



INDIGENOUS VALUES INITIATIVE

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NEWSLETTER FROM ONONDAGA TERRITORY,
HEARTLAND OF THE HAUDENOSAUNEE

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It is urgent that human beings re-establish respectful and nourishing relationships between themselves and the living earth. Our survival rests on the values deeply held by the world's Indigenous peoples.

The Indigenous Values Initiative (IVI) is dedicated to the values expressed by the Onondaga Nation leadership, Central Fire of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (People of the Longhouse).

IVI is an independent organization which collaborates with a variety of individuals, institutions, communities, governments, and businesses to articulate, disseminate and promote the ancient and enduring values of Indigenous people's traditions to the world through writing, events, conferences, projects and celebrations.



The IVI newsletter is dedicated to the seven generations coming...

FEATURE ARTICLES

Value Change For Survival

By Phil Arnold
Syracuse University

Celebrating its 40th year in 1985 the United Nations established the GLOBAL FORUM OF SPIRITUALITY AND PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS ON HUMAN SURVIVAL. This forum was charged to promote dialog between religious and political leaders in order to turn the tide of the growing environmental crisis. Forum conversations and deliberations were dedicated to the survival of the planet and future generations. This international (continued on page 6)

Haudenosaunee Lives

By Wendy Gonyea
Onondaga Nation

We are the Haudenosaunee, meaning "People of the Longhouse.": Newcomers to this land called us the Five Nations or the Iroquois. We are the descendants of an ancient Confederation born on the shores of Onondaga Lake where our ancestors accepted a of peace and formed a democracy with Chiefs, Clanmothers and Faithkeepers placed as leaders, a government so thorough it spelled out leadership titles (continued on page 4)

The Creator's Game at Onondaga

By Kent Lyons
Onondaga Nation

As the power of Lacrosse weaves throughout the very essence of Haudenosaunee men on a spiritual, physical and social level, each player, becomes identified, in all that he does, by the discipline and strength of his game.

The words of this text are taken directly from the teachings of the Haudenosaunee, commonly known as the "Iroquois." In particular, the teachings of the Onondaga Nation, recognized as one of the few Native (continued on page 2)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Roots of Peacemaking SATURDAY

October 3, 2009

Onondaga Lake Park
Syracuse, NY

A culture, arts and music festival honoring the Haudenosaunee at Onondaga Lake, the birthplace of democracy. Featured speakers: Susan Harjo, Sally Roesch Wagner, and Oren Lyons.

<http://rootsofpeacemaking.syr.edu>

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governments still operating under their original, ancient traditional system, and considered the spiritual center of the Iroquois Confederacy.

As we evolve as a unique and separate culture, the Haudenosaunee have always considered themselves only a part of creation, not masters of it. The understanding that we have of ourselves is quite different from what is conveyed in the texts of history. The understanding of a culture has two points of view; from the outside and from within, and the root of understanding exists in the experience of identifying not only the “what,” but also “why.”

For the purposes of writing about the ancient game of lacrosse, the foundation of cultural understanding will begin with an extreme abbreviation of a history that has sown the seeds of Democracy in a land that was proclaimed by opportunists to be wild. What actually existed in this perceived “wilderness” were the very roots and seeds of an unspoiled Democracy. There existed nobility, process and protocol, and a respect for women that placed the female bloodlines in leadership positions with power to ratify and recall of their respective Chieftainship titles. There existed a confederated union of Nations that enacted international disarmament and promoted peace, all prior to European landfall. The mere presence of the Haudenosaunee as a functioning governmental entity in this century is a testimony to the utterly perfect and complete design of the original laws and practices of the original inhabitants of this country, now known as America.

The formation of the “Great Law of Peace,” a democratic

process brought forth to the Haudenosaunee by the Great Peacemaker, a messenger from the Creator marked a confederation of warring nations who laid aside their arms and accepted peace as a way of life. This confederation placed the power in the will of the people and is separated by a system of clans; which is further divided into houses utilized in both religious and political applications. Historically, this formation has been placed in the early to mid 1600's. However, based on the oral tradition of the Haudenosaunee, as well as references to an eclipse which occurred at the time of the original confederation, the Haudenosaunee place their own formation almost 500 years earlier, at about 1142 AD. These teachings place the original Five Nations—the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga and the Seneca—at peace with each other, as their international clan system made them distinctly related families, separating bloodlines and establishing social responsibility within each Nation and Clan to one other.

The original game of lacrosse is sacred to the Haudenosaunee, and is known to the Onondaga as, Dehontsigwaehs (Dey-hoon-chee-gwa-ehs) an Onondaga word translated as “They bump hips”. The original game is considered to be of divine invention, given exclusively to the male population as a gift from the “Creator” for healing and the proper applications of mind body and spirit. The game is designed and played in direct patronage to honor his will, which, is always for the benefit of all of creation. The actual play of the game was, and still is, as many historical observers have recorded,

played on an open field, with a configuration of wood fashioned to represent a “goal area” at either end into which upon successful passage of a ball, utilizing a netted stick, points could be recorded, by two opposing groups. The variance of participant numbers, length of field, size of goal area, reasons for play, has been well-noted and recorded by historians and is directly related to geographical location and the evolution of woodland technology. The first recordings of this ancient game came from reports of French missionaries who immediately mischaracterized what they saw. They drew a correlation between the curved nature of the players sticks and the crosier's staff held by Christian bishops; and in other cases, they likened the game to “le jeu de la crosse,” an ancient form of field hockey. Both are attributed to the naming of the game as it stands in contemporary western culture. In all actuality, the two constants that define the game, for all of its participants and observers, is the use of a type of woven or netted stick to catch, propel or carry the ball through a defined space as well as the rule forbidding the clutching of the ball with your hands.

The Haudenosaunee historically played, and continue to play games within their own communities, giving thanks for the continuance of the game and for the ceremonial healing power associated with the Creator's will; and more popularly, for the pure enjoyment of its' inherent vigor and continual tests of stamina, strength and intellectual prowess. From the moment a boy



Homeland Security by Tom Huff

The Game itself is and always has been, for the Haudenosaunee, revered, and handed down from generation to generation as a game of discipline and honor.

is able to hold the stick, and comprehend the game, he is taught respect: for the power of the game is sacred, and it demands the purity of mind, body and spirit, the lack of any, it is believed, weakens the man and presents the opportunity for failure.

The Game mirrors life, traditional life, the teachings are directly descendant from the Creator, and his gift of Lacrosse is, in essence, a code of conduct and the use of strategy designed for all of life's various situations. These teachings are not apparent to the beginner. However, like all natural things, mature with time. True enlightenment comes only with continued involvement and experience. The wisdom is ancient, the teachings are not.

HAUDENOSAUNEE MEETS NYS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION COMMISSIONER BY WENDY GONYEA

A delegation of Haudenosaunee representatives recently traveled to Albany to meet with the NYS DEC Commissioner, Peter Grannis. The issue for discussion was man's latest intrusion upon our earth, hydro-fracking, and the damage it can bring to our environment. Hydro-fracking is a process of drilling, using huge amounts of water and chemicals to push natural gas up to the surface for energy use. This is urgent because we live in the northern end of a geological formation called the Marcellus Shale (see *Syracuse Post Standard*, October 8, 2008).

The members of our delegation, including the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force (HETF) were well prepared for the meeting. Specific speakers were designated to deliver our position—ancient teachings, beginning with our words of Thanksgivings and including a replica and explanation of Guswentha, or 'Two Row' wampum belt. The Commissioner and six individuals of the DEC were in attendance.

Haudenosaunee speakers skillfully condensed words passed down through the ages to accommodate time constraints. They explained fundamental natural law, history and presented our still functioning existence with an innate duty to care for the waters, and it's consumption. Our speakers suggested alternatives—renewable energy technology and energy conservation instead of drilling for natural gas.

After listening to our Haudenosaunee worldview, Commissioner Grannis thanked everyone for their comments, and then he pro-

ceeded to give comments of his own. "The Creator put riches above the earth, and he put them below the earth for the benefit of the people. We are mindful of what could happen with the environment," he said. "There are 1,300 or 1,400 wells operating today. We have some protections in place; we have an extraordinary resource there for the taking. The facts of water—is a finite source, we're very focused on that. We don't have the resources to re-deploy for other alternatives. We're mindful of historic sites." The Commissioner referred to an environmental impact statement adding they will not permit anything to happen to jeopardize the environment. They are mindful of property rights, he said. Admitting drilling is disruptive and posed risks, Grannis said, in spite of conflicting values, their mission is to go ahead. He left the meeting after staying a half-hour longer than scheduled. Discussions continued with the DEC lawyers and engineers from the Mineral Resources division.

It was obvious that opposing points of view present a stark reality, with our teach-

ings pitted against those of agencies in charge such as the DEC. Our views are long-term-visionary. Theirs are 'get it now.' On the DEC website Commissioner Grannis is quoted as saying gas drilling is "worth a fortune." I can't help but think of Onondaga Lake and the history that led us to today's clean-up.' At some point around 1790 some industrialist saw 'a fortune to be made' from salt. In the 20th century Allied-Chemical made 'a fortune' with soda ash while dumping bicarbonate and later mercury in to Onondaga Lake. Here we are today, with more damage to our earth—thinking of man's comfort, the needs of humans. The drilling will use huge amounts of water—along with propping material, a pumping fluid to push and fracture the shale deep underground to push the gas up. What does all this do to the underground formations that have been in place for millions of years? What about all the holes drilled? Disruption of the earth is harmful, and it's rude. A hundred years from now, will our grandchildren be faced with underground cleanups to restore our earth

after the latest damage? A recent gas explosion in Lebanon, New York should have residents questioning the safety and logic of gas drilling. Two workers were injured with the gas fire burning for 10 hours.

Fortunately, the current slump of the economy is a factor in a slow down of drilling for natural gas. According to Clifford Krauss, (*NY Times*, March 15, 2009), "Gas exploration had soared in recent years after technology ad-

It is of urgent necessity that human beings re-establish respectful and nourishing relationships between themselves and the living earth.

vances enabled the exploitation of gas trapped in huge shale beds..., but that boom has created such abundant supplies that companies are not only drilling less, but also deciding not to pump from wells already dilled. Thousands of oil and gas workers who migrated around the country to work in new fields for fat salaries have been laid off," writes Krauss.

In January 2009, the DEC announced a policy stating the agency "will consult as early as possible with Indian nations whenever they take action that will affect the nation's interest." It was clear the Albany meeting was post DEC policy and was not considered a 'consultation.'



Territory by Onondaga Nation artist Zenja Hyde, depicting the Great Tree of Peace.

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and duties, designated clans with two houses complementing one another, included procedures on how to install new leaders, on how to acknowledge and treat the natural world, and gave specific protocols to care for those who have passed it on. This was so complete, encompassing mandates for a way of life that it continues in the midst of American society today.

Our Confederacy, the Haudenosaunee, comprising the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca, was formed at least 1,000 years ago, perhaps 2,000 years ago. (The Tuscaroras were accepted in the Confederacy in 1722.) The ancient instructions are oral, carefully passed down from one generation to the next, the words still spoken in our languages. We are not a remnant of an ancient civilization but an extension of it.

Today, we face dozens of pressures from the world outside of our small communities and, unfortunately, mounting pressures from within. We are inundated daily with western thought, messages directly in contrast to our ancient teachings. Our youth, in particular, are in a precarious situation as the world outside of our longhouses pulls them in other directions. Many circumstances are new enticements, new ideas, modern gadgets, a lifestyle centered on individual gains, as opposed to the 'old' communal way of everyone helping one another and a whole village truly raising a child. Today the Haudenosaunee use ancient laws to deal

with contemporary situations such as drug abuse, treasonous acts, and a myriad of social ills indicative of ways humans can disrespect one another. Our laws don't include jails with degrees of punishments, but rather concentrate on individual freedom to conduct oneself in acceptable behaviors with positive values. This self-regulation we call 'using the good mind.' Haudenosaunee do recognize a darker side to humans and a 'punisher' in the afterlife for wrongdoings.

At the core of this way of life is a Thanksgiving that acknowledges all of the elements that sustain us: the grasses, medicines, trees, animals, birds, air, foods, sun, moon, stars, rains, the Creator, and one another. This Thanksgiving is spoken daily by individuals, and at the beginning and end of all ceremonies, meetings and other gatherings on our territories. The minds of those present are brought together in humbling thought, a calming reminder of our place in the universe. We are not a force to subjugate others, but a part of a whole life plan to live in balance with the rest of creation.

Some of our communities have come to this day completely independent of federal intervention. My community, the Onondaga Nation, is one of them. There is no Bureau of Indian Affairs office, there is no police force, and there are no 'strings' to any federal agency to hold us in check. Our Nation's Council meets and negotiates with various agencies: the New York State Department of Transportation for our roads

and bridges, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office, for serious internal matters, and the Environmental Protection Agency and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation regarding our lands and waters and the Lake bearing our name, to name just a few. This is procedure—this is protocol. Every official is greeted with those well-worn words of Thanksgiving, also proper protocol.

Our ancestors are the signatories on the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua with the new government, ratified by George Washington, President of the United States of America in 1795.* The Haudenosaunee hold fast to Canandaigua as a binding agreement between two Nations. When disharmony occurs and we are given cause to have complaint, we take the issue to the U.S. President. When there is outside encroachment on to our territories, we remind the President of the words in this treaty. The resulting response is routinely from the Department of Justice, or Department of Interior, but at least one visit to our Longhouse by a special assistant to the White House during the Carter administration. Canandaigua established 'peace and friendship' between our Nations, and we continue to maintain this agreement.

We survive because our predecessors saw to it. The dedication and tenacity of all those leaders throughout our history to carry on in spite of the armies they faced, relocation,

missionaries, germ warfare, boarding schools and attempts to extinguish them as a people. They still held firm. Our strength is also in the message itself, the Great Law of Peace, a principled method of balance in leadership, and environmental mandates expressed in ceremony and peace. And equally vital is our belief in a power that created this for us, and who continues to keep our people well.

These teachings are the heart and soul of the Haudenosaunee. However, foreign influences seem to grow larger every day, permeating susceptible minds bringing angst and uncertainty to our people. Some are drawn to assorted entertainments with money grabbing a hold in a rush to attain material wealth. The tired old western role of male dominance lingers in some minds upsetting the balance of fundamental Haudenosaunee law. Haudenosaunee languages have given way to proficiency in English. The intrusions seem endless. We maintain our economic independence, but even that resource is eyed by outside entities in a current taxation challenge. We have a tough road ahead, but our elders say it has always been so.

Realizing all humans are affected by the exploitation of our earth and her resources, Haudenosaunee speakers have begun sharing our ancient messages with the world outside of our Nations. In urgent appeal, they call for us all to look out for the generations yet coming; for that is our vision, and that is our mandate from the past.

* National Archives, Wash., D.C., Ontario Co. Historical Society, Canandaigua, N.Y.

Onondaga Lake – The Blue Eye of the Haudenosaunee Country

by Eglute Trinkauske, Hamilton College

People from the Onondaga Nation and members of NOON, Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (www.peacecouncil.net/NOON) gathered in a circle at Onondaga Lake Park on Thanksgiving morning, November, 2008. Cool autumn sun illuminated the beauty of Onondaga Lake. Naked trees hugged oblong roundness of the lake, pondering their own images in its water. People in the circle took their time to say what they were thankful for. Most importantly, people who stood there honored the lake's presence and its importance for the culture and the history of the Haudenosaunee peoples. For the Haudenosaunee people, Onondaga Lake is a part of the sacred geography that witnessed the creation of the Six Nations Confederacy. The Peacemaker Hiawatha traveled around the area of Onondaga Lake while delivering the message of peace.

As an indigenous Lithuanian living in upstate New York, I continue to see the world through my culture and through my language which is rich with poetic metaphors. My country has many lakes, and

often people talk about the lakes as the eyes of the country, or as the eyes into a country's soul. There are at least eight lakes in Lithuania named *Akis*, "an Eye." This naming of lakes is rooted in indigenous ways of thinking and relating to the living landscape. For indigenous people, the earth is the largest living organism that exists, and the landscape is often seen in terms of a human body. To me, on Thanksgiving morning the lake certainly did not look like one of the most polluted bodies of water in the world. It looked like a beautiful lake, and it felt so good to be in its eye's presence. Yet the poetic impression of the lake as an eye also invites an image of an infected eye, knowing that Onondaga Lake represents two very different cultures that oppose each other in their values and in their relationship to the landscape. As an eye, or as a window into a country's soul, Onondaga Lake reflects the complex character of America as a split or double soul in its relationship to the natural world.

The current state of the lake's chemical imbalance reflects American soul as a primarily consumerist society that has no respect for the natural world. Onondaga Lake itself, its physical and spiritual presence reflects America as a Turtle Island that miraculously grew in a watery environment and offered home to the first humans. I want to focus on the image of a lake as a healthy eye, a blue eye of the Haudenosaunee country. In its spirit, the thanksgiving gathering emphasized healing this split of America's double soul. That morning Onondaga Lake brought people together to participate in the culture of gratitude that is indigenous to America. Gratitude is at the center of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address which is like a prayer that extends thanks to all life and that which supports all life. As people were quietly gathering their thoughts and words of gratitude, one could see the ripples moving from the center into the outer edges of the lake. As an educator and a

clanmother of the Onondaga Nation says: gratitude creates abundance. The Haudenosaunee give thanks to water because without water there would be no life, and no Thanksgiving abundance.

Thanksgiving gathering was an off-shoot of the Roots of Peacemaking events (<http://rootsofpeacemaking.syr.edu/index.htm>) that centered on healing of Onondaga Lake. In my observation, these events have a ripple effect of expanding the awareness of the history of Onondaga Lake and its sacred status to the Haudenosaunee people. I think that each gathering like this at the eye of the Haudenosaunee country facilitates the lake's healing and tips the scale's of imbalance from "infected eye" to "blue eye." Something good happens for the people, for the lake, and for the place when they spend the time eye-to-eye with a conscious intention of healing and a commitment to values that promote life.



VALUE CHANGE FOR SURVIVAL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

group of religious and political leaders included the Dalai Lama, Mother Theresa, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Senator Al Gore and President Mikhail Gorbachev, to name a few. From 1985 to 1991 they met in New York, Moscow, Oxford and Tokyo. Representing Native America was Oren Lyons, Joaguisho, Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, which is the Central Fire of the Haudenosaunee and just a few miles south of Syracuse New York. Over the last 40 years Oren has been active in the UN to secure rights for Indigenous People and to advocate for environmental healing. Oren has said of the Global Forum's final meeting in Tokyo that the group was called upon by the Executive Coordinator, Akio Matsu-mura, to summarize their work. They agreed that all of their work could be distilled into four words: **VALUE CHANGE FOR SURVIVAL.**

Now, nearly 20 years later, these words seem more urgent than ever. As a Historian of Religion, working with the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse) who are erroneously referred to as the "Iroquois" or "Six Nations," these words have focused my work around the development of collaborative inter-cultural events. The Roots of Peacemaking: Indigenous Values, Global Crisis, is the most important of these ongoing collaborations. Before I talk about it in detail, however I want to make some observations about the phrase **VALUE CHANGE FOR SURVIVAL.**

There is a lot of talk nowadays about 'retooling' our economy as 'green.' I am completely in favor of that effort. But some leaders talk as if becoming 'green' is just a technological shift, as if it is exclusively an economic, political or technological shift of the machinery. To put this transforma-

tion in terms of a 'value change' however interjects that what is needed is a fundamental shift in cultural priorities. If we can characterize where we must go to survive as 'green,' then the urgent question is what has characterized the values that got us into this current crisis? What were the cultural and religious ideas that we now see as **opposite** to the new 'green' values that we urgently need to embrace? I'll call them 'raider' values. The reason why it's important to distinguish these different values right now because there is a growing tendency for a variety of institutions to utilize the rhetoric of 'going green' while clinging to a 'raider' mentality. I'm sure you all have examples in mind.

The negative 'raider' values that need to be expunged for the sake of survival have been most evident with respect to the modern world's treatment of Indigenous peoples. 'Raider' values don't just refer to how consumer societies, such as the USA, have treated the natural world, but it also refers to our colonial past and the mistreatment of Native Americans and other Indigenous peoples around the world. The illegal theft of land from Native people has been justified by a variety of religious doctrines, missionizing activities, and educational practices that assumed that the only way Native Americans could have a future was to assimilate them. How we have treated Native Americans here in the USA, and Indigenous peoples around the world, is directly proportional to the degree to which modernity has embraced the 'raider' values of its own destruction. How Indigenous peoples are treated from now on reflects how well we have incorporated a new set of 'green' values. Our current world has to become more 'indigenized' in its values. Up to this current moment we have done everything we can to diminish the value of Indigenous peoples and their worldviews.

Now our survival depends upon our ability to embrace indigenous values as our own.

Rhetoric of hatred for the 'savage' or 'uncivilized' Indian is only part of the story. As Charles H. Long and many others have pointed out, American history is full of moments where the survival of immigrant people was completely dependent on Native Americans. This is evident in upstate New York too. The Roots of Peacemaking event celebrates the indigenous roots of Western Democracy. At least 1000 years ago the Longhouse system of the Haudenosaunee, called the Great Law of Peace, was established by three men: the Peacemaker, Hiawentha, and the Tadadaho. In their efforts they managed to unify the various nations of the Haudenosaunee (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca) around a decision making process based on a matrilineal clan system. The Great Law of Peace was established at Onondaga Lake, which is right in the heart of Syracuse New York.

During the 18th century, Haudenosaunee chiefs sat in council with many who would become the Founding Fathers of the US. There seems little doubt that these meetings helped inspire the development of American Democracy. Indeed, in 1987 the US congress officially recognized the Haudenosaunee influence on the US system. But while many aspects of the Longhouse system were adopted, several other aspects of the Longhouse were not. For example, the role of women and the emphasis on ceremonially connecting the human community to Creation did not become part of the American democratic system. This last point is particularly key to the Longhouse practice. Indeed, The Great Law of Peace em-

phasizes that human beings only become fully functional when they can acknowledge their total dependence on the natural world. When a proper balance is achieved between human beings and all other beings in the world, then 'raider' values can be overcome and peace prevails.

Over the last 4 years we have developed a collaborative project between Syracuse University and the leadership of the Onondaga Nation called "Roots of Peacemaking: Indigenous Values, Global Crisis." The event coincides with the UN international Day of Peace on 21 September. The event takes place on the shores of Onondaga Lake, which, as noted, is the birthplace of the Great Law of Peace of the Haudenosaunee and the Indigenous birthplace of the US Democracy. Today, however, Onondaga Lake is best known as the most chemically polluted lake in the country and the 2nd most polluted in the world after Chernobyl. No stronger metaphor could reflect our current state of affairs.

It is also an opportunity for intercultural exchanges between the Haudenosaunee and the rest of the world around issues of *urgent mutual concern*. The obvious immediate concern is the state of the lake, which Jane Goodall (our guest speaker in 2006) described as 'sacred but filthy.' But larger issues are involved in these gatherings too. We have had Buddhist nuns come to support the Onondaga 'land-rights' action, which has served as a catalyst for uniting people; a local group Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON); Taiko drummers from Japan; Indigenous leaders from Alaska and other Haudenosaunee territories; UN representatives from the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In September 2009 Susan Harjo will be joining us at the lake to talk about the importance of spreading Indigenous values. Come and join us!

FULL CIRCLE

By Dr. Robert Spiegelman, Independent Scholar, founder of Thenandnow.us and Sullivanclinton.com

Dispossession is a continuum of practices that range from scorched earth campaigns to law-making and treaty negotiations. Today, such practices of uprooting Seven Generations peoples have come full circle. And, as a result, we stand at a perilous threshold that didn't emerge just overnight. What, then, is to be done?

A "bad seed" was sown during the American Revolution in 1779 by the ground-breaking Sullivan-Clinton Campaign. That April, Gen. Washington's scorched-earth strategy to not merely overrun but destroy Iroquoia targeted neutral Onondaga, dousing (for then) the Haudenosaunee people's central council fire. Three months later, the operation resumed in western New York and burned out the Senecas and Cayugas from their ancestral lakes and homelands. Fighting a war on the cheap and mainly concerned for its rich Caribbean holdings, the British Empire offered at best a minimal defense of its Indian allies. Facing the largest juggernaut against American Indians seen to date, most Haudenosaunee fled northwest to England's woefully and callously ill-prepared Ft. Niagara. After a horrific winter that took at least 200 lives, most Haudenosaunee migrated to the Buffalo Creek area or crossed the St. Lawrence River into Canada.

In its calculated "demonstration effect," the Campaign spread an atmosphere of demoralization and overhanging threat that spawned a series of one-sided treaties and land speculator machinations that intended (but failed to achieve) the Haudenosaunee's removal west of the Mississippi River. Having experienced the web of Iroquoia's waterways and fertile soil, the Revolution's officers and soldiers returned as pioneers and settlers; while voracious land speculators fancied themselves "second creators" of a providential, post-Indian, Civilized way of life. With attempted Indian removal, containment and pacifica-

tion now well underway, the Empire State's settler population soared by 400% from 350,000 to 1,350,000. Simultaneously, the Haudenosaunee population was imploding by 50%. Remarkably, this all occurred before the grand opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 — the hyper-catalyst of America's Westward Expansion. Thus, central and western New York were nearly depopulated of indigenous Haudenosaunee and, with this, came wrenching changes to the land: Taken together, the settler tsunami and Grand Canal would so massively deplete the ancestral forest that an Oneida chief described the nomadic settlers' behavior as "drinking the trees."

Left unchecked, market values were tied to the Biblical injunction to dominate all creation (Genesis 1:26) and a limitless appetite for personal wealth. This synergy uprooted communal property forms, indigenous reverence for Mother Earth, and respect for other species. The surveyor's almighty grid turned "wilderness" into real estate. And the market determined actual land use. Forests were transformed into farms. Cleared land was valued far more than forested land. And a regime dominated by overhanging rent and mortgage obligations, subject to the volatile tides of supply and demand, would decisively shape production.

Trees would now be regarded as timber and commodified as lumber. "Lumber drives" (the cattle drives of this Wild Wild East) would ply the waters to meet the insatiable building needs of Manhattan and Philadelphia. Lumber was also funneled into building steamboats and providing fuel for their engines. As early as 1864, an outcry was issued to his countrymen by the little-remembered, great naturalist George Perkins Marsh: "The operations of causes set in action by man," Marsh warned, citing the Mediterranean basin, "has brought the face of the

earth to a desolation almost as complete as that of the moon." But so great was the appetite and cash-craving for trees, and so oblivious were developers and consumers to any sense of balance or limits that New York State became functionally-deforested by 1900.

More specifically, Onondaga and Little Beard's Town (in Seneca country) were the high-value targets of the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign. Moreover, their subsequent development histories offer searing insights into today's environmental crisis. In 1790, Simeon DeWitt, New York's Surveyor General (and nephew of brothers Gov. George Clinton and Gen. James Clinton of Sullivan-Clinton), launched the Grand Survey that turned Iroquoia into real estate. DeWitt's survey map shows a 1.5 million acre military tract — former Indian Country granted to pay off soldiers — in which Onondaga is enclosed by townships named for Roman conquerors, such as Manlius and Marcellus (conqueror of a city state named Syracuse). Onondaga Lake is detached from Onondaga, labeled the "Salt Lake," and wholly encircled by a "Public Reservation". The Onondaga's removal from their lake was ratified by a one-sided treaty with the Empire State. And the "Salt Lake" would soon anchor the spectacular rise and expansion of the salt industry.

So great was the yield that, catalyzed by Gov. DeWitt Clinton's Erie Canal, salt production began Syracuse. Internationally renowned as "The Salt City," its briny treasure was transmuted by marketeers into "White Gold". Indeed, high-grade Onondaga Salt provisioned America for the next 50 years and was exported in great quantity to Europe. The industry's massive infrastructure — salt barrels, storage troughs and railway spurs — further deforested the region. It also started the restraint-free practice of turning the lake and its water-

ways into a cost-free sewer. The environmental damage, born first of dispossession, then kicked into high gear with the Solvay industrial processing; and, most recently, has culminated in the massive toxicification by mercury and other carcinogens that continue to damage the lake, its life forms, and surrounding ecosystems, human and otherwise. With future generations written off, the very birthplace of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, a wellspring of American democracy — and sacred lake — was degraded into a Superfund site. All this is in the name of "Progress & Civilization" whose pursuit of more could never be enough.

A decade after Sullivan-Clinton, the myriad waterways and fertile fields of Little Beard's Town — the former Seneca capital and Haudenosaunee Western Door — was integrated into the Wadsworth family land empire, and divided between Genesee and Cuylerville. One Jeremiah Wadsworth, the Commissary General of Sullivan-Clinton, became rich and bankrolled his cousins' land trek into the Genesee Valley. Around 1885, a geologist from Manlius induced a Manhattan financier to back a salt mine in that area. It became the flourishing Retsof mine, the largest salt complex in North America and #2 in the world. Then, in 1994, karma struck back: the mine collapsed and its vast network was flooded. Voluminous methane was emitted and periodically would threaten the underlying aquifer. Surrounding fields were likewise salted and the threat to salinize the underlying aquifer still requires monitoring. Interestingly, the American Rock Salt Company has since taken over. Initially it sparked a firestorm of protest by threatening to undo Seneca graves. Today large-scale salt mining (Continued on page 8)

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Links:

- Syracuse University
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- Bioneers
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- Roots of Peacemaking
<http://rootsofpeacemaking.syr.edu/>
- Then & Now
<http://thenandnow.us/>
- Sullivan & Clinton
<http://sullivanclinton.com/>
- Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation
<http://www.peacecouncil.net/NOON/>
- Tree of Peace Society
<http://www.treeofpeacesociety.info/>
- Kanatsiohareke Mohawk Community
<http://www.mohawkcommunity.com/home.html>



To learn more about the Onondaga Nation visit:

<http://www.onodaganation.org/>

FULL CIRCLE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

continues 2,400 feet below Cayuga Lake, and 1,500 feet below Watkins Glen at Seneca Lake. Big Salt, warts and all, is a major and enduring beneficiary of the Sullivan-Clinton invasion of Iroquoia.

Salt in the wound? Well, yes: but the wound has become everyone's. Environmental peril is the major historical consequence of uprooting Haudenosaunee lifeways and values. With karmic precision, the mode of unchecked development implanted by the scorched earth campaign of 1779 has run amok and today is scorching the planet. The celebrated bill of private property rights now requires rebalancing with a bill of collective responsibility to nature and to each other. When King Midas finally despaired that all he touched had turned to gold, he begged the gods to release him from that power; then returned to the forest to heal. If we awake in time to embrace and enact our obligations to the seventh generation as our guiding principle, we too may have a chance to return to the forest and heal our damaged umbilical bond with Mother Earth.



The artwork for the Roots of Peacemaking is an aerial view of Onondaga Lake embraced by the Everlasting Tree Wampum Belt. The Belt stands for the permanence of the Iroquois Confederacy. It is to protect the Grand Council by keeping the eyes of the 50 civil leaders free from dust or harmful thoughts. The belt is displayed whenever the Grand Council sits. It represents an everlasting Tree of Peace, growing high into the Spirit World for all nations to see. Under this Tree the Peacemaker placed a general fire to burn forever, Onondaga, the Council Place of the Five Nations. At this council the Peacemaker said, "When you are in a state of great confusion, I will return and again plant The Tree of Peace, and it will become stronger than before, that in the end, the government and laws of the Confederacy will influence the entire world." Wampum Belts of the Iroquois , by Tehanetorens.

By Zenja M. Hyde, 2006.