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Negotiators, Keepers of the Eastern Door

The continent of North America was originally owned by the Indian by right of settlement for hundreds of years before the arrival of the White Man.

Groups or tribes of Indians, composed of relatives and friends, lived in adjoining regions. The boundaries were either agreed upon by peaceful negotiations between the tribal chiefs or fought for in the showdown of war.

North America was not a wilderness as the White Man supposed. It was a great land mass composed of hundreds of small and large, interlocking, tribal-owned kingdoms.

We are the MOHAWKS

From this unsound social structure the six blood-brother chiefs of the large Iroquois Family amalgamated their adjoining kingdoms into one nation and controlled by one governing body.

It was called the Six Nations Confederacy. It combined the Great Hill People (Senecas); the People on the Hills (Onondagas); the Shirt-wearing People (Tuscuroras); the People of the Upright Stone (Oneidas); the People of the Mucky Land (Cayugas) and ourselves, the Mohawks, the People of the Flint.

The Confederacy covered most of present-day New York State, parts of Pennsylvania and touched on New England.

We, the Mohawks, by geographical position, were Keepers of the Eastern Door of the legislative Longhouse of the Six Nations. Together with our Senecan brothers on the West we were charged with the commencement of all the business transactions of our national council. And we were the first important Indian political negotiators to deal with the French, the Dutch and the English.

People of the Flint

Unlike Indian tribes elsewhere, the women of the Iroquoian People have always had an equal and, often, deciding voice in administrative affairs.

In former days their wishes, carried from their own council longhouses to the main seat of legislation, made and unmade the standing of chiefs, unless adhered to. Their voices are still strong.

The women's word was therefore most influential in the charting of the old Six Nations policies, the United Nations of its day.

Its proposal to end the arms race by "pulling out a great pine tree by the roots and throwing all weapons of war into the hole" was a bold dream centuries ahead of its time.

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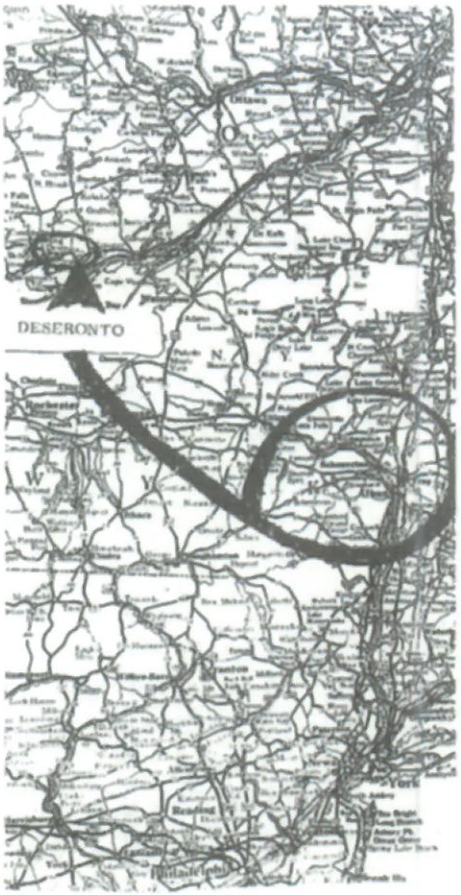


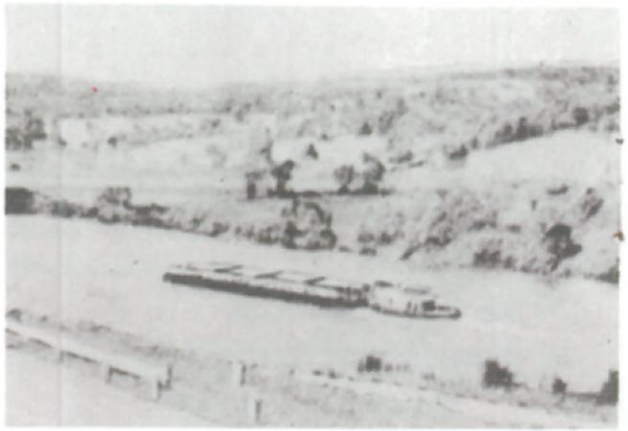
Strategic Control Point of Mid-North America

On our lands in the Mohawk Valley of mid-New York State we lived in several villages close to both Fort Hunter and the official residence of Sir William Johnson, British superintendent of Indian affairs for 30 years. He was our fair-dealing confidant during that time.

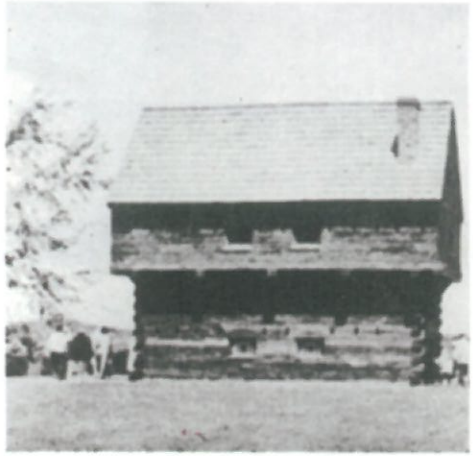
Some of our chiefs owned considerable personal property and farmed their lands extensively. They spoke and wrote both Indian and English for the Mohawk Tract was surrounded solidly on three sides by white settlements.

In 1711 five Mohawk chiefs visited England and were granted a royal audience with Queen Anne who was extremely impressed by their intelligence and loyalty.

IROQUOIS CALUMET



Our MOHAWK VALLEY *Home*



Blockhouse replicas new state museums

The Mohawks came down from the St. Lawrence River country more than 400 years ago into the fertile valley in New York State that today bears their name.

That region, connected by easy canoe routes with the Great Lakes and the Ohio, the Hudson and the St. Lawrence Rivers, was the water-level pass that gave our tribe and their associates the control of mid-North America.

It was an ideal country, too, for hunting, agriculture and other peaceful occupations.

We lived in bark-sided longhouse villages, described by white observers of that day, "unequalled in townsite neatness."

Site of Mohawk Valley, mid-New York State

Our women were too good at farming to till poor soil and consequently grew amazing crops of beans, corn, squash, pumpkins, tobacco and artichokes. Later, the Mohawks adopted European methods of growing cultivated grains and planted fruit orchards that flourished luxuriantly.

It was under these pleasant living conditions that the Iroquois League of the Hodenosaunee, or Long House, was formed among the six Iroquois tribes; the Mohawks were the keepers of its eastern door.

The League was a working wilderness government that white people encountered, envied and admire to this day. It forms the proud background of the Mohawks of Deseronto, Ont.

IROQUOIS WATER DRUM

Sir William Johnson home still preserved.

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The MOHAWKS *Came to Canada in 1777*

As the War of Independence became imminent the Mohawks, together with other members of the Iroquois League at a sudden mass meeting at Oswego, N.Y., declared allegiance to the Crown and swore to help the British keep open the water communication routes that today comprise the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The war started and the Mohawks, soon driven from their rich ancestral valley in New York State, settled temporarily at both Niagara, Ont., and Lachine, Que.

They Settled .....

Our branch of the Mohawk people had fled to Lachine, Que., in 1777 where those, not engaged in war, built huts, cultivated small fields and lived off the land. They were not happy in Lower Canada.

As allies of the British the Mohawks demanded deeded land forther west in Upper Canada. The Crown granted our request with 7,000 acres. We decided to move there with "the earliest opening of the (St. Lawrence) river in the spring" of 1784.

Our forefathers and their families of the Wolf, Turtle and the Bear Clans, landed on the shore of our reservation on May 22, 1784. They beached the canoes and, upturning one of them for an altar, held a service of thanksgiving and afterwards planted a cross and flag staff.

A cairn to commemorate the landing was erected in 1929 by the Historical Sites and Monument Board and unveiled as part of the United Empire Loyalist celebrations held that year.

Late in May each year since then we commemorate the occasion with pageantry. Chosen Indian people in colorful native costumes carry a birch bark canoe from the water edge to the cairn site where a short impressive service is held, attended by fellow tribesmen from near and far and a multitude of white friends.

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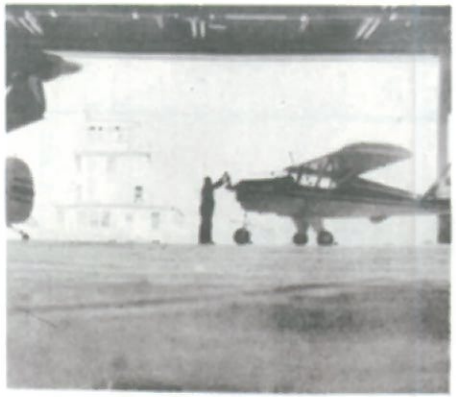


Tyendinaga

Royally-Deeded Land of the MOHAWKS

Tyendinaga Indian Reserve is situated 30 miles west of Kingston, 20 miles east of Belleville and stretches for nine miles along the north shore of the Bay of Quinte.

The reserve covers a land area of 27 square miles, or, 17,000 acres of rich agricultural land. Largely a farming community of small holdings and occasional 400-acre farms, the reserve surrounds the village of Deseronto on two sides. The Mohawks gave the village its name after an original Band leader, Captain John Deserontyou.

There are 45 miles of gravel roads criss-crossing the reservation and the main, or York Road, is the original colonial staging route between Kingston and York (Toronto).

About 800 members of the Tyendinaga Mohawks live on the reserve while some 1,200 more members are spread the length and breadth of Canada and the United States.

The community life of the reserve centres around the substantial homes; two Anglican churches - Christ Church has borne the Royal coat of arms since 1798; one Pentecostal Church; the Council Hall and five public schools. There are about half a dozen small commercial businesses.

About midway on the reserve is a modern three-runway training airport used during World Wars I and II. It was turned over by the Department of Transport to the Mohawks who lease out the buildings and runways for commercial purposes as a source of revenue.

TRADE HATCHET

SUN-DANCE WAND

The Present 17,000 Acre Indian Reservation deeded Forever to the Mohawks by King George III in 1793

Because of the progressiveness of the Mohawks of Tyendinaga Reserve, members are the first Indians in Canada allowed by the federal government to spend their own Band funds without the control of agencies or the Department of Indian Affairs. Officials say, "the Mohawks of Tyendinaga have proved to be very able administrators."

Leadership, therefore, is something to be expected of the Mohawks of the Quinte shore; their adopted and revered ancestor, Deganawidah, was the co-founder with Hiawatha of the old Iroquois League of Nations.

The Tyendinaga Mohawks, forever loyal to the Crown since the early 1700's, responded nobly to the call of arms during World Wars I and II.

Of the small number of able men available 150 Indians served actively and 12 of these paid the supreme sacrifice. Their memory is perpetuated in handsome church plaques and cairns.

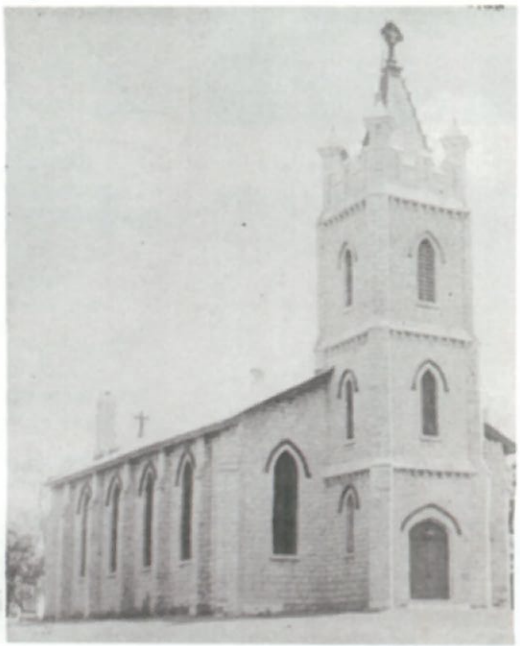
The motto of the Mohawks of Tyendinaga for more than 175 years has been:

IN HONOR, LOYALTY AND FEAR OF GOD.

Newest of four schools on Reserve

Mohawk Council Hall, Deganawidah cairn

Christ Church (Anglican), patronized by four British soveriegns



In the MOHAWK *Tradition*

Some 300 years removed from paganism and mythology, the Christian Mohawks of Tyendinaga base their customs mainly on those of white origin. There is the February distribution of flour, payment for a mill site at Shannonville; the Mohawk Fall Fair in September; the plowing match in October. Both latter events are well patronized.

The Mohawks most prized antiquity are three pieces of a stirling silver communion service presented to the Mohawk Valley people by Queen Anne in 1714. It was buried at Fort Hunter during the American Revolution, retrieved afterwards and brought to Tyendinaga Reserve where it is zealously guarded and used only on very special church occasions.

: flour payment from whites distributed each year.

Annual plowing match is popular fall competition

Mohawk Indian Fair held each September

Among the Prominent MOHAWKS

Among past and present Tyendinaga Mohawks they single out the following persons for special achievement and mention:

Deganawidah, Mohawk-adopted, co-founder with Hiawatha of the Iroquois League of Six Nations.

Leaders and founders of the Tyendinaga Reserve -

Captain John Deserontyou
Chief Isaac Hill
Chief Aaron Hill

Oronhyatekha - Dr. Peter Martin, friend of King Edward VII, Oxford-educated, Supreme Chief Ranger of the Independent Order of Foresters, and physician.

Marlene Brant M.A., B.A., Social service worker in Winnipeg.

The Rev. Glendon Brant B.A., L.S.T., first Quinte Mohawk ordained into Anglican Church, 1960.

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