

The Two Row Wampum / *Guswénta*

The Two Row Wampum, a 17th century treaty between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch, was the first treaty made by the Confederacy with European settlers. It is understood by the Haudenosaunee to be the basis on which all subsequent treaties were made and is a model of relationships between peoples. It is in the spirit of the teachings of the Two Row that we present the writings compiled in this booklet.

The wampum itself is a white shell belt with two purple rows. The white field symbolizes peace and friendship and the two purple rows represent the separate but equal paths of two sovereign nations. It is traditionally put into words as follows:



NOON Archives

Chief Irving Powless showing the Two Row Wampum belt to the audience at "The Two Row Wampum and the Covenant Chain of Treaties" talk during the Onondaga Land Rights and Our Common Future series (2010). The 400th anniversary of the Two Row Wampum Treaty was commemorated in 2013.

You say that you are our father and I am your son.
We say, we will not be like Father and Son,
but like Brothers.

This wampum belt confirms our words.

These two rows will symbolize two paths
or two vessels,
traveling down the same river together.

One, a birch bark canoe, will be for our people,
our laws, our customs and our ways.

The other, a ship, will be for the white people
and their laws,
their customs and their ways.

We shall each travel the river together,
side by side, but in our boat.

Neither of us will make compulsory laws
or interfere in the internal affairs of the other.

Neither of us will try to steer the other's vessel.

The agreement has been kept by the
Haudenosaunee to this date.

*The Onondaga say of this agreement:
There is no ending to the two rows because the
agreement is to live on forever – for as long as the grass
grows, for as long as the water flows, and
for as long as the sun shines.*

HAUDENOSAUNEE CULTURE

Who Are the Haudenosaunee?

By Wendy Gonyea



THE MEMBER NATIONS ARE:

MOHAWK
Hadi nyeñ'gegá'
meaning **The People
of the Flint**

ONEIDA
Hadineñyotga'
meaning **The People
of the Upright Stone**

ONONDAGA
Onoñda'gegá'
meaning **The People
of the Hills**

CAYUGA
Gayogweñga'geh
meaning **The People
of the Great Swamp**

SENECA
Hadi noñdowa-neñh
meaning **The People
of the Great Hill,**

TUSCARORA
Hoñdasgáyeñ'
meaning **The Shirt
Wearing People**

Well over a thousand years ago, the indigenous nations of the Eastern Woodlands joined together in an alliance of Nations called the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Haudenosaunee means People of the Longhouse. The Nations - the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca - unified as a result of a powerful message delivered to them by the Peacemaker who traveled across the waters in a stone canoe. His message of peace, unity and democracy is known as the Great Law of Peace, or the Great Law. The alliance and law was the first United Nations on this land, and is still the oldest, continuously operating form of traditional government in North America.

Each Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy lived on separate aboriginal territories for countless generations, predating the existence of the United States and Canada. The newcomers to this land called the Haudenosaunee the 'Five Nations' (English) or the 'Iroquois' (French). We continue to use our true name today; however, because of the common-ness of the English and French versions, exceptions can be found, such as the name of the lacrosse team, the Iroquois Nationals (see "Lacrosse: The Creator's Game," page 15). The Tuscarora joined the Confederacy in 1722, and today the Haudenosaunee Confederacy is also referred to as the Six Nations. Each of the Six Nations retains its authority to govern its own affairs and manifest the will of the people within the framework of the spiritual teachings, the Great Law, and its own Nation's laws.

The Great Law defines a system of governance, recorded by oral tradition and in wampum belts. The earliest democracy includes an elaborate system of checks and balances that influenced early American colonists in the formation of their new government. The Peacemaker said the Confederacy extends from the sunrise in the east to the sunset in the west, with the great Council Fire at the center, in the territory of the Onondaga Nation. The Great Law is like the morning sun. As it rises, it sheds the light of understanding on the minds of the people. The Peacemaker united the nations around the Council Fire, and the Council Chiefs formed a circle around the people. The first Grand Council was held on the shores of Onondaga Lake, in Onondaga territory. The Grand Council continues to meet at the Onondaga Nation Longhouse today.

The main principle of the Great Law is peace. The Peacemaker said the Creator never intended that humans should engage in the shedding of human blood and our people were directed to throw weapons of war underneath the Great Tree of Peace, and never to raise weapons against one another again. This Great Tree of Peace has guided the Haudenosaunee since that time. Haudenosaunee leaders are skilled diplomats in resolving conflict and settle any differences by rational thought. The Tree of Peace, a white pine, has roots extending in the four directions. It is known that any people seeking shelter may find sanctuary under the tree. At the top of the tree an eagle will sit to warn the Haudenosaunee of any danger approaching the people.



Kent Lyons

The Peacemaker was able to make Thadodá•ho' see the kindness in himself and change his evil way of living.

THADODÁ•HO' AND HAYENHWÁTHA' *

As he traveled from village to village, the Peacemaker encountered the most difficulty in convincing the Onondaga to accept his message. In particular was a man so feared it is said his body was twisted and snakes grew from his head. This man was Thadodá•ho'. Thadodá•ho' worked against the Peacemaker by killing the daughters of the Peacemaker's helper, Hayenhwátha'. Hayenhwátha', secluded and in mourning, began making strings of wampum, and by using consoling words he was able to recover himself and resume his work with the Peacemaker. The other Nations of the Haudenosaunee accepted the message of the Peacemaker. For a second time the two men, Peacemaker and Hayenhwátha', approached the evil Thadodá•ho', who was about to consume his human meal. The Peacemaker was able to make Thadodá•ho' see the kindness in himself and change his evil way of living. Hayenhwátha' combed the snakes from Thadodá•ho's hair. He was restored to clear thinking and finally accepted the message of the Peacemaker. In this way the Haudenosaunee became a people of principled laws. They accepted a way of life to live in harmony with one another and a system of governance that is still followed today.

FOUNDATION

The five fires became one house: a Longhouse with specific procedures to keep the fires burning and the people of good healthy minds. The Peacemaker laid out the circle of fifty Chief titles, representative of the five Haudenosaunee Nations. Alongside each Chief will be a Clan Mother, both working for the people. In addition Faithkeepers will assist and see that proper procedures continue to be followed. The Council of fifty chiefs will meet in a Grand Council to be held at Onondaga, the center of the new Confederacy. The Grand Council will decide issues by reaching a consensus. They are to leave personal issues at the door, not use harsh tones and think about the coming generations in their decision making. They are to end their meetings before the sun sets.

Each Chief represents a Clan family. In an historic rite of equality in government, the Clanmother, also a leadership title, has the authority to "put up" or choose a Chief when the need arises. The Clanmother can also remove a Chief from his seat or title, if he is not working for the people in a good way. All titles are lifetime titles. When a Chief passes away, the Haudenosaunee have a procedure to follow that mourns the fallen Chief and also installs a new leader to the fallen Chief's seat. This ceremony is called a Condolence. In this way the great circle of 50 Chiefs remains unbroken and continues to work for the people. Each Nation was given a certain number of Chief titles and Clans. Chiefs and Clans are recognized throughout the Confederacy. Haudenosaunee languages are similar, differing some, but experienced speakers can comprehend all six languages.

CREATION

From *Iroquois Creation Story, Myth of the Earth Grasper*, John C. Mohawk:

Our world began with the creation of the earth. In the Sky world above lived Sky Holder and Sky Woman. She was pregnant with his child. Beside their lodge was the great tree of light, for which he was the caretaker. Because of Sky Woman's curiosity with the tree's bright light, she urged Sky Holder to uproot the tree. She fell into the dark world below, with soil clenched in her fist after having tried to cling to the tree's roots to stop her fall. She fell to a world of endless water. There the water

*The spellings of words in the Onondaga language have varied in the process of creating a written form for an oral language. Non-indigenous readers are more accustomed to "Tadodaho" and "Hiawatha".

animals decided to save her, for she came with the power to create life. The birds' interlocked wings broke her fall and set her upon the back of snapping turtle. Of all the animals, only muskrat could succeed in retrieving mud from the sea bottom - which he placed on turtle's back. As Sky Woman walked counter clockwise in ever expanding circles upon the mud, it grew into an island. From her dress and clutches fell seeds, which fell upon the soil. Soon she gave birth to a daughter who later had many suitors of male beings who could transform themselves into human form. She selected the being who wore scalloped leggings and a large robe, said to be turtle-being. He placed two arrows over her body at night, and she became pregnant. She had twins, but died giving birth to the second son, as he was born through her armpit. Sky Woman buried her daughter and from her body grew the Three Sisters - corn, beans, and squash. From her heart grew the tobacco plant which we still use as a way to carry our thoughts to the Sky World. The deceased daughter became known as Earth Mother. The earth she created on the back of a turtle we call Turtle Island.

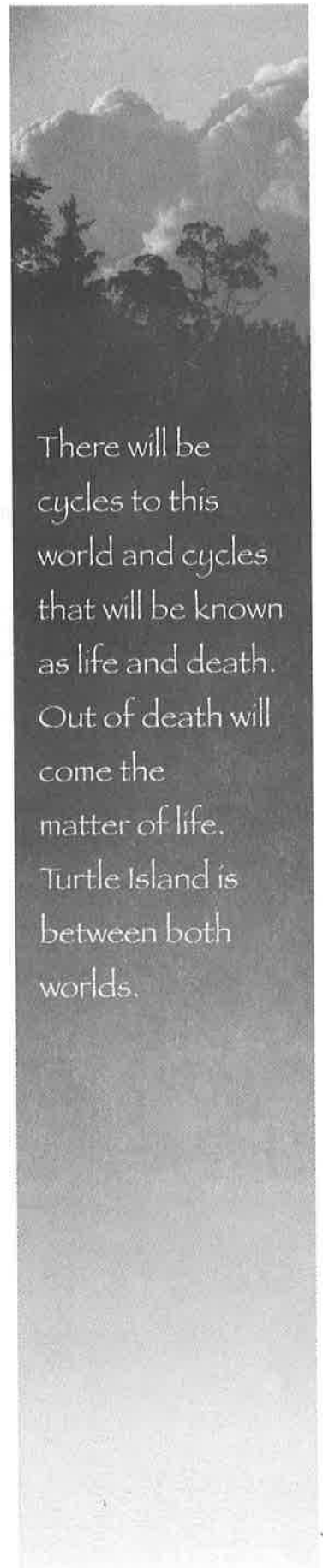
One twin was called the right-handed twin, and the other was called the left-handed twin. The boys were raised by the grandmother under very stressful circumstances. The right handed twin, as he was maturing, began to have a vision that his duty was to create the world in the image of what he had been told about the Sky World. He hadn't seen the Sky World, but he was a member of that race. The twin began to dig up earth, the ground of Turtle Island, and blew life into the things he formed. In this manner he created life forms.

The left-handed twin saw the work his brother was doing and became very jealous of his life-creating abilities. In his mind the left-handed twin set out to destroy the new burgeoning life. One created ascending forms of life and the other created descending. One twin created ivy and the other created poison ivy. One created trees and the other put thorns on the branches. Eventually the two forms of life began to compete. The left-handed twin tried to enlist help from the bear and deer, to help dominate the earth, but the animals chose to follow the instructions from the Sky World. Finally the left-handed twin confronted a man and said, "I think you and I can dominate all the animals and all other life on the earth." The man said, "Tell me some more." This sparked the war between the two brothers. The right-handed twin won and banished the left-handed twin to the center of the earth where he oversees darkness. The right-handed twin became our elder brother, the sun.

The story of the twins presents the idea that humans have a power to manipulate nature in ways that could be extremely destructive, and that they have a responsibility to use the power prudently. There will be cycles to this world and cycles that will be known as life and death. Out of death will come the matter of life. Turtle Island is between both worlds. This is how we came to live on Turtle Island today.

OUR WAY OF LIFE CONTINUES

As the gifts of our universe continue to do their duties, as they have since the time of creation, the Haudenosaunee people continue a way of life in harmony with the world. Each part of creation is addressed in Thanksgivings at every gathering of the people and/or every day individually. We acknowledge and give thanks for the privilege of using the gifts that sustain us. Leaders of the natural world are acknowledged and given respect. The minds of all who are gathered are drawn together in unified thought by a speaker who is chosen to carry out the ancient words of our Ganonhanyonh, or the first words. It is in this way, ceremonies, meetings, gatherings on our territories begin still today.



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Kent Lyons

By observing and noticing changes in our environment, the women titleholders gather to set the days designated for ceremony. When the sap begins to flow from the Maple tree, the date will be set and announced for the Maple Ceremony. When the earth warms and frost rests, a time will be set for Planting Ceremonies. When the Strawberries grow again, a day will be set to hold our Strawberry Ceremony. And so on for Bean, Green Corn, Harvest and Mid-Winter Ceremonies. The Haudenosaunee continue to live connected to our earth Mother, in balance with our needs as humans and respectful for what is given to us. This way of life was handed down to us through the generations and will be handed down to the generations next coming

WORDS OF OUR FRIEND, JOHN MOHAWK (1944-2006)

Although there were serious threats to Haudenosaunee continued existence, and although it must certainly have appeared... that the Iroquois were doomed, the Iroquois in fact are growing in strength and influence...albeit, not necessarily in unity. The Six Nations Council continues to meet at the Onondaga Longhouse near Nedrow, New York and at the Onondaga Longhouse near Ohsweken, Ontario. Its doors continue to be open to people who wish to use thinking instead of violence, just as the Peacemaker had hoped many centuries ago. As long as there are Iroquois Indians who are willing to place the good of the whole above the interests of the few, there will always be an Iroquois Confederacy.

From *The Iroquois Book of Life, White Roots of Peace*



History and Law

Excerpted from "A Special Report by the Haudenosaunee on some of the Primary Aspects of Law, Sovereignty and Governance," March, 1998

The Haudenosaunee believe that since the time of Creation our people have walked this land. The earth, as our mother, gave birth to us and we in turn become part of the earth itself. The land holds the bones of our ancestors and ties each succeeding generation of Haudenosaunee to this land in ways that no other humans can claim.

Our history and our law have grown together. They are not separate. The Creator watches over both history and law, and both have spiritual dimensions as a result. We cannot separate our spiritual laws from our civil laws. Our history and our law is based upon several elements.

First, spiritual laws gave form to the world in which we now live. These spiritual laws formed a natural law and became the basic framework from which our way of life evolved. These metaphysics for the natural world are our first laws. Our oral histories are full of object lessons describing how our ancestors gained an understanding of the world around them. These lessons provide us with insights which teach us how our own conduct should reflect the spiritual and practical interactions of all beings.

Second, the Original Instructions, given to our people by the Creator, teach us how to live on this land and how to express thanks for what we have been given. The Original Instructions are the second set of laws which obligate us to certain patterns of behavior and spiritual expression, as manifest in our ceremonies.

Third, the Great Law of Peace was taught to us by the Peace Maker. The implementation of the Great Law by the Peace Maker provided a form of governance, law, order, sovereign rights, and self government for the Haudenosaunee. The Great Law established what we call the Good Mind, which is how someone aligns their own thinking to the laws of the Creator and the Peace Maker. The foundations of the Good Mind are three principles: peace, righteousness and strength. The white pine - the Great Tree of Peace - represents these laws and the spiritual laws of the universe.

The Great Law was followed by the *Gasweñhda'* and the Covenant Chain of Peace. The *Gasweñhda'* or Two Row Wampum is an agreement describing how the European newcomers and the Haudenosaunee would live in peace while pursuing parallel but separate paths of culture, religion, and government. The ideal of the *Gasweñhda'* was balanced by the practical solution of the Covenant Chain, which implemented a real world setting for the *Gasweñhda'* through a series of treaties. These treaties noted how practical matters of trade would be confirmed by spiritual and political commitments by both sides. The Covenant Chain obligated the newcomers to the Haudenosaunee just as the treaty, which visually represents the Covenant Chain, obligated the Haudenosaunee to their new allies. The principles of the Covenant Chain are peace and friendship, and these were meant to last forever. When official meetings are held today we are polishing the Covenant Chain.

Finally, there is the *Gaihiwiyóh*, the spiritual message delivered by Handsome Lake to our people beginning in 1799. This message defines how the Haudenosaunee will perpetuate our culture and beliefs while continuing to live in peace with the newcomers. In a very practical way, *Gasweñhda'* teaches the Haudenosaunee how we can continue all the lessons that have come before: the Original Instructions, the Great Law, the *Gasweñhda'*, and the Covenant Chain. We see each step in our history as consistent with what happened before, as we balance the changing physical realities we see around us with our spiritual ideals, beliefs, and obligations.

History and law, to the Haudenosaunee, incorporate all of these elements which cannot be isolated or limited to the legal concepts of the federal, state or provincial governments, executive actions or court decisions. In fact, as a sovereign people, the Haudenosaunee firmly believe that the laws of these outside entities do not apply within the territories of our member nations. We continue to operate under our own set of laws as best we can in order to push forward traditional law and understanding for the benefit of the Seventh Generation to come.

Discipline of the Good Mind

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Thousands of years ago, at a time when our people were in the midst of wars and pervasive violence the Peacemaker came and brought us a message of love and peace. One of the gifts he brought to us at that time was the concept of the Good Mind (*Ga'nigoñhi-yóh*). As children grow up in our Nation they hear the words "use a good mind" many times. I felt that a deeper explanation of what using the Good



Kent Lyons

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I refer to the Good Mind as a discipline, rather than just a description of a person's state of mind.

thought. This realization that you have a will over your thinking is important. You have a choice to follow your thoughts based on a loving purpose (the Good Mind) or let go of thoughts and certainly not build upon thoughts steeped in anger and judgment. In most cases it takes thousands of thoughts to get to a point where you are harboring hate for someone and capable of violence. This discipline helps us redirect our thinking to more constructive, kind and loving thoughts. Since our actions follow our thoughts, what we are doing with our lives will be kinder and gentler. Since the words we speak follow our thoughts, we also have a way of affecting the world around us with words that will reflect the Good Mind.

By observing our thoughts we may begin to identify areas in our lives that may need to be reflected upon and healed. Watch out for over-reactions to your experiences and also under-reactions for they may help identify places that need healing. Consider being more willing to look at these parts of yourself and seek out people who work as healers to help you work through old hurts and anger. Stifled anger never goes away, it lingers in the background ready to show up to add to your next angry moment. This can make for more dramatic moments than you may want. Work through old anger and life will be less painful.

While we actively become aware of our thoughts, especially those that have a kind and loving intent, we naturally allow ourselves to become spiritually in tune with the Creator's wishes. This allows us to use our talents to fulfill our purpose on Earth. This is my motivation to follow the Good Mind. When it is time to leave this Earth I would like to feel that I fulfilled the purpose that the Creator sent me here to accomplish.

As Haudenosaunee, we give thanks to all the parts of Creation that make life possible here on Earth (*The Ganoñhéñ-nyoñ*). This keeps us connected with the very vital purpose of all living things. So our respect and love includes all parts of Creation. This understanding helps us use the Good Mind in our interactions with the natural world around us.

It has been said many times that change begins with the individual. If you want change to happen, begin by changing yourself. The discipline of the Good Mind is a process anyone can use to help him or herself change. Much can be accomplished with prayer, love and patience.

Mind means would be beneficial and this is how I explain it.

When the Europeans first came to this continent they were surprised to see that the Haudenosaunee did not have a police force or many laws to make the people behave themselves. I feel that the use of *Ga'nigoñhi-yóh* was so pervasive that it was unnecessary to have a police force and many laws.

I refer to the Good Mind as a discipline, rather than just a description of a person's state of mind. First of all *Ga'nigoñhi-yóh* recognizes that we are connected to the good, that we have access to a loving source of good thoughts. Each and every one of us has many, many thoughts each day. With discipline we can become aware of each thought, see its substance, realize its intent, and then determine if you should follow and build on that

thought. This realization that you have a will over your thinking is important. You have a choice to follow your thoughts based on a loving purpose (the Good Mind) or let go of thoughts and certainly not build upon thoughts steeped in anger and judgment. In most cases it takes thousands of thoughts to get to a point where you are harboring hate for someone and capable of violence. This discipline helps us redirect our thinking to more constructive, kind and loving thoughts. Since our actions follow our thoughts, what we are doing with our lives will be kinder and gentler. Since the words we speak follow our thoughts, we also have a way of affecting the world around us with words that will reflect the Good Mind.

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Lacrosse / *Dehoñtjihgwa'es*: The Creator's Game

by Kent Lyons

The original game of lacrosse is sacred to the Haudenosaunee and is known to the Onondaga as *Dehoñtjihgwa'es*, translated as "they bump hips." The original game was given as a gift from the Creator exclusively to the male population 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 traditional game was, and still is, played on an open field, with a configuration of wood fashioned to represent a "goal area." Two opposing groups record points by reaching the goal areas as they pass a ball utilizing netted sticks. The first recordings of this ancient game were by French missionaries, who mischaracterized what they saw. In fact, the two constants that define the game for all of its participants and observers are the use of a woven or netted stick to catch, propel and/or carry the ball through a defined space, and 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, as well as for the pure enjoyment of its inherent vigor and tests of stamina, strength and intellectual prowess. From the moment a boy is able to hold the stick and comprehend the game, he is taught respect. The power of the game is sacred, and it demands purity of mind, body and spirit. The lack of any of these three components, it is believed, weakens the man and presents the opportunity for failure.

The game mirrors life, traditional life. Its teachings are directly from the Creator, and his gift of lacrosse is, in essence, a code of conduct and strategy designed for all of life's various situations. It is revered by the Haudenosaunee and handed down from generation to generation as a game of discipline and honor.

The misrepresentations of a Native history written by non-natives has from the beginning distorted the most sacred and honorable game of Haudenosaunee men and nations. When a person sees something totally foreign, he will naturally apply his own frame of reference based on his own time and experience. Thus, early history writers could only liken what they saw in the game as "war-like." This original misconception has continually portrayed the game as "the little brother of war."

The intensity of the game for the Haudenosaunee is simple and is understood in this manner: the passion that encompasses and defines the male spirit is inherent and indivisible to the game, as the Creator had originally intended. Without the disciplines of dignity and honor, violence results, and brings disgrace on your nation, people and teachers. Lacrosse is "the Creator's game," and it is truly believed that he knows every player's mind and disposition. Therefore, lacrosse players are bound to play with the utmost respect for themselves and their opponents, mindful to avoid anger, vanity and brutality, paying respectful homage to the winners, as the outcome is the Creator's will. Amidst a peaceful people playing for the honor of nation, clan, and their Creator, all concepts of war would be far removed.



It is said that every time we step onto the field, there is a parallel game in the sky world. As players of this sacred game, our final journey home begins with an entrance into the Creator's game.



Liam Gillespie

Lacrosse National Hall of Fame goalie Oren Lyons.

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.

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. Each man is given an equal amount of potential, and when he plays the game his character emerges. For example, a man's true nature is revealed in how he handles his own errors, as every man commits them. Does he suddenly quit in shame? Does he become angry and retaliate against another as if to blame others for his mistake, or does he recover immediately, placing himself conspicuously in a strong defensive posture ready to compensate for an errant pass, dropped ball, or missed check?

Another situation that conveys a man's true nature within the game is when a man is successful in gaining the ball (opportunity). It becomes in an instant his decision to take it himself or to seek help by passing and trusting others (teamwork) with the advancement or scoring of a goal. The defensive position of the opposing team determines the correct path and is not always immediately recognized by each man in the flow of the offense. Should a ball carrier constantly try to overcome the defense himself and gain personal notoriety by scoring unassisted, his character becomes recognized as selfish and he will stand alone even in triumph. He may score goals, but he has slighted peers, who ultimately determine his final overall respect in the fraternal order of society, which remains long after the game is done.

A bond of trust must be formed. Men are individualistic and are inclined to dominate and control their environment. In these natural tendencies the seeds of war are found. The Creator has placed these qualities inside every man. When cultivated within the spirituality of the game, with dignity, respect, honor and social recognition, the seed grows into recognizable leadership qualities, and the man emerges as a possible protector of his clan and nation.

It is said that every time we step onto the traditional field, there is a parallel game in the sky world. As players of this sacred game, our final journey home begins with an entrance into the Creator's game.

It is our belief that we are all here for a reason. It is the Creator's will when we spring from the Earth at birth. We are all born with a mission and all of the physical attributes to accomplish our individual tasks. We are also born with a number of days. No matter what lies ahead this number cannot be changed, yet it remains a mystery until the end of our worldly duties. This we see as wise, so that we do not worry and accept every day as a gift. The game is constant, and continues daily in the intellectual applications of its strategy in our daily lives, and the constant physical training in anticipation of the upcoming season. Even in death it does not end as every player is buried with his stick in a final tribute from his earth-bound family, nation and clan. The memories of his play are the tributes he leaves behind, never looking back, eyes forward in anticipation of the next play in the never-ending game of honor among Haudenosaunee men.

As the game of lacrosse continues to spread to the four corners of the Earth, its roots remain centralized in the Land of the Fire-Keepers, the Onondaga Nation. Tradition and culture are buried deep within the hearts of its keepers, and the proper application of mind, body and spirit is instilled into every new generation by this sacred game of men.

These traditional teachings are not apparent to the beginner but, like all natural things, mature with time. True enlightenment comes only with continued involvement and experience. The wisdom is ancient, the teachings are not.

AN OVERVIEW OF HAUDENOSAUNEE/U.S. HISTORY

Onondaga Nation Land Rights and the Doctrine of Discovery

This article includes information originally published in the Syracuse Peace Council's Peace Newsletter, written by Joe Heath and Phil Arnold.

All United States Indian law is founded on a very old and racist concept - the "Doctrine of Discovery." This doctrine was created by the Roman Catholic Church and supported by European imperial nations as soon as Columbus landed and has continued, after its acceptance by the Supreme Court in 1823, right up through today.

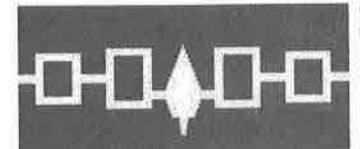
This Euro-centric doctrine, as set forth by the Pope in the Papal Bull of 1493, was based upon the assumption of Christian superiority. The edict claimed that since the Natives were not Christian, they were "savages," and therefore less than human and not entitled to hold title to their own lands. The European sovereigns assumed title by "discovery" to all the land, leaving the indigenous peoples with only an "occupancy" right, which could be transferred only to the discovering sovereign. By fiat, indigenous peoples were involuntarily converted into tenants on their aboriginal lands.

The vast wealth of all of the land on these "discovered" continents was thereby transferred to the rulers of the European countries, who controlled who could buy this land from them and at what price. This sale of the stolen Native lands was the fundamental source of wealth in the "new world."

This stealing and selling continued with the creation of the United States. Many of the men traditionally viewed as the founders of this country - Washington, Jefferson, Adams, etc. - were land speculators, who made fortunes by investing in Native lands west of the original colonies, which were then sold to settlers at enormous profits. Land speculation was also a source of revenue for the newly formed states. New York State quickly sold the Onondaga land illegally purchased in 1788 for a fraction of its value, and in knowing violation of federal law, treaties and the Constitution, for five times the amount paid for it.

Shortly after ratifying the U.S. Constitution in July 1788, New York furiously worked to grab vast areas of Haudenosaunee lands, because then Governor George Clinton knew that the state could not take Native lands once the Constitution went into effect. In its September 1788 "agreement" to take millions of acres of Onondaga ancestral territory, New York failed to even comply with its own laws. Subsequently, in 1793, 1795, 1817 and 1822, New York continued to grab Onondaga lands, even though the state had been repeatedly warned by federal officials that such takings violated laws (the Trade and Intercourse Acts), federal treaties (such as the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua), and the Constitution.

In 1823, in Johnson v. M'Intosh, another land speculator, Chief Justice John Marshall, ruled that the "Doctrine of Discovery" was a fundamental basis for United States



HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Please refer to the environmental timeline on page 65 for a broader context for these events.

909
Earliest date established by non-Indian scholars for the founding of the Confederacy. The Peacemaker gathers representatives from the Five Nations to bury their weapons and agree to the Great Law of Peace, forming the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. According to Haudenosaunee oral history, their League was formed much earlier.

1452
Papal Bull (letter from Pope Nicholas V) bestows "special graces... to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever." This initiated the "Doctrine of Discovery," which served to justify the subjugation of indigenous people throughout the world, including Native Americans.

1493
The Inter Caetera Bull issued by Pope Alexander VI elaborated on the earlier bull further codifying and validating Christian conquest of non-Christians.

1613
Probable date of the first treaty between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch, signified by the Two Row Wampum, the Guswentia. For the Haudenosaunee, this formed the basis for all future relations with European settlers. It establishes the idea of two separate but equal



Kent Lyons

No, this was not a discovery. There were very ancient people already here.

Indian law. He said the doctrine meant that “unoccupied lands” were those “lands occupied by Indians, but unoccupied by Christians.” Since then the “Doctrine of Discovery” has been regularly cited by legal scholars (Henry Weaton, B.A. Hinsdale, and George Grafton Wilson) and in court decisions. Another key decision was Tee-Hit-Ton v. United States (1955), which evoked the concept of “Manifest Destiny,” justifying Protestant immigrants taking land in the name of their Christian god.

It is shocking that this medieval “Doctrine of Discovery” is still an integral basis of current federal Indian law. It is the foundation for two extremely negative federal court rulings which have been handed down in Haudenosaunee cases. The first was the City of Sherrill v. Oneida Indian Nation, which the Supreme Court issued on March 29, 2005, just weeks after the Onondaga Land Rights Action was filed. The second case was the 2nd Circuit’s dismissal of the Cayuga Nation’s land claim on June 28, 2005, a dismissal that was allowed to stand by the Supreme Court when it refused to hear the appeal. The “Doctrine of Discovery” is referenced in the first footnote in Sherrill.

Today, if some bullying imperialist country were to announce that it was entitled to the lands of some other country because of “discovery” by a “superior” religion and culture, such a claim would be in obvious violation of international law. Under the leadership of the Haudenosaunee and other Indigenous peoples, there is a determined effort to have the Vatican rescind the Papal Bulls, which are the “moral” foundation of the “Doctrine of Discovery.”

In May, 2005 a meeting was held at the United Nations organized by Indigenous people from across the Americas to discuss the devastating consequences of the “Doctrine of Discovery.” The following comments are excerpted from a talk given by Oren Lyons during that meeting:

- No, this was not a discovery. There were very ancient people already here. There were civilizations here. There were libraries here. There were cities here that were bigger than any city in Europe. There was knowledge...
- In 1987, John Paul II was visiting Argentina and the indigenous representatives delivered this message to him: “One day European civilization arrived and planted the sword in the language of the cross and turned us into the crucified peoples...They brought that cross to America and on it, instead of the Christ of Judea they hung the Indian as Christ.”
- They are maintaining the integrity of their landholding which is based on a very, very racist and flawed Doctrine of Discovery. And that’s what we want to rescind. We want the Holy See* to rescind those Papal Bulls and free our people from oppression. Because that is precisely why we are struggling today.
- In 1992, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA said that for the descendants of the survivors of the subsequent invasion, genocide, slavery, ecocide, and exploitation of the wealth of the land, the celebration (of Columbus’ arrival in the western hemisphere) is not an appropriate observance of this anniversary. Well, I guess not.
- It’s going to take our determination - which we have and it’s why we’re here - to see this through. And hopefully, the new Pope, whose expertise incidentally is 14th and 15th century canon law, will perhaps be courageous enough to... rescind those Papal Bulls which subjugated millions of people for 500 years with death, destruction, and instability.

* Central government of the Catholic church

Haudenosaunee Roots of American Identity

A Debt in Governance Style

By Sandra Bigtree

Prior to Colonialism, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy had created strong international relationships with neighboring Indigenous Confederacies throughout the Americas, by upholding the Great Law of Peace. Their Native allies extended from what is now New England to the Mississippi, and from the St. Lawrence Valley to Virginia. Peace was understood to mean living responsibly within the Natural Law by acknowledging that all life has its own intelligence and spirit. Respectively, all experienced a flourishing landscape with abundant crops, fertile soil, clean air, and pure water. By the mid 18th century, English colonists had established townships of Boston and Philadelphia, which contained 15-30,000 people. As they settled into Haudenosaunee territory, they were well aware of the Great Law of Peace protocol in negotiating treaties. They regularly met with Haudenosaunee leaders, who held titles as Hodiya-nehsoñ’ —“Men Who are of the Good Mind.” The Hodiya-nehsoñ’ spoke for the people, which was something unheard of in European monarchies at the time. Word quickly spread throughout Europe regarding this powerful government “of the people,” which was rooted in peacemaking through the Great Law.

Each nation is an absolute Republick by itself, govern’d in all Publick affairs of War and Peace by the Sachems of Old Men, whose Authority and Power is gained by and consists wholly in the opinions of the rest of the Nation in their Wisdom and Integrity. They never execute their Resolutions by Compulsion or Force Upon any of their People. Honour and Esteem are their principal Rewards, as Shame and being Despised are their Punishments.
— Cadwallader Colden, Acting British Governor of New York 1760-1771

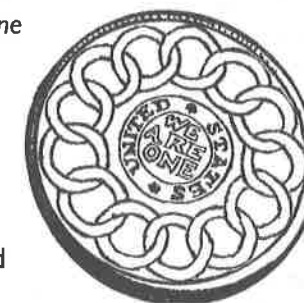
In 1736, a popular Philadelphia printer, Benjamin Franklin, began publishing proceedings of Indian treaties. At the Treaty of Lancaster in 1744, Franklin printed a speech by Canasatego, an Onondaga Hodiya-nehsoñ’ who urged the colonists to “unite as one.” Canasatego demonstrated, as instructed by the Peacemaker, how easily a single arrow could break, but five arrows bound together formed an unbreakable union. This image was incorporated into the official U.S. Seal.

Our wise forefathers established Union and Amity between the Five Nations. This has made us formidable; this has given us great Weight and Authority with our neighboring Nations. We are a powerful Confederacy; and by your observing the same methods, our wise forefathers have taken, you will acquire such Strength and Power. Therefore whatever befalls you, never fall out with one another [emphasis added].

— Canasatego, Lancaster, Treaty Council, 1744

The encroaching colonies were disturbingly disorganized leading increasingly to the exploitation and illegal taking of Indian land. Franklin kept communications open through his publications and was therefore regularly invited to Haudenosaunee Council meetings.

Franklin also designed currency using the “Covenant Chain” concept of the Great Law by



“We Are One”
13 State Chain Links
Benjamin Franklin 1787

nations that will respect one another’s sovereignty.

1615

Samuel De Champlain and an army of hundreds of Hurons attack and lay siege to the Onondaga fortified town on the shores of Onondaga Lake, between Onondaga and Ley Creeks. Despite extensive casualties, this imperialist attack without warning was not successful and Champlain, after being seriously wounded, was carried to New France, in what is now Canada.

1654

French send Jesuit Simon Le Moyne to Onondaga.

1694

The French attack the Onondaga. The French find abandoned villages, decide to burn the crops of the Onondaga.

1713-1722

Tuscaroras are adopted into the Haudenosaunee Confederacy after being defeated in war by colonists in North Carolina, who sought to make slaves of their people.

1744

During treaty negotiations in Lancaster, PA, Canasatego, an Onondaga chief, urges the English colonists to unite by following the example of the Haudenosaunee.

1754

Benjamin Franklin travels to the council of the Haudenosaunee to discuss the structure of the Haudenosaunee government. He reports back about the strength of the union of the “savages.” Benjamin Franklin’s “Albany Plan of Union” for a central government of the North American colonies names its legislative branch “the Grand Council,” language directly borrowed from the Haudenosaunee.