Brant, did his utmost to persuade the Six Nations - to break their treaty of neutrality with the Americans, which they finally did in 1777, except the Oneidas and the Tuscaroras, most of whom sided in the American rebels.

Apart from the British regulars, there were also loyalist American regiments, one of which was led by Sir John Johnson: The King's Royal Regiment of New York. Through the early part of the war, Molly sheltered and fed loyalists, and sent arms and ammunition to those who were fighting for the King. She is also said to have provided intelligence to the British military, which resulted in the successful defeat of American forces at Oriskany in 1777. Molly and her family were forced to take refuge in Cayuga after the Oneidas and the Americans pillaged her Canajoharie home. Such actions, along with the advancing patriots, ultimately left her no choice but to flee, as many other Iroquois had done before her. In the Fall of 1777, General John Butler, the British commander at Fort Niagara, persuaded her remove herself, her family, two male slaves and two female servants and place herself under his protection at Fort Niagara. Molly then sent her younger children to school in Montreal.

During the war Molly Brant made several trips back and forth between Niagara, Montreal, and Carleton Island, where the British had built a fort. The Mohawk from the upper village of Canajoharie took refuge at Fort Niagara, while those from the lower village traveled to Montreal. Now, more than ever, Molly was expected to use her influence over the Mohawk warriors. She was an intelligent woman, and she used the British administration to increase her own political power and to promote the interests of her people. The British government similarly used her as an instrument of political control. In describing a large Iroquois force that had gathered at Carleton Island, the commander of the fort indicated that "their uncommon good behavior [was] in great measure to be ascribed to Miss Molly Brant's influence over them, which [was] far superior to that of all their Chiefs put together."

Throughout the war, Molly continued to use her influence to steady the warriors, bolster their morale, and strengthen their loyalty to the King. In the course of the hostilities, native, loyalist, and patriot settlements were attacked and burned. Thousands of destitute Iroquois made their way to Fort Niagara, suffering from starvation and illness. Making the situation worse, the winter of 1779-1780 was one of the most severe on record. Support for the American cause from France, Spain, and the Netherlands, and underestimation by the British of

the Americans' determination to gain independence, ultimately decided the outcome of the war. The surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781 ended the war and forced England to recognize the independence of the Thirteen Colonies.

After the war, no provision was made for the Iroquois in the Treaty of Paris of 1783: they were left to conduct their own negotiations. It is known that Joseph Brant petitioned Governor Haldimand on behalf of the Iroquois; it has also been suggested that Molly used her influence on behalf of her people at this time. Eventually, the British granted land on the Bay of Quinte to the Iroquois;. Not all were satisfied, however, and Joseph Brant requested additional lands on the Grand River. The Mohawk who had traveled to Montreal during the war settled on the Bay of Quinte, where they were led by John Deserontyou, while those who had been refugees at Fort Niagara went with Joseph Brant to the Grand River. Molly Brant settled at neither place. It was decided in 1783 that the site of the old French fort at Cataraqi, originally selected for the Iroquois, would be a good place for the settlement of the other Loyalists. It was at this time that Molly decided to settle at Cataraqi . She received a substantial military pension for her service to the King during the war, an amount of £100.

Molly Brant was a strong individual who retained her native heritage throughout her life, often to the disdain of her European contemporaries. Molly is a controversial figure because she was both pro-British and pro-Iroquois. She insisted on speaking Mohawk, she dressed in Mohawk style throughout her life, and she encouraged her children to do the same. She argued on behalf of the Iroquois before, during, and after the American Revolution. She sheltered and fed her people. She complained when she thought the government was ignoring the Iroquois. Did Molly Brant disappear into a life of obscurity, no longer intervening on behalf of her people? After the war, the prominent female presence in the public sphere of Iroquois society had been greatly reduced. For Molly's daughters, this circumstance encouraged acculturation, but Molly could rely on her past performance and recognition to maintain respect from the Europeans among whom she now lived. At the age of 47, after a long and difficult war, it is possible to believe that she was exhausted; the few historical references to her life at Cataraqi, however, indicate that, at least to some extent, she maintained her quiet dominance.

In 1785, Molly traveled to Schenectady in the Mohawk Valley, apparently to sign legal documents. It is reported that the Americans wanted her and her family to return, and went so far as to offer financial compensation. The response, the one to be expected from Molly Brant, was that she rejected the offer "with the utmost contempt."

On April 16, 1796, at the age of about 60, Molly Brant, a true Canadian Heroine, died. She was laid to rest in the burial ground of St. George's Church, located at what was to become the corner of Queen Street and Montreal Street, where St. Paul's Church now stands. Sadly, the exact location of her plot is unknown.



SARAH HANCE AINSE

Oneida Iroquois

c. 1728 - c. 1823

Trader, diplomatic courier, and vocal champion of her own legal rights, a clearly exceptional person, Sarah Ainse was respected by native society and could function well in white society. She had powerful friends and powerful opponents. The new order brought on by the American Revolution neither loved nor cowed her.

Sarah Ainse was well known around Detroit and the Western District of Upper Canada in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Probably an Oneida, although she once claimed to be a Shawnee, she had been brought up on the Susquehanna River. Her exact name is not known but there is speculation that it may have been Hance (or Hands), a name common among the Iroquois. She sometimes used her nickname, Sally.

At 17, Sarah became the second wife of Andrew (Henry) Montour, an Indian agent and interpreter, and lived with him in what is now Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. He fell into debt, perhaps as a result of her extravagance, and in the early 1750s he nearly went to debtors prison. In 1755 or 1756 the family was split. Most of the children were placed with people in Philadelphia. Montour left Sarah and their son Nicholas - who was baptized in Albany, N.Y., on October 1756 - with her relatives, the Oneidas near the Mohawk River. Soon afterwards her Oneida relatives gave her land near Fort Stanwix (Rome, N.Y.). Here by 1759 she had become a trader. Within seven years, she had expanded her trading activities westward to the north shore of Lake Erie, and it seems she was trading to Michilimackinac (Mackinaw City, Mich.) by 1767. Because of the similarity of names, it has often been thought that she was married to Joseph-Louis Ainse, the Michilimackinac interpreter, but it appears that when she was there she lived, for a while at least, with trader William Maxwell.

Shortly before and during the American revolution Sarah moved to the Detroit area. Between 1775 and 1785 Sarah Ainse was an active trader in the Western District, with headquarters of operation in the British-occupied settlement and fort at Detroit. She had become a person of considerable property, owning two houses at Detroit, a considerable amount of flour, cattle, horses, and four slaves.

During the American Revolution, the British used Fort Detroit as a base to plan and launch Indian raids into the Ohio Country. Henry Hamilton, known for paying Indians for American rebel scalps, was the fort's governor during the Revolution. Located far enough away from American controlled Fort Pitt and close to the majority of British-allied Indians, Fort Detroit became the center for the British military and Indian Department efforts in the Western Great Lakes, Southern Ohio, and Kentucky regions during the American Revolutionary War. As a result, Fort Detroit and the surrounding settlement became a spring board for British-allied Native American raids on American settlements in Kentucky and Western Virginia. In order to gain more information concerning the military and British Indian Department activities in the Detroit region, the Americans recruited inhabitants of the Detroit region as spies and sympathizers for the American cause.

Shortly after the outbreak of the Revolution, the British military became aware of American spies and sympathizers in the Detroit region. The first group the British military suspected of treason, with good reason, were the French habitants of the Detroit region. Although the British assumed control of Detroit in 1760, the French habitants (residents) represented the vast majority of people living in the Detroit settlement. The majority of these French had an active role in the fur trade throughout the Western Great Lakes region as well as areas located to the west and south of that area.

As a result of their mutual involvement in the fur trade, the French habitants and the Native Americans in that region developed strong, friendly relationships. Throughout the war, these relationships caused the British military and Indian Department to remain very suspicious of both groups. The British soon realized that the French habitants viewed the war as an Anglo-American civil war, that did not concern them. The French habitants' apparent lack of loyalty to the British cause constantly worried Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton. In mid-1778, Hamilton wrote that he believed "there is but one in twenty (French habitants), whose oath of allegiance would have force enough to bend him to his duty." This would remain true throughout the war. The British soon realized that even some British subjects living in the Detroit region supported the American cause. Hamilton reported that he had come to suspect some British traders' who "are rebels in their hearts". A year later, Hamilton wrote, "The disposition of the (British) people at this place requires something more than the shadow of authority to keep them in the Bounds of Duty." In the first years of the war, Hamilton arrested several French and British traders as well as a number local farmers on ground that they supported, or actually aided, the Americans

It will never be known whether Sarah Aulsebrook was among the American sympathizers or spies at Detroit. Regardless, she doubtless knew and consorted with those French and British traders that Hamilton charged with treason by virtue of their aiding and abetting the American rebels. Furthermore, Sarah was an Oneida, a division of the Iroquois that were tilting toward joining the Americans against the British. But, she also had to consider her business interests. Given that her far-flung trading enterprise covered the entire Western District which included both British- and American-occupied areas, Sarah could not afford to alienate either party to the dispute. This was a conflict in which both sides tolerated no neutrals. **Which side in the conflict would she choose? Or, would she struggle to stay neutral?**

Sarah Ainse's Decision¹

It is said that, in the American Revolution, a third of the inhabitants of the American colonies sided with the American rebels, a third with the British, and a third remained neutral, going about their business between and around the conflict. Sarah Ainse, Iroquois businesswoman, was one such individual. The fact that she wheeled and dealt mostly out of British-held Detroit meant that she had to be careful about keeping good relations with both the Indians and the British, even when they were in conflict with each other.

Between 1775 and 1785 Sarah Ainse was an active trader in the Western District. In 1780, according to a list made by commandant Arent Schuyler DePeyster, two bateau (boat) loads of the merchandise, that were ordered by the merchants of Detroit, belonged to Sarah. She accumulated large debts with merchants William Macomb, John Askin*, and Montague Tremblay. In 1781 her account with Tremblay was for £2,620, in 1783 she did business with Askin to the extent of almost £3,000, and in 1787 her account with Angus Mackintosh was for £685. For the times, these were very large amounts of money. She had become a person of property, owning two houses at Detroit. In addition, the 1779 census records that she owned flour, cattle, horses, and four slaves. In May 1787, Sarah moved to the La Tranche (Thames) River in Canada and built a dwelling on the part of her property that later became Dover East Township. In 1788 she completed the purchase from local Indians of a 150-mile-square property, which ran from the mouth of the river up to the forks where the city of Chatham, Ontario now stands. During the 1780s she seems to have been the wife of John Willson, a trader. He took over responsibility in 1783 for her account with Askin.

In a petition of 1789 to Governor Lord Dorchester, Guy Carleton, Sarah Ainse tried to get title to a portion of the land she had bought from the Indians. She claimed a parcel 300 acres in front by 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ acres in depth. This property lay within the area purchased from the Indians for the British government by deputy Indian agent Alexander McKee in 1790, but she repeatedly asserted, and her statements were confirmed by a number of Indian chiefs, including Egushwa, that her lands were exempt from this treaty. Supported by Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Testard Louvigny de Montigny, a member of the district land board present at the treaty negotiations, McKee denied that this exemption had been intended. McKee was himself a major landowner in the area, as were several members of the land board who denied Sarah her claim. Moreover, the land on the Thames was seen as the most valuable in the district. Were the members of the board simply too inflexible to accept a sale made by Indians, since the institutionalized system disapproved of such sales to individuals? Was it simply that an Indian woman stood in the way of the speculative ventures of the local European elite? Why was the word of as many as 20

¹ Portions of this biography have been excerpted from the Henry Hamilton and the Sarah Ainse entries in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography On Line <<http://www.biographi.ca/EN/index.html>>

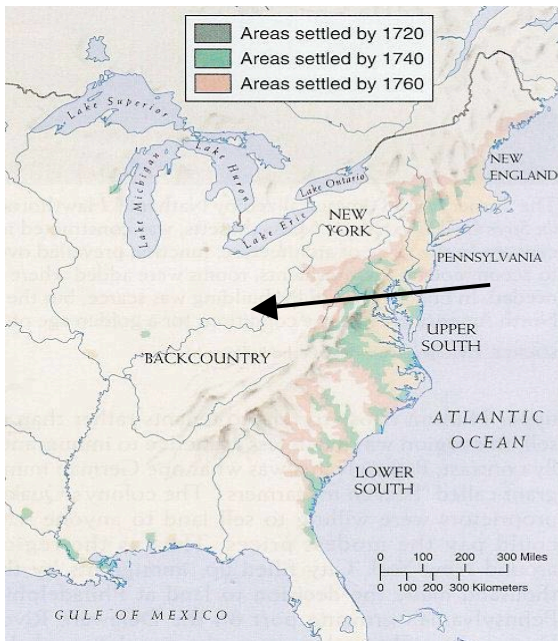
chiefs be discounted? In June 1794, as a result of the influence and pressure of the Superintendent General of Indian affairs, Sir John Johnson, Mohawk chief Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea), and Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, an order was issued that Sarah receive 1,673 acres of the 150 square mile property that she had originally purchased on the Thames River. She now had clear title to 1.7 per cent of the amount for which she had originally petitioned, but the Executive Council nevertheless denied her claim in 1798! Sarah received neither the land nor any compensation .

While she was pursuing her land claim Sarah Ainse still carried on her trading. She successfully sued several people for small debts in 1792, and when the commanding officer at Detroit tried to prevent the sale of liquor to an Indian gathering at the Au Glaize (Defiance, Ohio) - the very epicenter of resistance to American expansion - he complained that "Sally [Sarah] Ainse availed herself of the general prohibition, and privately disposed of a sufficient quantity to keep an entire band drunk." Sarah also acted as messenger and informant for Brant in the critical months after the defeat of the western Indians by Anthony Wayne's forces at the battle of Fallen Timbers (near Waterville, Ohio) in August 1794. Brant wanted to maintain Indian unity against the Americans and through Sarah Ainse sent messages to Egushwa and other leaders of the western tribes. "I am much afraid that your wampum and Speeches will be to little effect with the Indians," she advised Brant in February 1795, "as they are sneaking off to General Wayne every day." Her observation was entirely correct: that very month, many of the Indians who fought against Wayne at Fallen Timbers signed a preliminary agreement with the Americans.

Records of Sarah Ainse's activities after the turn of the century are scant. In September 1806, when she purchased a quart of whisky from John Askin, she was still resident on her Thames River farm. ("I don't mean to ask payment," Askin noted on her account.) A woman of remarkable persistence, in January 1809 she petitioned Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore about compensation for her land claim on the Thames. At that date she was living in Amherstburg, clinging to life as tenaciously as she had clung to her rights. Sarah survived until about 1823. Agents for the executors of Richard Pattinson, to whom she had owed money, applied on 11 Feb. 1824 for authority to administer her estate.

A clearly exceptional person, Sarah Ainse was respected by Indian societies and could function in white society. She had powerful friends and powerful opponents. The new order of white domination brought on by the American Revolution neither respected her , but nor did it intimidate her.

Shawnee Backgrounder, 1754 – 1776



By the 1720's, the Shawnees had begun to return from the Carolinas to the Ohio Valley from whence they had been driven by the Iroquois during the Beaver Wars of the Seventeenth Century. In doing so, they came under the protection of the Iroquois, who now assumed the role, not of conquerors but of the Shawnee's "older brothers," that is, their self-appointed spokesmen and intermediaries with the British under an arrangement called the **Covenant Chain**. At the outbreak of the American Revolution, the Shawnees occupied a precarious position between the frontiers of Virginia and Kentucky and militant Mingo (independent Iroquois) bands closer to the British stronghold of Detroit. Tribes already allied with the British, such as the Iroquoian Mingos, threatened to attack the Shawnee if they made peace with the Virginians. Yet they, not the Mingoes and the Iroquois, occupied the front lines of the escalating conflict in the Ohio Country. They Shawnees not only could not trust the Virginians, but also their experience with the British from the French and Indian Wars in 1754 to the Revolution in 1775 did not instill in them an unwavering trust in the British King and his North American agents.

At the outbreak of the Seven Years War (**The French and Indian War**) in 1754, the Shawnee, Delaware and Mingo stood ready to join the British against the French, but this changed in the fall when it was learned the Iroquois had ceded Ohio to the British during the Albany Conference in May, without, of course, consulting the Delaware or the Shawnee. The Ohio tribes not only lost confidence in the Iroquois, but decided the British were also enemies who wanted to take their land. However, they stopped short of allying with the French and refused to help them supply or defend their forts, preferring to remain neutral. The French were finally forced to assemble a force of 300 French Canadians and 600 allies from the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes tribes to defend Fort Duquesne against the British, but this would include only four Shawnee and no Delaware. The Shawnee and Delaware were angry but neutral while the British assembled an army to take Fort Duquesne. Unfortunately, they did not appear this way to the British.

In July 1755 General Edward Braddock met disaster when his 2,200-man army was ambushed just before reaching Fort Duquesne. Half the command was killed (including Braddock himself, but Colonel George Washington and wagoner Daniel Boone survived.). When the news reached the colonies, disbelief was followed by a violent anger towards all Native Americans. Although the Shawnee and Delaware had not participated in the battle, they chose a very poor moment to send a delegation to Philadelphia to protest the Iroquois cession of Ohio. The Pennsylvania colonial government hanged the delegates, and the Shawnee and Delaware went to war against the British, not for the French, but for themselves. In 1755 war parties struck the frontiers in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland, unleashing a wave of death and destruction that killed 2,500 colonists during the next two years. The Iroquois ordered the Shawnee and Delaware to stop but were ignored. In July, 1759 the Shawnee and Ohio Delaware made peace with the British and ended their attacks on the frontier. Quebec and Fort Niagara fell in the fall. With the surrender of Montreal in 1760, the war in North America was over. The Ohio tribes had taken over 650 white prisoners during the war. These were exchanged on Ohio's Muskingum River in 1761, but surprisingly, half refused repatriation and remained with the Indian communities, which had adopted them. With the war ended, prisoners exchanged, and their claims to Ohio extinguished, the Shawnee and their allies expected the British to leave. Instead the British built Fort Pitt at the site of Fort Duquesne and garrisoned it with 200 men. When the Shawnee and Delaware signed a final treaty at Lancaster in 1762, they felt betrayed.

No longer forced to compete with the French for the allegiances of the Indians, Lord Jeffrey Amherst, the British military commander in North America, decided to treat the native allies of the French as conquered peoples. He terminated the annual presents to alliance chiefs ended and restricted the supply of trade goods, particularly gunpowder and rum. Because the tribes had grown dependent on these items, there was a severe reaction. By 1761 the Seneca were circulating a war belt calling for a general uprising against the British. Only the Shawnee and Delaware responded, but the British Indian agent, Sir William Johnson, discovered the plot during a meeting at Detroit with members of the old French alliance and quieted the Iroquois.

The unrest continued and by the spring of 1763 had collected around the leadership of Pontiac, the Ottawa chief at Detroit. **The Pontiac Rebellion** caught the British completely unaware with the sudden capture of six of nine forts west of the Appalachians. The Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingo besieged Fort Pitt and hit the Pennsylvania frontier with a series of raids, which killed 600 settlers. Only an informer saved the garrison at Detroit, but Forts Niagara and Pitt were surrounded and isolated. In desperation, Amherst wrote the commander at Fort Pitt, Captain Simeon Ecuyer, suggesting he deliberately attempt to infect the Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingo besieging his fort with gifts of smallpox-infected blankets and handkerchiefs. Ecuyer took this as an order and did exactly that. It proved particularly effective because the Ohio tribes had little immunity having missed the 1757-58 epidemic among the French allies contracted during the capture of Fort William Henry (New York). The Shawnee were fighting the Cherokee in Tennessee at the time, and they carried the disease to them, and then to the Shawnee living with the Creek Confederacy. From there, it spread to the Chickasaw and Choctaw, and finally the entire southeast. Before it had run its course, the epidemic had killed thousands, including British colonists. Struggling under the scourge of small pox, Pontiac's Rebellion collapsed after its failure to take Forts Pitt, Niagara, and Detroit, and the French refusal to help their former allies.

Unlike Pennsylvania, Virginia had never renounced its claim to Ohio. In 1749, it chartered the Ohio Company that asserted large land grant at the forks of the Ohio (Pittsburgh). Virginia's claims were far more extensive than Pennsylvania and included the entire Ohio Valley west to the Illinois River including Kentucky, West Virginia, and Lower Michigan. Many colonists (including George Washington) had invested in Ohio land speculation, and the British refusal to open this area for settlement started many of the more wealthy colonists on the path towards revolution. Poor frontiersmen had a simpler solution: They ignored the proclamation and settled on lands in western Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, white settlement was beginning to encroach on the Iroquois homeland. This was the setting in 1768 when the British and Iroquois met at Fort Stanwix and produced a treaty where the Iroquois (who could no longer control the Ohio tribes) ceded Ohio to the British (who could no longer control the Americans). By opening up the ceded lands in Kentucky, the Iroquois hoped to deflect the tide of white settlement from northern New York to the Ohio Country.

These agreements, which opened the Ohio Valley to settlement, were essentially private purchases by land speculators in violation of British law. After the treaty at Fort Stanwix, the British government had basically washed its hands of the whole affair. The British closed Fort Pitt and sat back "to watch the fur fly." By 1774 there were 50,000 frontiersmen west of the Appalachians lusting after Indian land and spoiling for a fight. Most had been fighting Indians for several generations, and they could be brutal and merciless. When they sold their rights to Kentucky, the Cherokee had tried to warn Daniel Boone that the Shawnee would fight if the Americans tried to settle there, but Boone already knew this. They had killed his oldest son James during a hunting expedition in 1773. Early in 1774 Virginia militia took over the abandoned Fort Pitt to use as a supply base for a possible war against the Shawnee.

The following month, another group of Long Knives (Virginians) massacred a peaceful band of Mingo at Yellow Creek (Stuebenville, Ohio). The victims included the Shawnee wife of Logan, a Mingo war chief. Several days later, Logan's brother and pregnant sister were also murdered. However, the Shawnee chief Cornstalk wanted to avoid a war and went to Fort Pitt to ask the Virginians to "cover the dead," a widespread Indian ritual whereby the murderer provides the family of the murder victim a large gift. Meanwhile, Logan went to the Shawnee-Mingo village of Wakatomica and recruited a war party. While Cornstalk was talking at Fort Pitt, Logan's gruesome revenge killed 13 settlers on the Muskingum River. Logan tried to tell colonial officials in July the killing had ended, but the Virginians had gathered into forts awaiting reinforcements from the east. Rather than resolve matters through negotiation, the governor of Virginia, John Murray (4th Earl of Dunmore), himself a speculator in Ohio lands, raised a large army of militia and brought them west to Ohio. Thus began in response, **Lord Dunmore's (Cresap's) War** (1774).

Weakened by the recent defections of their tribesmen to Missouri, the Shawnee sent a war belt to the Detroit tribes, but they refused to take it up. Most of the Delaware also chose to remain neutral, so the Shawnee and Mingo were badly outnumbered. Dunmore's militia destroyed Wakatomica and five other villages, and in October was gathering at Point Pleasant (West Virginia) on the Ohio for a second invasion, when Cornstalk and 300 warriors launched a sudden attack. The battle lasted most of the day with heavy casualties on both sides, but Cornstalk was finally forced to withdraw across the Ohio. A month later, he met with Virginia officials and signed the **Treaty of Camp Charlotte**, giving up Shawnee claims south of the Ohio and promising not to settle there. Immediately afterwards, the remaining Hathawekela Shawnee left Ohio and moved to live with the Creek in northern Alabama. Lord Dunmore's War opened Kentucky for settlement, and in March, 1775 James Harrod founded Harrodstown, the first permanent American settlement in Kentucky. By the time Daniel Boone led a second party through the Cumberland Gap and settled at Boonesborough a month later, the first shots of the American Revolution had been fired at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts.

Nevertheless, the Shawnee were neither reconciled to the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, nor were they defeated in their own war for independence from the Iroquois Confederation, the same Iroquois who had signed away Shawnee rights to Kentucky.

The Shawnees, 1776 - 1783

True to his word, Cornstalk kept the peace with the Long Knives after 1774, but he could not speak for all Shawnee. With the beginning of the Revolution, the British ceased being an interested observer and began urging the Shawnee and others to attack American settlements. Some tribes chose neutrality, but by arguing the Americans were going to take their land, the British succeeded in persuading the Detroit tribes, St. Joseph Potawatomi, Mingo, and the Saginaw and Mackinac Ojibwe to join them against the American rebels. They also got an alliance between the war factions of the Shawnee and Cherokee (Chickamauga). In July, 1776 the Chickamauga attacked two frontier forts in the Carolinas which provoked an American retaliation against all of the Cherokee. Meanwhile, Chickamauga and Shawnee war parties roamed through Kentucky attacking Americans. Before the Iroquois themselves were drawn into the war in 1777, the League demanded the Shawnee stop their attacks, but by this time, they almost expected to be ignored.

Besides encouragement, the British supplied arms and paid bounties for American scalps. The American state governments did the same. This inflamed an already vicious, private war - "The War of the Villages" - between the towns of the Ohio Indians and the Kentucky settlements, that was a separate civil conflict among neighbors, quite apart from the revolutionary conflict east of the Appalachians. Whites murdered Indians they knew, and Indians murdered whites with whom they were acquainted. In July, 1776 near Boonesborough, Daniel Boone's 14-year-old daughter and two of her friends were captured by a Shawnee-Cherokee war party. Boone rescued them after a three-day chase and pitched battle. The situation deteriorated so rapidly into personal hatreds and reprisals that Cornstalk was losing control of his warriors. Accompanied by his son in 1777, Cornstalk went to Fort Randolph (Point Pleasant) to warn the Americans the Shawnee were going over to the British. Rather than being grateful for this, the soldiers took Cornstalk hostage and later murdered him to avenge the killing of a white man. Cornstalk's successor was Blackfish, a bitter enemy of the Americans, who retaliated with raids throughout Kentucky and western Pennsylvania.

By July Boonesborough, Harrodsburg and St. Asaph's (Logan's Fort) were the only settlements left in Kentucky. The other settlers had either moved into the forts or returned east. Even the forts were not safe. In September, Fort Henry (Wheeling) was attacked by 400 Shawnee, Mingo and Wyandot. Half of the 42-man garrison was killed before relief arrived, and before withdrawing, the war party burned the nearby settlement. In February, 1778 General Edward Hand left Fort Pitt with force of Pennsylvania militia on a raid into Ohio. Hand never caught any hostiles, but his "Squaw Campaign" destroyed two peaceful villages and almost brought the Delaware into the war. Hand resigned and was replaced by General Lachlan McIntosh. Meanwhile, a white scout and trader at Fort Pitt named Simon Girty became convinced the Americans would lose the war and deserted to the British. Known as the "Great Renegade," Girty would soon be leading Shawnee war parties and become one of Long Knives' most effective enemies.

In May Blackfish and Half King led 300 Shawnee and Wyandot warriors in an attack on Fort Randolph to avenge Cornstalk. The fort's commander, however, refused to allow his men outside to fight, and frustrated after a week-long siege, the war party left and moved up the Kanawha River to attack settlements near Greenbrier. Daniel Boone had been captured by the Shawnee in February, but Blackfish refused to turn him over to the British and adopted him as his own son. Boone escaped in June to warn Boonesborough of an impending attack. This finally came in September, and while his warriors besieged Boonesborough for nine-days, Blackfish stood outside the walls and berated Boone's ingratitude and betrayal of his adopted father. Despite Hand's "Squaw Campaign," the Delaware went to Fort Pitt in September and signed a treaty of friendship and alliance with the Americans. They also agreed to the construction of an American fort on the west bank of the Tuscarawas in Ohio to "protect them from the British" but balked at joining an expedition to capture Detroit. This lack of cooperation made the Long Knives suspicious, and in November while escorting them to the site of the new fort, the Delaware head chief White Eyes was murdered by the Americans.

The Americans won a major victory in 1778 when George Rogers Clark captured the British forts at Vincennes (Fort Sackville) and Kaskaskia in August and took control of the Illinois Country. With the help of the Detroit tribes, the British re-occupied Fort Sackville in December, but Clark

counterattacked and forced its surrender in February, 1779. British prisoners were spared, but Indians were executed by tomahawk. As if cursed by White Eyes' ghost, Fort Laurens on the Tuscarawas became a deathtrap for the Americans. In January, 1779 a detachment was attacked a Mingo war party led by Simon Girty. A month later, 18 soldiers were killed directly in front of the fort, and the Mingo and Wyandot kept it surrounded until relief arrived from Fort Pitt in March. By August it had been abandoned as indefensible. The Kentuckians retaliated for Shawnee raids in May when John Bowman and 300 mounted volunteers crossed the Ohio River and burned Old Chillicothe. Blackfish was killed, and the Shawnee moved their villages from the Scioto farther north to the Mad River.

The Long Knives were in an ugly mood. They not only rejected a peace offer from the Wyandot and Shawnee but attacked a delegation of Delaware (American allies at the time) enroute to meet with the Congress at Philadelphia. Tired of the fighting, the last of the Kispoko Shawnee and Piqua Shawnee left for Spanish Louisiana leaving the Chillicothe and Mequachake as the last Shawnee in Ohio. The cycle of atrocity and revenge continued during 1781, In the spring Daniel Brodhead burned the Delaware capital at Coshocton. Women and children were taken prisoner, but the men were executed by tomahawk. In March, 1782 Pennsylvania militia massacred 90 peaceful Moravian Delaware at Gnadenhuetten (Ohio) giving the Delaware good reason for revenge. In June an American offensive against the Sandusky villages was defeated during a two-day battle in northern Ohio. The American commander, Colonel William Crawford was captured by the Wyandot and turned over to the Delaware. While Simon Girty watched and taunted him, the Delaware burned Crawford (a personal friend of George Washington) at the stake. In August Girty led another raid against Kentucky, this time at Bryan's Station. Pursued by militia, he ambushed them at Blue Licks on the Licking River. Sixty Americans were killed including Daniel Boone's son Israel. The Mingo burned Hannastown, Pennsylvania, and in October a 300-man war party attacked Fort Henry at Wheeling, West Virginia for a second time. The following month, Clark with 1,100 mounted riflemen defeated the Shawnee on the Miami River and burned six of their villages, including New Chillicothe.

The Revolutionary War ended in 1783 with the Treaty of Paris, but the war between the Ohio tribes and Long Knives continued with few interruptions until 1795. Although the British asked their allies to stop their attacks on the Americans, there was a great deal of hypocrisy in this request. The British continued to perform the old French role of resolving intertribal disputes while at the same time encouraging an alliance to keep the Americans out of Ohio. While there was never a formal military alliance between them, the British provided aid and arms to the Ohio tribes from forts on American territory which they continued to occupy in violation of the peace treaty. Nevertheless, the British were more of an opportunist than instigator in this conflict. After seven years of brutal warfare, both sides still had scores to settle. Although the United States and Great Britain had made peace, the Long Knives did not feel this changed anything between themselves and the Shawnee. There was only a lull in the fighting, while each party sized up the intentions of the other.

The Shawnees survived the repeated invasions. They pulled back when American armies invaded their country, watched as the troops torched villages and cornfields, then returned or rebuilt their homes in safer locations after the enemy departed. Cornfields and hunting territories beyond the reach of American strikes, as well as British supplies from Detroit, sustained their efforts. Were the war to continue for another year, the American generals on the Ohio predicted that the Shawnee and their allies would have swept Kentucky clear of white settlers. Suddenly, after the Treaty of Paris, British officers in Detroit began urging chiefs to restrain their warriors and tried to sell them the Peace of Paris as offering a new era of peace with the Americans. During an exchange of prisoners at the Ohio falls in 1783, American major Wall gloated before the Shawnee delegates: "Your Fathers the English have Peace with us for themselves, but forgot you their Children, who Fought for them, and neglected you like Bastards."

This was the real disaster of the Revolution for the Shawnees. Between 1775 and 1790, some eighty thousand white settlers poured into Shawnee hunting territories, an invasion of settlers and land speculators that gathered pace dramatically after Independence. Any hopes the Shawnees had of recovering their Kentucky lands disappeared with the end of the Revolution. Having carried the fight south of the Ohio and lost, Shawnees henceforth fought to preserve their lands north of the river. They were left to face American aggression on their own, but remained committed to the defense of their lands.

Black Hoof (*Catahecasa, Quaskey*) (Shawnee) ca. 1722 - 1831



Black Hoof was a leader and headman of the Shawnee Nation. His birth probably occurred in the northwestern part of modern-day Ohio. His Indian name was Catahecasa and Quaskey. Little is known about his early years. Some historians believe he was born in 1717, but this seems unlikely considering that he lived until 1831.

Black Hoof's life reflected the essentially conservative values of Shawnee society. Like other First Nation peoples, the Shawnee borrowed selectively from European and Indian neighbors, but they strongly held on to their own culture ... and independence. This desire to preserve their culture and independence prompted the Shawnee to choose migration, rather than accept the consequences of living aside aggressive Europeans. Black Hoof never converted to Christianity, though in his later life he developed a warm relationship with the Quakers. David McClure, who visited the Shawnee during Black Hoof's time, commented that the Shawnees "have always shown great opposition to Christianity and have great hatred of the *Long Knife*, which is the name given by them to the *Virginians*."

In a departure from Shawnee tradition, however, Black Hoof gained a singular reputation for his faithfulness to one woman. When he was a young warrior he wooed and finally won the daughter of a headman. He lived with her for forty years and raised a large family. Colonel McKenney, accustomed to chiefs with as many as five wives, was astounded when Black Hoof told him he had lived with one woman all his life.

Throughout his life, Black Hoof demonstrated an ability to balance negotiation with military action to assure Shawnee cultural integrity and independence. Allied with the French, Black Hoof was present at the defeat of Edward Braddock's British forces during the French & Indian War. Black Hoof led the Shawnee attack on Fort Mifflin in 1763 during the French War, and participated in all the Ohio wars against the British. Black Hoof also probably joined Pontiac in his revolt against the British. Likewise, he most likely fought the Virginians at the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774 during Lord Dunmore's War. The Battle of Point Pleasant only confirmed his dislike for the Virginians. During the battle, a fellow Shawnee soldier, Pucksinwah, fell to a Virginian's bullet. Afterwards, Black Hoof assumed guardianship of Pucksinwah's son, the boy that would eventually grow to become the great Shawnee statesman and general: Tecumseh.

Black Hoof, however, was not reconciled to the Treaty of Camp Charlotte that concluded Dunsmore's War but also forced the Shawnee to cede their Kentucky hunting grounds to the Virginians and established the Ohio as the boundary between European and native settlements. Particularly, galling was the requirement of the treaty for the return of captives, many of whom were well assimilated into Shawnee society. Both Black Hoof and Cornstalk, for example balked at returning the offspring of black women and a Shawnee fathers as "we thought it very hard they shou'd be made Slaves of."

For many Shawnees, such as Black Hoof and Cornstalk, it was apparent that the American Revolution simply merged with the hostilities engendered by Lord Dunmore's War and that the struggle against Virginian aggression would continue unchecked. Lord Dunmore's War meant that Kentucky could be settled and the Virginia elite - the George Washingtons and Thomas Jeffersons - could become rich through speculation in Indian lands and African slaves. Dunmore had demonstrated how Indian hating and murder, occasioned by rum and back country settlers, could serve "the desires of these more discreet men to become wealthy".

Using the fraudulent Treaty of Fort Stanwix in which the Shawnee's "elder brothers," the Six Nations Iroquois Confederation, ceded Shawnee lands to divert white settlers from Iroquoia, land speculators targeted Shawnee hunting territory. The encroachments of trespassing white settlers destroyed or drove away the game. Beginning in 1775 and continuing through 1790, some eighty thousand people poured into Shawnee hunting territories north and south of the Ohio, an invasion of settlers and land speculators that accelerated after Independence. In June 1775, Shawnees, for example, complained that the Virginians "were killing our deer and destroying our trees." In July 1775, Cornstalk and other chiefs told the Virginians, "We are often inclined to believe there is no resting place for us and that your Intentions were [sic] to deprive us entirely of our whole Country." Settlers continued to pour into the Ohio while the Maquachake, the diplomatic arm of the Shawnee nation, attempted to stem the Shawnee drift towards war.

Despite the invasion of white settlers, the Shawnee were a divided people on the eve of the Revolution. In the spring and summer of 1776, Black Hoof's division, the Maquachake, counseled peace among the other Shawnee towns along the Scioto and Miami Rivers and assured George Morgan, the U.S. Indian commissioner at Pittsburgh, that the Shawnee would remain neutral. But, the other Shawnee divisions - the Chillicothes, Piquas, and Kispokis - thought otherwise and, like Black Hoof, were unreconciled to the consequences of Lord Dunmore's War and American trespassing upon their lands. In April 1776, a delegation of Shawnees traveled south through Kentucky to carry a nine-foot war belt to the Cherokee in an effort to precipitate a united resistance against the Virginians. As the Shawnee war party continued to gain strength over the peace party led by Cornstalk and Moluntha and Kishanosity, individual Shawnee soldiers and villages began to accept the war belt from British governor Henry Hamilton at Detroit and joined the Mingoies in raiding the American frontier.

Black Hoof was a man of the Maquachake division, the division of healing and medicine, a man who took seriously his responsibilities to reconcile and to heal as well as to lead his nation. His fellow Maquachake, Cornstalk, also was struggling down that path. Yet, the evidence of Virginian aggression was blatant. But to ally with the untrustworthy British was to risk the kind of destruction that the Shawnee experienced during the French and Indian War and Lord Dunmore's Wars. **Which path would Black Hoof choose?**

Sources: Calloway, Colin G. *The American Revolution in Indian Country; Crisis and diversity in Native American Communities*. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995); White, Richard. *The Middle Ground*. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), p. 364.

Black Hoof's Decision

Despite the invasion of white settlers, the Shawnee were a divided people on the eve of the Revolution. In the spring and summer of 1776, Black Hoof's division, the Maquachake, counseled peace among the other Shawnee towns along the Scioto and Miami Rivers and assured George Morgan, the U.S. Indian commissioner at Pittsburgh, that the Shawnee would remain neutral. The murder of peace-seeking Cornstalk, Red Hawk and all their fellows at Fort Randolph shocked Black Hoof and other Shawnees seeking some accommodation with the Americans. Denunciations of the Virginian treachery accompanied news of the act throughout the Indian villages of the North. The erstwhile Shawnee Neutralist, Nimwa, at once became an enemy of the United States. American officials struggled to maintain neutralist factions among the Shawnees and Delawares at Coshocton. A month after the murders, American general Edward Hand wrote to Patrick Henry that he knew "it would be vain for me to bring the perpetrators of this horrid act to justice," but by May several Anglo-Americans stood trial for the crimes at the Rockbridge County Court. It is almost needless to say that all were acquitted; not white citizen would testify against them. This was the last straw for Black Hoof. He accepted the war belt and threw himself into the war against the Americans.

Black Hoof fought long and well against the Americans during the Revolutionary War. After the war, he continued his resistance by joining Little Turtle's northern alliance against the escalating invasion of the Ohio country by white settlers. Although it is not confirmed, many historians believe that he took part in St. Clair and Harmar's Defeat during the 1790s. He did fight at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and represented the Shawnee at the signing of the Treaty of Greenville after the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

Tecumseh, with his fine oratorical skills was unable to convince Black Hoof and his followers to join a revived Indian coalition against the Americans, even though Black Hoof had been an ardent opponent to white expansion prior to the Greenville Treaty. Reconciled to peace, he visited Fort McArthur in 1813 and was shot in the face by a white Indian-hater, causing a serious injury, from which he made a full recovery.

Following the Treaty of Greenville, Black Hoof became convinced that the Indians had no hope against the Americans except to adopt their customs. Using his influence with the Shawnee, Black Hoof encouraged the Shawnee to adopt the Euro-American's ways of living. By 1808, his followers established farms at Wapakoneta. A member of the Society of Friends (Quakers) visiting Wapakoneta reported that the Indians were farming over two hundred acres of land. There were several hundred head of cattle and hogs, and other improvements included the construction of a sawmill and a grist mill.

Black Hoof supported peace with the Americans and encouraged the Shawnee to do the same, despite the efforts of the resurgence of militant resistance championed by Tecumseh and his brother, the Prophet. Conflicts between the Shawnee and the Americans continued. Black Hoof proved to be a major problem for Tecumseh and the Prophet as they tried to unite the Indians against the white settlers during the early 1800s. But if Tecumseh and the militants failed to secure for the Indians their homelands, so too for the most part, did those, such as Black Hoof, who tried to accommodate the American expansionists. Black Hoof discovered that his studied neutrality during the War of 1812 did not win for his people the protection of their remaining lands. In their villages around Wapakoneta, they met with unyielding American pressure to cede their lands. In 1817, the Treaty of the Miami Rapids limited their holdings to a small reserve around Black Hoof's village of Wapakoneta.

Over the next two decades following the war, the Americans forced most Shawnees to yield their land and to seek refuge across the Mississippi. By the 1820's and early 1830's, against Black Hoof's wishes, most Shawnees had begun the trip to the Kansas River Valley. In 1826, Black Hoof organized a Shawnee emigration camp at Wapakoneta from which he led several hundred Shawnee for the Kansas territory. The eighteen-month migration was a difficult journey and the people suffered many hardships. Some were lucky enough to survive the trip. After leading his people to Kansas, Black Hoof returned to Wapakoneta.

In 1831 a proposition was made by the government to purchase the land of the Shawnee about Wapakoneta. The Shawnees accordingly held a council, and prepared a petition to Congress, setting forth their grievances and asking additional compensation. The Shawnees formed a committee of four, including Black Hoof, to present the petition to the government. The deputation set forth on this mission in December, 1831. These negotiations resulted in the surrender of the Ohio lands held by the Shawnee nation. An anecdote is told of the celebrated chief, touching this sale of land. He was asked if he agreed to the sale, at which he replied: "No." "Why then did you sell?" "Why," he replied, "because the United States Government wanted to buy and possess our lands, and remove us out of the way. I consented because I could not help myself, for I never knew them to undertake anything without accomplishing it. I knew that I might as well give up first as last, for they were determined to have our lands."

Black Hoof died shortly after the ceding of the Shawnee's last lands in Ohio at the advanced age of 109 years. There is a monument at the corner of Route 65 and US Route 33 in St. Johns, four miles east of Wapakoneta, Ohio. Shawnee country, bereft of Shawnees.

Cornstalk (*Keigh-tugh-qua, Hokolesqua*)

Shawnee. ca. 1720 - 1777



Cornstalk was a chief of the Shawnee Nation. He was born circa 1720. Little is known about his early years. In all likelihood, he was born in Pennsylvania, the home of the Shawnee in the 1720s, and then moved to Ohio around 1730 with the bulk of the Shawnee Nation. Cornstalk was one of the Maquachake Shawnees, whose community produced accommodationist leaders, such as Malunthy, as well as the more militant Black Fish and Black Hoof. The Maquachakes were but one of the five divisions of Shawnees, each with specific responsibilities. The Maquachakes were responsible for health and medicine and supplied healers and counselors, the Piquas were charged with matters of religion and ritual, the Kispokis for matters of training for war and preparing war leaders, the Chillicothe and Thawekila divisions took care of political concerns that affected the whole Shawnee nation and generally supplied political leaders. The Mequachakies also acted as counselors, intermediaries with “outsiders.” These Maquachake traditions prepared Cornstalk, Black Hoof, and Malunthy, to become leaders, but also brokers between Native peoples and the European colonists.

During the French & Indian War, Cornstalk and the Shawnee sided with the French. They feared that English settlers would flood the Ohio Country if the Anglo-Americans were not stopped on the east slope of the Appalachian Mountains. Cornstalk led raiding parties into western Virginia, hoping to drive the English away from Shawnee territory. He also played an active part in Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763. Colonel Henry Bouquet defeated the Shawnee in 1764. To assure that the natives would sign a peace treaty ending the rebellion, Bouquet seized several hostages, including Cornstalk. The Shawnee agreed not to take up arms against the English again.

During the next decade, fighting did occur between the English and the Ohio natives. Cornstalk tried to ease the tensions, but the influx of more white settlers placed him in the minority of how to deal with the whites. By the spring of 1774, violence was constant. On May 3, 1774, a group of English colonists, seeking vengeance, killed and mutilated eleven Mingo Indians, one of them the pregnant sister of Chief Logan, leader of the Mingo at Yellow Creek. Upon hearing of the murders, many Mingo and Shawnees demanded retribution. Some, like Cornstalk, urged conciliation. Cornstalk and most other Shawnee natives promised to protect English fur traders in the Ohio Country from retaliatory attacks since the traders were innocent in this attack. Logan, however, was not easily assuaged, and Shawnee and Mingo chiefs permitted him to attack the parties responsible for his family members' murders-British colonists living south of the Ohio River.

Logan took approximately two dozen warriors to exact revenge on the colonists. He marched into western Pennsylvania. There, his followers killed thirteen settlers before returning back west of the Ohio River. Captain John Connolly, commander of Fort Pitt, immediately prepared to attack the Ohio Country natives. Lord John Murray Dunmore, the governor of Virginia, offered his colony's assistance. Dunmore hoped to prevent Pennsylvania's expansion into modern-day West Virginia and Kentucky. He believed the best way to do this was to place Virginia militiamen in these regions. He also hoped to benefit by opening these lands to white settlement. In essence, Dunmore hoped to engage in real estate speculation.

In August 1774, Pennsylvania militia entered the Ohio Country and quickly destroyed seven Mingo villages, which the Indians had abandoned as the soldiers approached. At the same time, Lord Dunmore sent one thousand men to the Little Kanawha River in modern-day West Virginia to build a fort and to attack the Shawnees. Cornstalk, who had experienced a change of heart toward the white colonists as the soldiers invaded the Ohio Country, dispatched nearly one thousand Shawnee to drive Dunmore's force from the region. The forces met on October 10, 1774, at what became known as the Battle of Point Pleasant. After several hours of intense fighting, the English drove Cornstalk's followers north of the Ohio River. Dunmore quickly followed the Shawnees across the river into the Ohio Country. Upon nearing the Shawnee villages on the Pickaway

Plains, Dunmore stopped and requested that the Shawnees discuss a peace treaty with him. The Shawnees agreed, but, while negotiations were under way, Colonel Andrew Lewis and a detachment of Virginia militia that Dunmore had left behind at Point Pleasant crossed the Ohio River and destroyed several Shawnee villages. Fearing that Dunmore intended to destroy them, the Shawnees immediately agreed to terms before more bloodshed could erupt. Under this treaty, the Shawnee had to agree the terms of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1768) to cede their lands east and south of the Ohio River and to no longer attack English colonists traveling down the Ohio River. Particularly galling was the requirement of the treaty for the return of captives, many of whom were well assimilated into Shawnee society. Cornstalk balked at returning the offspring of black women and a Shawnee fathers as “we thought it very hard they shou’d be made Slaves of.” Nevertheless, Cornstalk struggled to abide with this treaty.

In the spring and summer of 1776, Cornstalk continually assured American Indian agent George Morgan in Pittsburgh that his people intended to remain neutral in the War. He led a Maquachake peace delegation to the Shawnee towns along the Miami and Scioto rivers, but many Chillicothes, Piquas, and Kispokis were not buying his message of peace. A delegation of Shawnees traveled south to persuade the Cherokees to join them in a united front against the Virginians. Nevertheless, that autumn, Shawnee peace advocates, including Cornstalk, attended a multiracial treaty council at Pittsburgh with American Indian commissioner George Morgan. In a private conference with Morgan, Cornstalk, Nimwha, and other Maquachakes assured Morgan that the source of the troubles lay not with the British in Detroit but with the malcontent Shawnees and Mingoes in Pluggy’s Town and that the Maquachake peace party would keep the Americans informed of hostile Indian movements if they Americans would keep the Maquachake’s informed of hostile moves by the white settlers. Throughout 1777, Maquachake peace advocates kept the Americans informed about developments in Indian country and among their own people.

Despite Cornstalk, Moluntha, and Kishanosity’s best efforts, the war party continued to gain strength as increasing numbers of Shawnee warriors accepted the war belt from Governor Henry Hamilton at Detroit and joined the Mingoes led by Pluggy in raids into Kentucky. That summer, Cornstalk’s sister, Nonhelema carried a warning to the American garrison at Fort Randolph on the Kanawha that many of her people had joined the British. On October 6th, Captain Matthew Arbuckle, commander at Fort Randolph detained two Shawnees - Red Hawk and Petalla - who had come to the fort at Cornstalk’s request to inform them that it was no longer possible to hold the militant young men of his tribe in check and that the agreement made with Lord Dunmore three years previously could no longer be maintained. A few days later, Cornstalk’s son, Elinipsico, came to the fort to see why Red Hawk and Patalla had been detained and was quickly imprisoned. At this point, Arbuckle resolved to apprehend “as many [Shawnee] as fall into my hands” and hold them as hostages for the Shawnee nation’s good behavior.

Cornstalk agonized over what to do next. No matter how many Shawnees Arbuckle detained, their captivity would not restrain the drift toward the British and war against the Americans advocated by the Shawnee militants. And, he wondered if he had been wrong all along by insisting on peace. The achievements of the militant Shawnees in Kentucky were impressive so far. Only four Anglo-American stations, or forts, in Kentucky were left standing: McClelland’s, Logan’s, Boonesboro, and Harrodsburg. They rest had been abandoned as result of the Indian onslaught. Perhaps, had the Shawnee struck the intruders with full force immediately from the beginning, the whites would never have gotten their toe hold at all in Kentucky. It was not too late to throw his support to Black Snake and the others.

Cornstalk was a loving father and leader wanted so much to keep his son and his other detainees safe, and he resolved to do whatever he could to make it so. But he also knew that, by going to Fort Randolph to plead their case, he was endangering his own life. Few Americans were as trustworthy or humane as Commissioner George Morgan. Many, if not most, of the new European settlers were Indian haters. Their young men were reckless and viscous drunkards, Indian haters who thought nothing of killing every Indian they met, friend or foe. “Indian haters killed Indians who warned them of raids. They killed Indians who scouted for their military expeditions. They killed Indian women and children”” Captain Matthew Arbuckle himself might be an Indian hater. Might the Shawnee captives be dead already? With that in mind, should Cornstalk travel to Fort Randolph to negotiate with Arbuckle and the Virginians or could he cut his losses, join the party of war, and ally himself with the British at Detroit. **What path should Cornstalk choose?**

Cornstalk's Decision



In a private conference with American Indian commissioner George Morgan in 1777, Cornstalk, Nimwha, and other Maquachakes assured Morgan that the source of the troubles lay not with the British in Detroit but with the malcontent Shawnees and Mingoes in Pluggy's Town and that the Maquachake peace party would keep the Americans informed of hostile Indian movements if they Americans would keep the Maquachake's informed of hostile moves by the white settlers. Then, Captain Arbuckle at Fort Randolph took a number of Shawnee's hostage, including Cornstalk's son. Cornstalk was torn, but he shook his head to clear away the thoughts, not giving in to the "what-if's" of his peace policy. He, as leader of his people, had given his word, and a Shawnee's word was not given lightly, nor his promise easily broken. He had to go to Fort Randolph to explain to the Americans that the situation was becoming unhinged, that many Shawnees were tilting towards the party of war, and that he himself had grave doubts about his own policies. Cornstalk set out for Fort Randolph, which was located on Point Pleasant on the south bank of the Ohio River, where he had fought the Virginians in Lord Dunmore's War no so many years previously.

As Cornstalk forded the Ohio on horseback, his vigorous waving of the white flag kept the whites gathering on the shore from firing on him. He was immediately escorted by a squad of soldiers to the headquarters of the Fort Randolph commander, Captain Matthew Arbuckle, who regarded them with suspicion and ill-concealed fear.

"Why have you come here, Cornstalk?" he asked.

Cornstalk, by all accounts spoke English reasonably well, but he spoke slowly and distinctly to be sure the officer understood him well. "I come with grave news. At the camp of Charlotte [Treaty of Charlotte] three years ago, I gave my word as a principal chief of the Shawnees that our nation would keep the peace, would remain on our side of the Spaylawwitheepi [The Ohio River] and refrain from retaliation if grievances arose between my people and yours, but instead take those grievances to the white commanders and they would be smoothed. This was a talk-treaty and papers were to be marked later at the Fort of Pitt, where the Spaylawwitheepi (Ohio River) begins. But because of the troubles that have arisen, including the war between your own people [the Revolution], this did not come about. We have been injured in many ways, by the whites since then and though we have brought our grievances to the Fort of Pitt and discussed them at length, they have not been smoothed and have only become worse."

... Cornstalk held Captain Arbuckle with a steady, steely gaze and continued. "Now I have come here to say to you that these grievances have become too great to be borne. I can no longer restrain my young men from joining the raiding parties encouraged by our friends, the British. I no longer *wish* to restrain them. We have suffered much at the hands of the *Shemanese* [whites] who have repeatedly broken the talk-treaty. Now there is a treaty no longer. It is a matter of honor that we honor that I have come here to tell you this."

Captain Arbuckle rose from behind his desk and, without replying to Cornstalk's remarks, ordered the squad of soldiers to put them in confinement with the other Shawnee in a cabin which he designated, adding, "Apparently, we're at war with the Shawnees again. We'll hold these hostage."

Angered by such treatment but unable to do anything about it, Cornstalk allowed himself to be led to a single-room cabin in which there was a table and two chairs, a large fireplace, and a crude ladder leading up to a partial loft ... and Red Hawk and Cornstalk's son, Elinipsico. The single door was bolted from the outside and there were only three narrow slits as windows.

"This was all a mistake," Red Hawk said bleakly. He glanced up at the loft and then stooped and peered up the fireplace chimney.

"I do not regret that I came," Cornstalk said calmly. "I regret only that my son and my friend are here with me and that the whites acted so dishonorably."

Soon a disturbance was heard outside and through the slits they could see Captain Arbuckle arguing with a large unruly group of armed men, saying that the Indians were unarmed and official hostages and were not to be molested. Arbuckle, however, was shoved aside and the mob surged toward the cabin.

Inside, Elinipsico began to scale the ladder to the tiny partial loft, but Cornstalk called him to come back down, which he did. Cornstalk placed his hands on his son's shoulders. "My son," he said gently, "God has seen fit that we should die together and has sent you to that end. It is Her will, and She will gather us up, so let us submit. Her ways are sometimes mysterious, but She knows what is best."

Not inclined to such meek submission, Red Hawk leaped to the fireplace and quickly scrambled up the chimney. He was not sooner out of sight than the bolt was thrown and the door yanked open. The gap was immediately filled with a motley mixture of soldiers and frontiersmen armed with rifles. Cornstalk, one arm on his son's shoulders, faced them without expression.

"By God," exclaimed the leader, Captain John Hall, "it is Cornstalk!" He brought his rifle to bear, as did Adam Barns, Hugh Gailbreath, Malcolm McCoun, and William Roane, along with several others and a barrage of shooting broke out. Even after Cornstalk and Elinipsico fell to the ground, others crowded to the door and shot into the bodies.

"Where the hell's the third one?" someone shouted and a search was begun, first up the loft and then the fireplace. The chimney had quickly narrowed, and Red Hawk was braced fearfully as high up as he could go. It was not high enough. He kicked at the hands that reached for him but they finally caught hold of his ankles, and they dragged him, blackened, onto the cabin's hard-packed earthen floor where he was shot, tomahawked, and beaten with clubs and rifle butts until his form was hardly recognizable as human.

Such was the price of Shawnee honor.

The wrath of the Shawnees at the murder of their principal chief, his son, and his chief attendant, reverberated throughout the Shawnee nation. It was an act of war and if it was the war the *Shemanese* wanted, they would now get it.

Several months after the murders, on March 27, 1778, the Virginia Council issued a notice for the arrest of five of the identified perpetrators and offered a reward for their arrest on the charge of murder. There seems to be no record of any of these five ever having been arrested or tried for their crime. Sixty-three years later in 1841, while excavations were being made at Point Pleasant for a street, the remains of three men were found, believed to be those of Cornstalk, Red Hawk, and Elinipsico. The account states that "the bones were much broken and jammed as if by blows, five or six rifle balls also were found among them." These bones were buried in the yard of the Mason County Court House.

[Portions of this account is excerpted from Allan W. Eckert's semi-fictional, but well-researched, book, *A Sorrow in Our Heart: The Life of Tecumseh* (Bantam Books, New York, 1992), pp. 152-154.- with some modifications.]

Nonhelema

Shawnee

ca. 1740's - ca. 1820



Nonhelema - known to the Europeans as the "Grenadier Woman" - was the chief of her own village on the Scioto River. An attractive woman, she stood six and a half feet tall and had a well formed body in good proportion to her height. She was the sister of Hokolequa ("Cornstalk") and, therefore, was a member of the Maquachake division of the Shawnee nation, a division whose responsibility it was to deal with outsiders, negotiate with them, and make treaties. She married Moluntha in 1760. This marriage produced Cheska and Captain Johnny. Moluntha later married two younger women - not an usual arrangement in Shawnee society. Although we have no record of how Nonhelema felt about sharing her husband with two other women, she remained fiercely loyal to Moluntha until he was murdered by the Americans in 1786.

Because of her great height, the white settlers called Nonhelema "the Grenadier Woman." The Moravian missionaries who lived among the neighboring Delawares named her Katherine. She was often called Kate by the white settlers and traders. Nonhelema became acquainted with the early white settlers and developed an fondness for them. Without being a traitor to her own people she frequently gave the whites information that was very beneficial to them. However, she tolerated whites in her neighborhood as long as they were few and friendly.

American commissioners traveling through the Shawnee nation in 1775 to invite tribes to meet at Fort Pitt with George Morgan in the fall found the Shawnee's "constantly counseling." They acknowledged the Maquachakes as the treaty-making division of the Shawnees. The commissioners sought out Shawnee women, such as Nonhelema, because they knew what was going on, not just in their village, but throughout the entire Shawnee nation. Commissioner Butler wrote that he found "some Women wiser than some Men." In talking to the women, the American Commissioners found "all seemed very uneasy in Expectation that there would be a War." Women had much to fear from war. They had charge of planting, tending, and harvesting the extensive Shawnee fields of corn, pumpkins, and squash and tending to the orchards of fruit trees, and helping manage the cattle and pigs that the Shawnee had incorporated into their economy.

The women knew that, when war came, American strategy, like the French and the British before them, aimed to carry the war into Indian country, destroying villages and carrying off Indian property, leveling orchards, carrying off livestock, and burning Indian crops late in the season when there was insufficient time for raising another crop before winter. In addition, women had the responsibility of bearing and raising children. Unlike the Ohio Indians, the Americans had no tradition of adopting and assimilating captives, especially young captives, into their communities. Because Indian prisoners brought no reward, American soldiers automatically killed men, women, and children for their scalps. Pennsylvania, for example, offered \$1000 for every Indian scalp, regardless of its gender or age. Consequently, when Kentucky militia invaded Shawnee villages, the militiamen dug up Shawnee graves to scalp the corpses.

Nonhelema harbored new illusions about the intentions of the Virginians, but she also harbored no illusions about the devastation of war. Not surprisingly, she, along with many other Shawnee women, sided with her brother Cornstalk's peace party. Nonhelema joined the Maquachake peace delegation to the Shawnee towns along the Miami and Scioto rivers, but many of the Shawnees - Chillicothes, Piquas, and Kispokis, in particular, were not buying their message of peace. Despite Cornstalk, Moluntha, and Kishanosity's best efforts, the war party continued to gain strength as increasing numbers of Shawnee warriors accepted the war belt from Governor Henry Hamilton at Detroit and joined the Mingo led by Pluggy on raids into Kentucky.

That summer, Nonhelema carried a warning to Captain Matthew Arbuckle, commander of the American garrison at Fort Randolph on the Kanawha, that many of her people had joined the British. On October 6th, Captain Matthew Arbuckle, commander at Fort Randolph detained two Shawnees - Red Hawk and Petalla - who had come to the fort at Cornstalk's request to inform them that it was no longer possible to hold the militant young men of his tribe in check and, therefore, that the agreement made with Lord Dunmore three years previously could no longer be maintained. A few days later, Cornstalk's son and Nonhelema's nephew, Elinipsico, came to the fort to see why Red Hawk and Patalla had been detained and was quickly imprisoned. At this point, Arbuckle resolved to apprehend "as many [Shawnee] as fall into my hands" and hold them as hostages for the Shawnee nation's good behavior.

The detention of members of Nonhelema's family and political faction forced upon Nonhelema a critical decision. Had she and Cornstalk taken the right path? Accommodation with the Americans - the hated Long Knives, the authors of so many Shawnee tragedies - seemed a distant island in a stormy sea and neutrality "a world too narrow." **Nonhelema's choices were narrowing. What path would she now choose?**

Nonhelema's Decision

Cornstalk (Nonhelema's brother) and his son, Elinipsico (her nephew), went to Fort Randolph the site of an American fort, to warn the whites of the breakdown of Shawnee neutrality. The Americans took the Shawnees hostage. Shortly thereafter, news reached Fort Randolph that, presumably, some Shawnee had ambushed and killed an American soldier. Seeking vengeance, the Virginians massacred Cornstalk, his son, and other Shawnees that they had earlier taken into custody. Surprisingly, Nonhelema abandoned her village and moved to Fort Randolph with the American commander's permission. She brought nearly fifty head of cattle, some horses, and other property with her. This gesture indicated her good faith and the Virginians accepted her as one of them. We have no way of knowing why Nonhelema sought refuge among Virginians, many of whom knew about, possibly witnessed, perhaps even consented to her brother and her nephew's murder.

Nonhelema acted as an interpreter for the garrison throughout much of the war. In May, 1778, following the cruel murder of Cornstalk, a force of two hundred Shawnees banded together and came to Fort Randolph seeking revenge. They demanded that Captain William McKee surrender the fort. He asked them to give him until the next morning to consider their demand. All through the night the Americans were busily employed in bringing water from the river. The next morning Captain McKee sent his answer via Nonhelema that the fort would not surrender. The Indians immediately attacked the fort and besieged it for one week. Then they rounded up all the cattle and horses they could find and started up the Kanawha Valley. The Nonhelema learned of their purpose to go into the Greenbrier settlements. Captain McKee sent two scouts to follow the Indians, but they returned with the intelligence that the Indians had broken up into small groups. He then asked for volunteers "to risk their lives to save the people of Greenbrier." John Pryor and Phillip Hammond stepped forward and offered their services. Nonhelema dressed them like Indians and painted their faces. By traveling by day and night, these men were able to get to the Greenbrier settlements before the Indians arrived. The people in the settlements hurried to Donnelly's Fort, which was located near the present site of Lewisburg. When the Indians arrived, they discovered that the fort was too well defended for them to capture it. They destroyed much property, and returned to their homes on the west side of the Ohio River.

Meanwhile, by late 1777 and early 1778, the more militant Shawnees evacuated the Scioto Valley and reestablished their villages in the Miami River Valley, where they would be less vulnerable to assault. Moluntha, Nonhelema's husband, stayed on Scioto with a number of Maquachakes. Cornstalk's faction of Maquachakes moved east to the Delaware town of Cohocton, leaving Cornstalk's town all but deserted. Nonhelema's town also was probably abandoned by this time. The Shawnees about this time split into a peace faction led by the Maquachakes and Kispokis, an immigration faction who moved west of the Mississippi into Missouri, where they took up lands after the Revolution near Cape Girardeau under the auspices of the Spanish government, and a war faction led by the Chillicothe war chief, Black Fish. Black Fish raided into Kentucky in the winter of 1777-1778, capturing Daniel Boone and twenty-six companions at Blue Licks in a raging snowstorm. Black Fish later adopted Boone into the Chillicothe faction. After a period of time with Black Fish's people, which he thoroughly enjoyed - even contemplating becoming a Shawnee - Boone escaped and made his way back to Kentucky, where he was accused of being a traitor and an "Indian lover."

With all but the Maquachake Shawnees hostility apparently well established, American invasions of Shawnee country became almost an annual event. With the rest of their nation gravitating toward the British, the Maquachake civil chiefs once again endeavored to seek peace, but failed after Delaware, such as Killbuck, urged them to join the war on the side of the Americans. Faced with the prospect of war, despite their best prospects for peace, the Maquachakes who were living with the Delaware's in Cohocton moved out and rejoined Moluntha on the Scioto River.

Nonhelema was at the center of the Maquachakes who, after the Treaty of Paris (1783) attempted to keep the peace. They returned their war

belts to the British in 1784, signifying their intention to remain at peace. Nonhelema and Moluntha and three hundred very disgruntled Shawnees met with the American commissioners at Fort Finney in January 1786. The majority of the Shawnees were Maquachakes, fulfilling their traditional role as negotiators, but the talks were heated. The American commissioners threatened that the Shawnee refusal of the American terms would result in the destruction of their women and children. Moluntha (possible Nonhelema herself) stepped in to counsel moderation and accommodation, and the Shawnees ceded tribal lands east of the Great Miami. But they warned, "This is not the way to make a good or lasting Peace to take our Chiefs Prisoners and come with Soldiers at your Backs." Moluntha with other older chiefs signed the treaties, but the Americans realized that the elder chiefs from whom they obtained the cession of land were losing authority to a new generation of warriors who came of age during long years of recurrent warfare and would keep the Shawnee on a permanent war footing for years to come.

In the fall of 1786 General Benjamin Logan led a force of U.S. soldiers and mounted Kentucky militia against the Maquachake towns despite the fact that Richard Butler had received word that "there was one town of Shawnee called Mackachak, that has done all in their power to keep the Shawnees from going to War." Logan and his 760 Kentucky militiamen destroyed the first Maquachake town they found, killed the few Indians they found. When they got to Moluntha's town, which was about a mile away, Moluntha met them clutching a copy of the Fort Finney peace treaty, while his people hoisted an American flag up the flagpole. The Maquachake's could not believe the Americans would attack them. To no avail. The Kentuckians destroyed the town and rounded up the Maquachakes. General Logan put the Shawnee chief and Nonhelema under the protection of guards. Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton struck up a friendly conversation with the couple. Someone lighted a pipe, and it began to circulate among Boone, Kenton, Moluntha, and Nonhelema. Suddenly, Colonel Hugh McGary broke through the guard and asked Moluntha if he had been at the Battle of Blue Licks with Black Fish. Moluntha, who didn't understand the question, apparently nodded in the affirmative, smiling. In fact, Moluntha hadn't been there; very few Shawnees had. McGary promptly tomahawked Moluntha in the forehead with an axe, killing him instantly. Moluntha fell to the ground with the American's safe conduct pass still in his hand. Nonhelema shrieked with rage and launched herself at the McGary, but the guards leaped upon her and, with difficulty, brought her to the ground, subduing her. Kenton too was so enraged he came near to killing McGary and had to be restrained himself. But Moluntha's murder was not the only atrocity on that day. In the evening, Tom Kennedy, an officer ridiculed for hacking to pieces a number Shawnee women, broke into attempted to vindicate his manhood by breaking into one of the cabins where the prisoners were being housed and tomahawking an unarmed man that Boone described as "a fine looking young warrior." McGary and Kennedy "was not much censured," said the outraged Boone.

Logan's report stated that he had destroyed seven Shawnee towns, killed ten chiefs, took thirty-two prisoners, burned some two hundred houses, and an estimated fifteen thousand bushels of corn, carried off hundreds of cattle and horses, and "took near one thousands pounds value of Indian furniture besides an unknown quantity burnt." He made no mention of the men, women, and children his troops had slaughtered. It was a very lucrative expedition for the Kentuckians who profited greatly from their raids on the relatively affluent Shawnee. Josiah Harmar, the American commander on the Ohio, considered Logan's attack "a breach of faith on our part." Ebenezer Denny said, "Logan found none but old men, women, and children in the towns; they made no resistance; the men were literally murdered." Logan did have McGary arrested, and a courts martial that investigated the murder suspended the colonel for a year. Kennedy escaped punishment entirely.

In the winter of 1786, Daniel Boone facilitated an exchange of white for Indian prisoners, among whom was Nonhelema who was released into the custody of her son, Captain Johnny. When Nonhelema was released in December 1786, she was very thin and drawn, as she was kept in confinement and close guard the whole duration of her captivity. The whites were uncomfortably aware of the warrior-like fighting ability of this powerful woman. Inevitably, Nonhelema's people disowned her and in old age and poverty, and she was forced to petition the United States for support on account of her past services at Fort Randolph. She requested a grant of 2,000 acres on the west bank of the Scioto River where she once lived and where her mother was buried. It seems that this petition, which was referred to Congress, was never acted upon. Congress did grant her a suit of clothes and a blanket each year, and daily rations for life, "which she may receive at any post in the western territory she shall chuse."