

# Sullivan

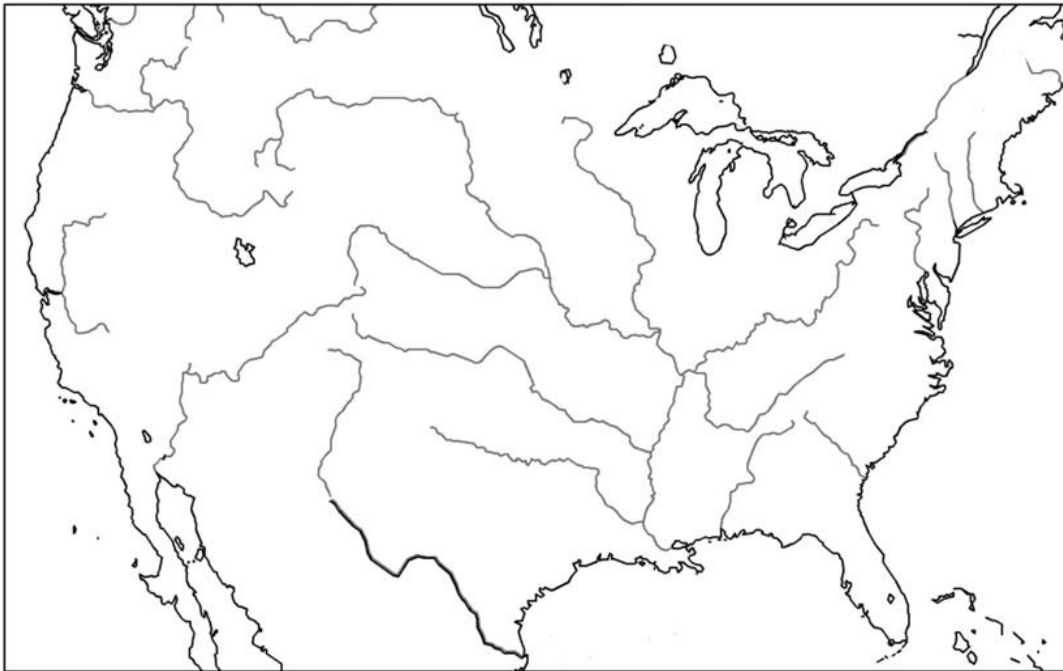
By Dehowähda-dih - Mr. Brad Powless



## Haudenosaunee Beginnings

Once the five warring nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca) united to form the Haudenosaunee. The people united under one common law, *Gaya·neñ·hsä·'gó·nah*, or the Great Law of Peace. The Haudenosaunee became a very powerful force in the area. The Haudenosaunee were able to live together in peace and prosperity within their lands.

For the Haudenosaunee, diplomacy was a priority. Anyone who threatened the Great Peace was seen as an issue to be resolved. First nations were met with diplomacy, if that did not resolve the issue, Haudenosaunee fighters were feared throughout the northeast. Because of the strong union, their influence spread from the Hudson River to the east, Lake Ontario to the North, the Susquehanna River to the south and the Mississippi River to the West.



## Doctrine of Discovery

Then in the 1600s, explorers from Europe began arriving on our shores. They came to Turtle Island with the goal from their country which sponsored their journey, to acquire more land for their King or country. But these explorers knew (from Columbus' 1492 exploration) that there are people already living there.

Back then, the Catholic Church was a major factor in daily religious, personal, and political life. The Leader of the Catholic Church is called the Pope. The Pope established rules that all of the Catholic people would follow. They followed these rules because they believed that only the Pope could communicate to the Creator or God.

Kings and Queens had a lot of wealth and power and were always looking for more. Once they began sending ships of explorers to Turtle Island in search of more wealth, they needed a moral rationale to acquire these new lands.

The Pope at the time, Pope Nicolas V, then created a rule (Papal Bull) that would benefit the Kings and Queens and the church. The Pope created, "The Doctrine of Discovery". In this document, the Pope gave instructions for the explorers when they encountered people already living on Turtle Island.

The Pope declared, if the people they encounter do not believe in Jesus Christ as their savior; they cannot be human. People who are not Christians, are just like the plants and animals you will find there. Therefore, they do not have any rights to the lands where they live. The explorers can therefore "justly" lay claim to any lands where no Christian people are present.

With the Doctrine of Discovery in hand, explorers began claiming lands they encountered, often violently from already living



the people there.

## The Dutch

When the explorers entered our territory, they entered the lands of the Mohawks by way of the Hudson River. The explorers were from a country called the Netherlands. The Netherlands is a northern European country on the Atlantic Ocean. They called themselves the Dutch.



When the Dutch arrived, the Mohawks noticed that these people were totally different from the people we were used to interacting with. They had different languages, customs, religions, and leaders. The Dutch felt the same way about the Mohawks. Despite these wide differences, the Mohawks and the Dutch began to try to communicate with each other. The Mohawks probably saw that the Dutch had goods that were beneficial to the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch realized that these people could not be easily militarily conquered.

The Dutch and the Haudenosaunee began to talk to each other. They both quickly realized that a positive relationship between the two nations would be beneficial. One of the first discussions was what to call each other. The Dutch felt that they should be referred to as “father” and the Haudenosaunee would be the “son”. The Haudenosaunee said that this will



not do. We will refer to each other from this point forward as “brother” to show that we are equal.

At the conclusion of these negotiations, there were indeed more aspects of both being equal, embedded in the treaty. Both the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee agreed that we both have different religions, languages, governments, and customs that are neither better nor greater than

the other. That each one will travel down the river of life, side by side, the Dutch in their ship will carry all their ways. In our canoe, we will carry our ways. Neither people will try to steer each other’s vessel as we travel down the river of life forever. Forever will be, as long as the waters run downhill, the grasses grow green, and the sun rises in the east and sets in the west.

The Dutch also wanted to symbolize the three foundations of the treaty; peace, friendship, and forever. They decided to make three interlocking chains. But what material should they be made of? Gold can be easily bent and broken; gold is not the answer. Iron is stronger, but it can

also rust and brake; iron is not the answer. Silver is stronger than gold and it will not rust like iron; the chains will be made of silver. It will be called the Silver Covenant Chain of Friendship. When we meet again, we will call each other “brother” and polish this chain of friendship so that it will remain strong and be renewed.



The Dutch said that it is their way to record treaties on paper. The Haudenosaunee said that we will record this peace agreement in our way, with wampum. The wampum will have a row of white to show that we did not always know each other. There will be two equal rows of purple running the length of the belt. One row will have your ways, the other row will have ours. Neither row will cross the other. Between the two rows will be three rows of white, representing peace, friendship, and forever. The purple rows will travel off the belt to show this treaty will carry on. This agreement was finalized in 1613 and it is called the Two Row Wampum Belt.

This treaty was the basis for how the Haudenosaunee dealt with all people from across the ocean. The explorers also used this treaty. They became accustomed to our ways and began using wampum to make agreements with us.



## Trade

Time passed and more and more Europeans crossed the ocean and began to settle on Turtle Island. Two European countries took the lead in the Northeast and began setting up colonies and forts. Those countries are France and England.



With the two countries establishing themselves, they relied on Native agreements to be successful in land agreements and trade. Native people then had to make decisions on who they wanted to form trade agreements with. Often Native peoples pitted the different European countries against each other to try to get the best trade.

Trade became so prosperous; it developed into a serious problem. For the Haudenosaunee, it meant a change in lifestyle. We are taught only to hunt for what we need and to give thanks to the animal for helping us to continue to survive. Now that the English and the French had many goods that we desired, this changed how hunting was not for survival, but for trade. Animals, mainly beaver, were being over hunted for goods that the trading post had. This also meant that the Haudenosaunee and other nations were battling each other for the best hunting and trapping grounds.

In 1753, this trade tension turned into a war. The French and English wanted to control all of the beaver trade. They began to fight over the forts in the indigenous homelands to ensure they had the best trade routes. This soon escalated to battles across Turtle Island, Europe, and Asia.

Indigenous nations were forced to choose between their trading partners. Some saw the French as a people who were willing to live with natives peacefully and some saw the English with more valuable items to trade.



Either way, the indigenous people were having French and English colonizers fighting in their homelands.

A Mohawk called King Hendrick was an ally of the English. He believed that the English had a greater army and navy than the French. If the Haudenosaunee joined forces with the English, we would be on the winning side of this fight. In a town now called Johnstown, N.Y., King Hendrick and Sir William Johnson, an influential British authority, convinced the Haudenosaunee to join forces with the British.

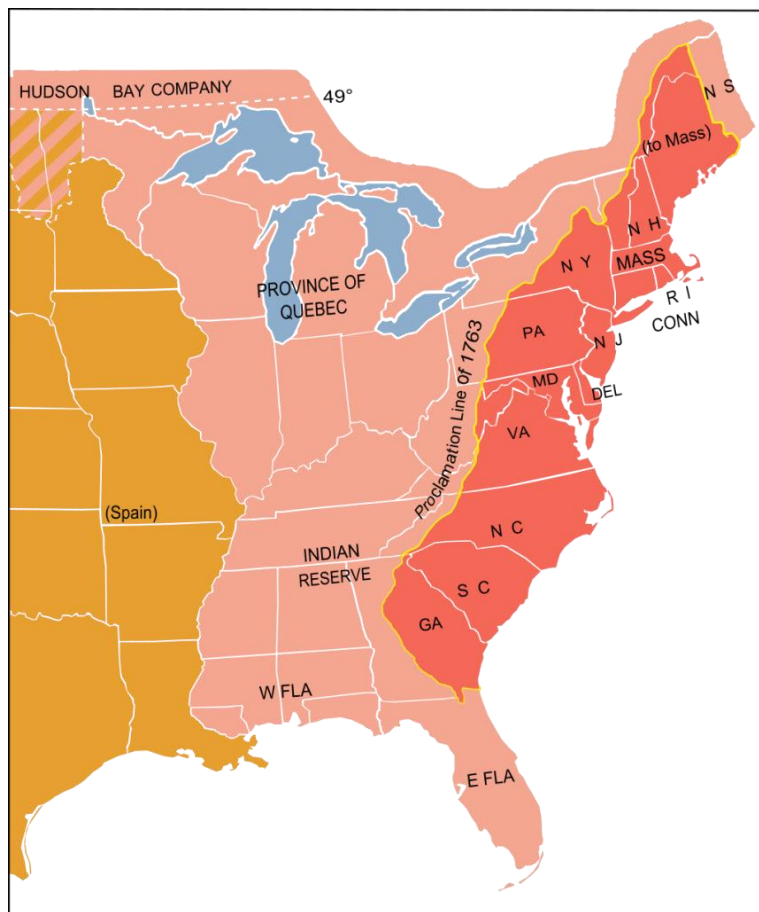
This was not a quick war, it was named the French and Indian War. This war lasted for 7 years! The French did not have as big of an army so they relied heavily on their native allies. Many battles were won on both sides. Colonists took up arms with the British and fought against the French and their allies. Colonists such as George Washington fought with the British and even wanted to be promoted to a general in the British army. In the end, the large British army and the constant flow of British troops proved too much for the French and their Native allies.



## English Rule

After peace was achieved with the French, King George of England was now in charge of the colonies and the majority of the trade on Turtle Island. The King also welcomed many Mohawks to England to thank them for fighting with England. One of these people was a Mohawk named Joseph Brant. When the French and Indian War began, he was only 14 years old. But he was involved in many battles and proved himself in battle time and time again.

In 1763, King George created a boundary for the colonies called the Proclamation Line. This Line created a definite boundary where the Colonists could live and where natives could live in peace. He recognized the efforts of native allies who fought with England also while balancing how much territory his army could defend. Due to our alliance with England, most of our lands remained ours.



## Wise Forefathers

But seven years of fighting a large-scale war paid a heavy price for England. King George spent a lot of money in defeating the French. Now he wanted to recoup his money back. To do this, he began forcing the colonists to house and feed British Troops (Red Coats) and began levying heavy taxes on daily life.

Tensions between the Colonists and England grew and grew. Colonists began to meet with the Haudenosaunee about the government that produced free men and women in a peaceful society. They had watched our leaders not only fight, but also negotiate treaties with great oratory skill.

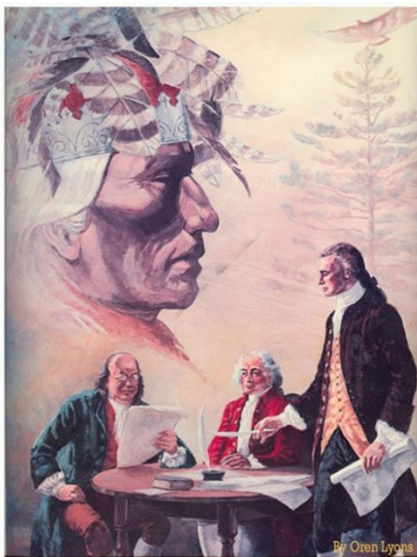


During one meeting, an Onondaga Chief named Canastego talked directly to the colonists about their oppression under the King.

“We heartily recommend Union and good agreement between you, our English brethren... Our wise forefathers established union and amity between the Five Nations; this has made us formidable; this has given us great weight and authority in our neighboring nations. We are a powerful Confederacy; and by your observing the same methods our wise forefathers have taken, you will acquire fresh strength and power.”

Some of the Colonists demanded change. They did not like how their lives have been changed. Maybe they could be like the Haudenosaunee? One Colonist who expressed these thoughts was Benjamin Franklin.

“It would be a very strange thing if six ignorant savages should be capable of forming a Scheme for such a Union, and be able to execute it in such a manner, that it has subsisted for ages and appears indissoluble; and yet that that a like union should be impracticable for ten or a dozen colonies, to whom it is more necessary; and must be more advantageous; and who cannot be supposed to want an equal understanding of their interests”

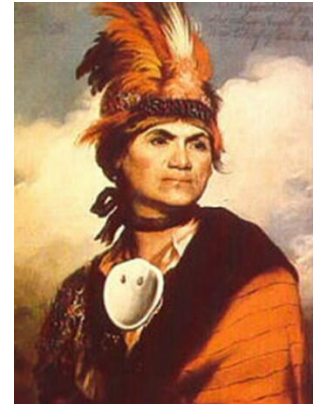


## A Revolution

The Colonists reached out to the Haudenosaunee in 1775 for help. They asked if the Haudenosaunee would join with them in fighting against the British. The Haudenosaunee told the colonists that we saw this as a fight between “father and son” and we would remain neutral. But our men are free, they may choose to fight with or against you.

On July 4, 1776, the colonists decided to no longer be a part of England. They declared independence from King George and his laws, taxes and heavy rule over the people. The King disagreed with the idea of the Colonists declaring independence and not paying him his taxes. This meant war, it was called the American Revolution!

Just 13 years ago, the French and Indian War had ended, now there was another war. Many Haudenosaunee were tired of the fighting that occurred throughout our lands. Some thought that we should fight with the American Colonists, some thought we should fight with the British Crown. One person who thought we should fight with the British was Joseph Brant.



Joseph Brant was a very fierce Mohawk fighter. As a young teenager, he fought with the British in the French and Indian War. He traveled to Europe to visit England, learned how to speak English, study warfare, and was an ally of the British Crown. Joseph Brant thought that the British army was so strong, that the British would easily defeat the Colonists and we must ally ourselves with England. Despite the Haudenosaunee council’s decision to remain neutral, he went against the wishes of the council and gathered forces to fight and support King George of England.

The American Colonists became upset with the taxes and the dominance of King George. One way to show the British their anger was the Boston Tea Party. The Colonists boarded English ships loaded with tea for the American Colonists. The Colonists knew that when they were going to purchase this tea, a large tax would be added and that money would be sent back to England. Colonists dressed as Mohawks boarded the ship and dumped all of the tea into the Boston harbor! Many believe that the Colonists dressed as the Mohawks because of how they envied the freedom of the Haudenosaunee and its government.



## Declaration

On July 4, 1776, the American Colonists declared independence from England. They wrote a document to the King of England stating their intentions.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

War between the Colonists and England began. As the Colonial Army battled the English army, the Colonists began moving westward into native lands. They did not like that the King drew the Proclamation Line which prevented Colonists from taking lands from native people.

The Declaration of Independence states, “He (the King) has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose, obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.”



## Brant

With the Declaration of Independence written, the Colonists now believed they could now live where they wanted. Soon villagers were moving across the boundary into Mohawk country to make settlements. They believed they did not have to follow the wishes of the King anymore.

The Mohawks were upset that Colonists began moving into their homelands. They wanted them to return to the other side of the Proclamation Line, but the Colonists would not leave. In response, Joseph Brant and his forces began to attack the towns in Mohawk territory all along the Proclamation Line.

Joseph Brant and his forces attacked colonial villages such as Cherry Valley. At Cherry Valley they forced the villagers out of their homes, destroying their town. To build animosity towards the Mohawks, the painting *The Murder of Jane McCrea* was created.



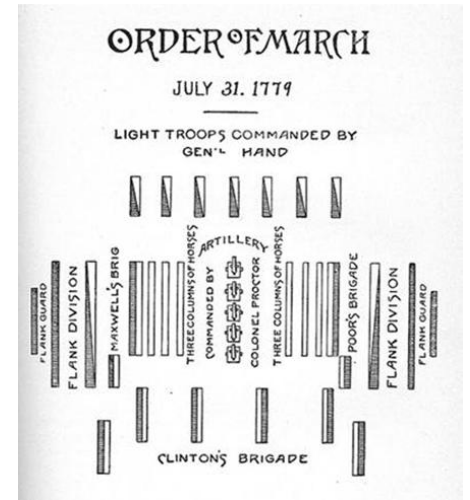
The painting depicts the Mohawks attacking a female villager, Jane McCrea. The painting shows the defenseless Jane, about to be killed by ruthless Mohawks. Interestingly, the painting also highlights a white pine tree, a symbol of peace of the Haudenosaunee. The painting and the re-telling of the attack angered the Colonists who demanded revenge.

## Sullivan's Campaign

The leader of the colonial army, General George Washington, listened to those calls for revenge; even though he fought alongside the Haudenosaunee just a few years earlier in the French and Indian War.

In reaction to the actions of Joseph Brant's forces, Washington planned a major attack against the Haudenosaunee. He deployed two major generals (John Sullivan and James Clinton) to carry out his plan. His plan was simple, yet deadly. His plan was called the Sullivan Campaign, and its goal was to wipe out all the Haudenosaunee.

"The Expedition you are appointed to command is to be directed against the hostile tribes of the Six Nations of Indians, with their associates and adherents. The immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements, and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more. I would recommend, that some post in the center of the Indian Country, should be occupied with all expedition, with a sufficient quantity of provisions whence parties should be detached to lay waste all the settlements around, with instructions to do it in the most effectual manner, that the country may not be merely overrun, but destroyed."



General Sullivan

## The Capital

That spring, a battalion of soldiers carried out Washington's orders. Interestingly, the soldiers did not attack Joseph Brant's Mohawk villages but instead attacked the capital of the Haudenosaunee, the Onondaga Nation.

In the morning the soldiers paddled across Onondaga Lake to the Onondaga villages. The Onondaga were not expecting to be attacked as they remained neutral. The Onondaga heeded the Grand Council's decision, and their forces were not fighting with the British or the American Colonists.

The quiet sleepy Onondaga villages were awakened by gunfire and soldiers on April 11, 1779.

Onondagas scrambled as the colonial soldiers attacked men, women, and children; the young and the old. Many were killed. The soldiers then began setting everything on fire. Burning longhouses and all the food that the Onondaga have stored.

When the fighting finally stopped, for eight miles from the lake, all of the Onondaga longhouses were on fire, their food was destroyed, and any Onondaga survivors were on the run.



## Newtown

Some of the Onondagas who survived traveled north to live with the Mohawks in their summer fishing villages at Akwesasne. Some Onondagas traveled west to live with the Cayuga people. When the Onondaga got there, they told of the brutality of the colonial army.

In August, the second wave of the Sullivan Campaign began.

General John Sullivan traveled north from Pennsylvania to the lands of the Haudenosaunee. Because the army was so large, English scouts noticed that they were heading north.

Joseph Brant and the English army decided to make a stand to stop the army at Newtown (now called Elmira, New York). When the colonial army met Brant and the English army, a huge battle ensued. But the Brant and the English army were greatly outnumbered. The Colonial army defeated the English and Brant's forces and scored a major victory. Joseph Brant and the surviving allies headed north.



## Abandoned

With no military force standing in their way, the army headed towards the Cayuga and Seneca villages.

As the army came to a village, they were ready for battle. Instead, the army would encounter an empty abandoned village. The only people there were the very old or people unable to travel. Once those remaining people were killed, the army would go about burning and destroying the village. The food was burned, orchards were cut down, longhouses burned, and interesting objects stolen. The soldiers feasted on as much food as they could before the rest was burned.

By the end of September, General Sullivan had mapped and destroyed over 40 large Cayuga and Seneca towns and burned thousands of bushels of food stores containing corn, beans, and squash.

“Every creek and river has been traced, and the whole country explored in search of Indian settlements; and I am well persuaded, that, except one... there is not a single town left in the country of the five nations,” reported General John Sullivan.



## Frozen

Thousands of Haudenosaunee were now homeless and hungry. They decided to head to the closest British fort for safety, Ft. Niagara. When the Haudenosaunee arrived at the fort to seek help, they found none. The British would not let the people inside.

With winter on its way, the Haudenosaunee tried to make any kind of shelter they could. Unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate as it was an extremely cold and snowy winter. Many of the Haudenosaunee camped outside and either died from starvation or froze to death.

The following spring, some Haudenosaunee decided to stay together near Ft. Niagara in an area they called Buffalo Creek (now Buffalo, NY). Some Onondaga decided to go home to rebuild. When they got there, longhouses were still destroyed and very little food. That is when the Creator sent a gift for the people to survive. The Creator sent Ogweñ•yó'da' or cicada to eat. We now had food to eat until our plants could be harvested.





## Town Destroyer

Life was different. The Haudenosaunee no longer lived in longhouses but in small family cabins. Hunting areas were reduced and now people only had small family farms to survive. Life was hard. People began to turn away from the old longhouse ways and turn towards the white brother's church ways. Many Haudenosaunee tried to forget these trying times by drinking alcohol.

When the Haudenosaunee met with the new leader of the new country, they recognized who he was. It was General George Washington. But now he was President Washington. The Haudenosaunee had a new name for him.

"When your army entered the country of the Six Nations, we called you Hanadagá-yas -Town Destroyer: and to this day when that name is heard our women look behind them and turn pale, and our children cling close to the necks of their mothers. Our counsellors and warriors are men and cannot be afraid; but their hearts are grieved with the fears of our women and children, and desire that it may be buried so deep as to be heard no more," said Seneca Chief Corn Planter.



## Facts

- By the end of the war 9 of 10 Haudenosaunee had died.
- Over 90% of our lands are claimed by New York State.
- Haudenosaunee began living in cabins instead of Longhouses.
- Onondagas began to rebuild.
- The Haudenosaunee refer to every President at Hanadagá•yas.
- Every 17 years the Ogweñ•yó'da' (cicada) return to Onondaga; we remember and eat!
- Below are some signs along the lakes about the loss of villages during the Sullivan Campaign.

