A History of Politics and Women's Status at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory: A Study of Continuity and Social Change Among the Iroquois.

Martin John Cannon

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

This dissertation contributes to the political history of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and to the literature concerning the status of Iroquois (i.e. Haudenosaunee) women. I document the factors responsible for transforming women's status, including: nineteenth-century residential schooling, government policy and colonial interference. These factors led to religious dissimilarities, differences in acculturation and a willingness to experiment with and sometimes reconfigure social and political organization. They also led to the transformation of gender relations, kinship organization, governance and the once esteemed status of Haudenosaunee women. I document some of this historic change in this dissertation. I also illustrate how the history of women's status is one that has resulted from a complex process of intrusion and accommodation that took place historically at Six Nations. More generally, I argue that women's status was indeed transformed – and also maintained – following colonization, and that the decline of traditional governance and women's changing status cannot be understood as separate events in history. I explore the coincident history of both patriarchal and colonial injustices at Six Nations by considering historically significant events in time: the implementation of a band council government in 1924, the Report of Andrew T. Thompson, and histories of racism and sex discrimination in the *Indian Act*. The *Indian Act* (R. S. C., 1985) continues to determine matters of governance, citizenship and Indian status at twenty-first century Grand River. I document the way in which it has also defined – and divided – some members of the Grand River Territory. The *Indian Act* and other institutionalized discrimination continues to structure and transform the Haudenosaunee – including women's status and political history – into the twenty-first century. The research I present here contributes to a much overdue history of politics and women's status at Grand River, and also, to an emerging body of literature that considers the history of colonization and women's history as this concerns all Indigenous peoples.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the following people who shaped this thesis in some way or another, and who also played a part in the making of my academic career. To the early encouragement of Susan Heald and Bruce Curtis while at Wilfrid Laurier University. Thanks to Roberta Hamilton, Mary Morton, Ena Dua, and Evelyn Peters while at Queen's University. Thanks to Gordon Darroch, Himani Bannerji, Kathy Bischoping, Hira Singh, and Audrey Tokiwa, and especially to my committee at York University: Peter Landstreet, Brian Singer and Celia Haig-Brown. My colleagues: Patricia Monture (Mohawk), Terry Wotherspoon, Peter Li, Harley Dickinson, Jennifer Poudrier, Michael Mehta, Ken Coates, Marie Battiste (Mikmaq), Verna St.Denis (Metis/Cree), and Sakej Henderson (Chicksaw) (University of Saskatchewan). Thanks to Jim Frideres (University of Calgary). Thanks also David Kanatawakhon (Mohawk) for help with Mohawk language translation. *Nyawen* [Thank-you] to the five people I interviewed at Six Nations. Classmates and friends: Eric Mykhalovskiy (Dalhousie), Rob Gill (Ryerson), Harvey Briggs (York), Patty Phillips (York), and Lina Sunseri (Oneida,Western). I acknowledge my long-time friends: Marc Sanderson (Mohawk) and Aimee Johnston. Sky Gilbert for many debates and conversations. Thanks to my Taekwondo instructors for showing me the way of Zen in the martial arts: Master Reza Ghasry (Toronto), Grand Master Kee Ha and Master Duk Ha (Saskatoon). The dissertation is dedicated to all my relations (including the family of Deborah Doxtator), Alva and Gordon Cannon, and to my Grandparents, the late Freeman Earl Farmer (1912-1983) and his life-long partner Olive Hill (1918-1997). *Tewatathawi* ["We carry ourselves"].

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page *i*

Copyright Page *ii*

Certificate Page *iii*

Abstract *iv*

Acknowledgments *vi*

Table of Contents *vii*

Maps and Illustrations *viii - xxi*

Introduction **1**

1. Women's Status and Gender Complementarity among the Haudenosaunee **19**

2. Political Autonomy, Religious Influence and the Transformation of Women's Status at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, 1775-1890 **84**

3. Politics, Governance and the Transformation of Women's Status at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, 1847-1924 **138**

4. Exploring Hidden Complexities: Bill C-31 (An Act to Amend the *Indian Act)*, Haudenosaunee Women and the Legislative History of Sex Discrimination **213**

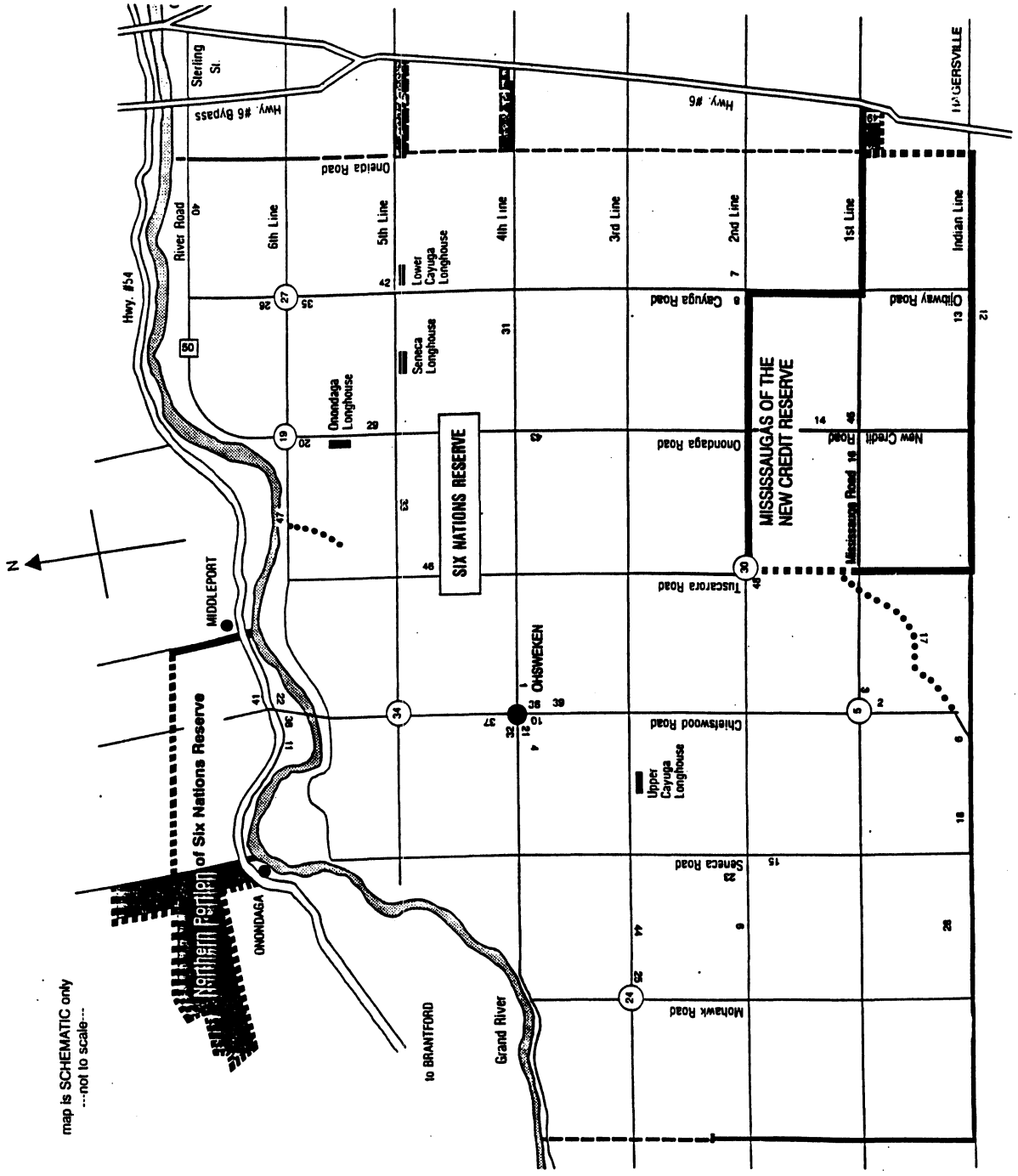
5. Voices from the Present: A Gathering of Haudenosaunee Perspectives **249**

6. Summary and Conclusions **328**

Bibliography *344*

VITA *365*

Maps and Illustrations A - L



(A) Map of the Six Nations Reserve at 1997 (source: Beaver, 1997: 176).

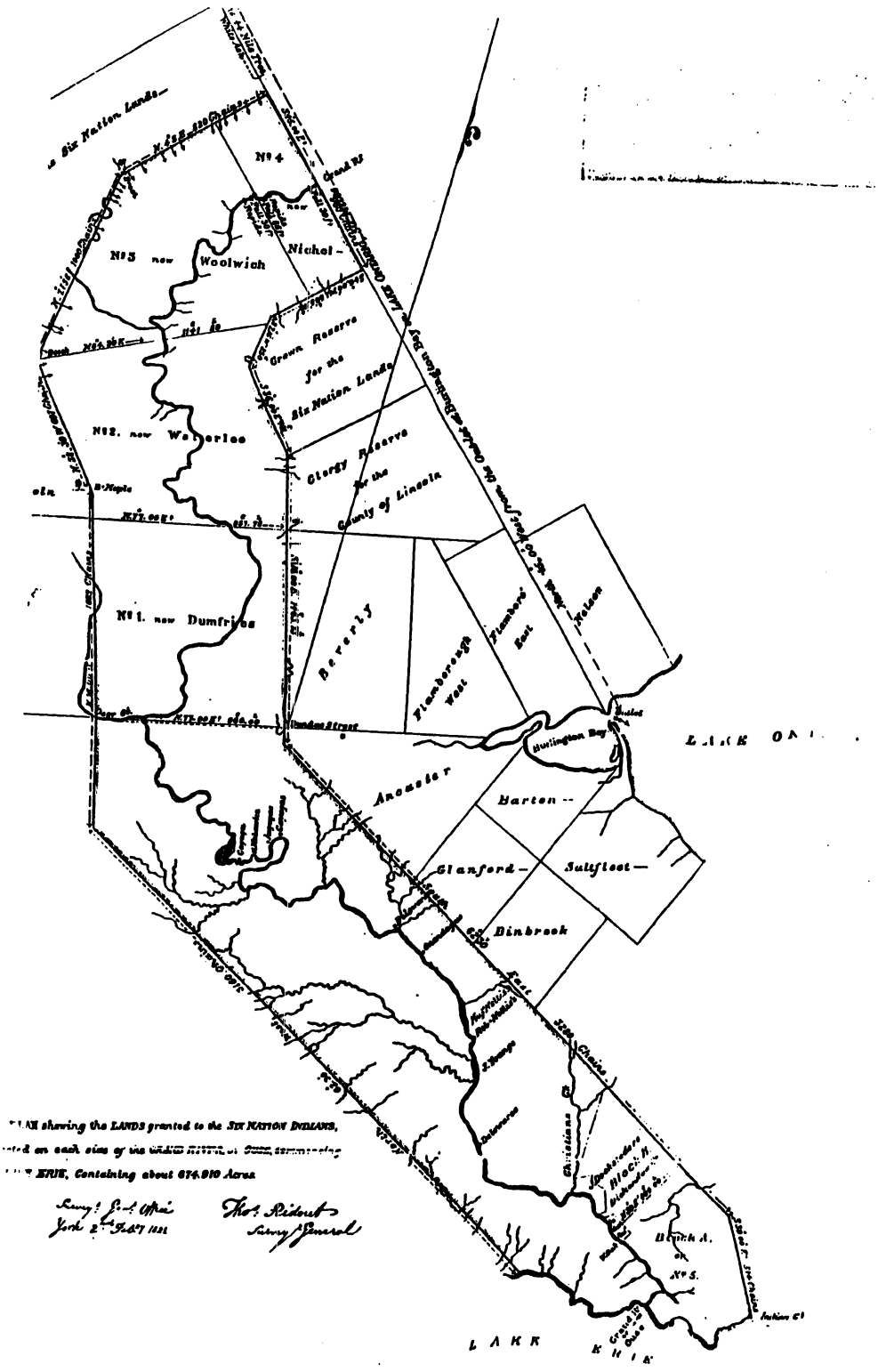


FIGURE 3. GRAND RIVER INDIAN LANDS, 1821. [Public Archives of Canada.]

(B) Map of the Six Nations Reserve at 1821 (source: Johnston, 1964: 128).

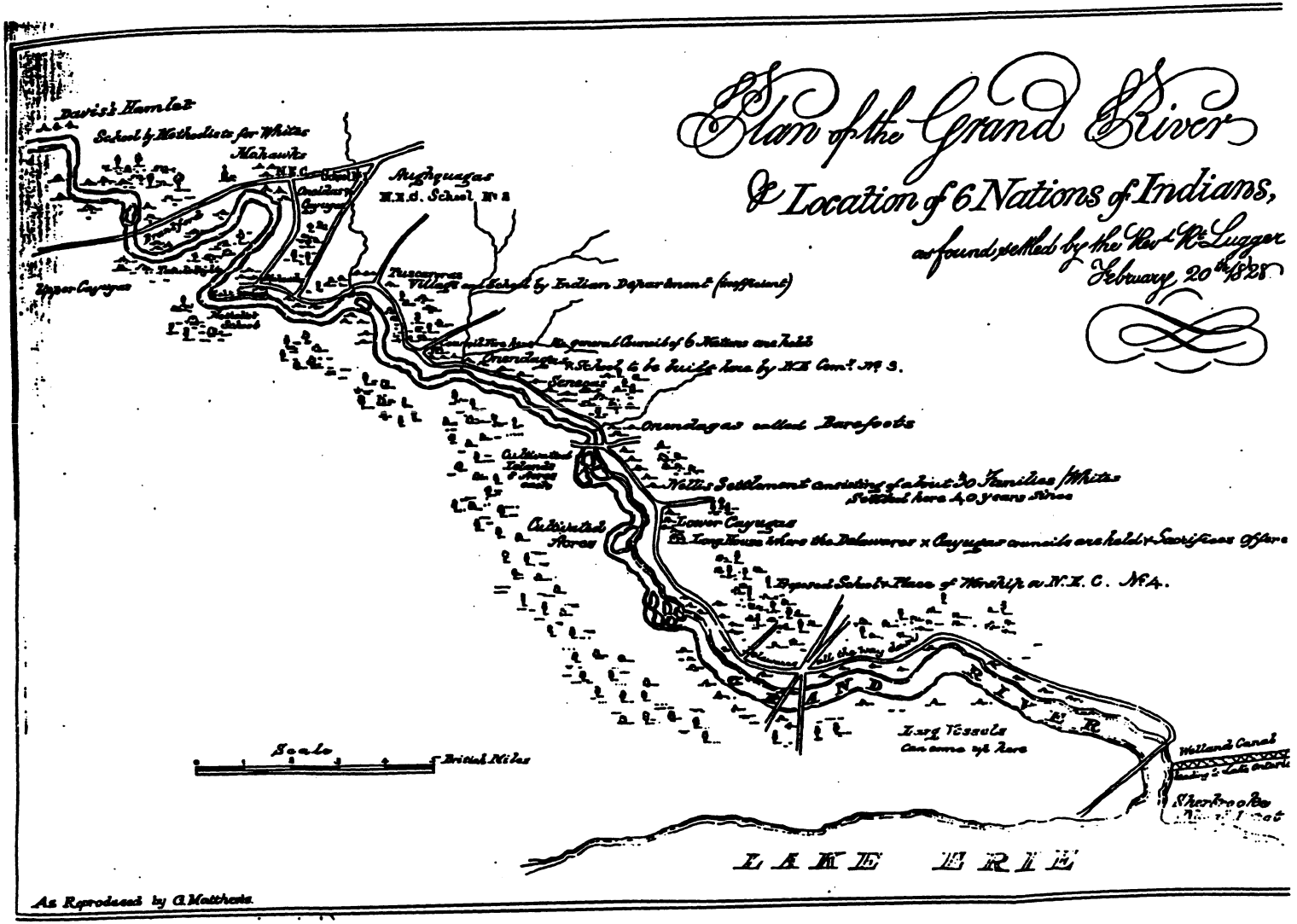
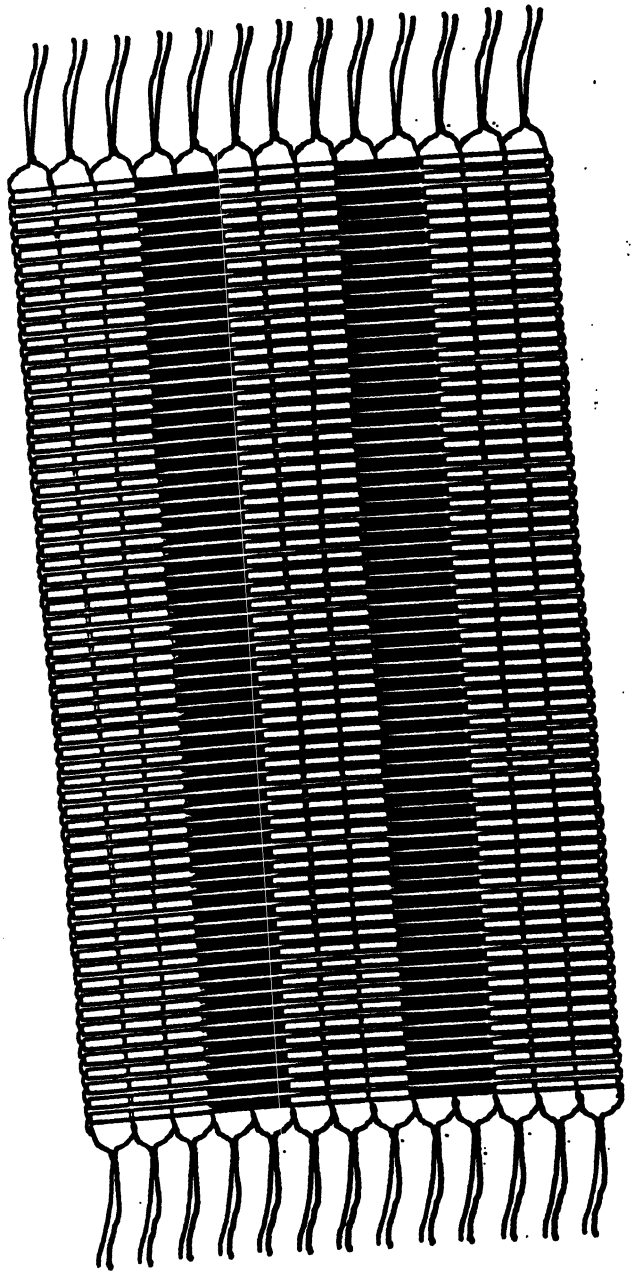


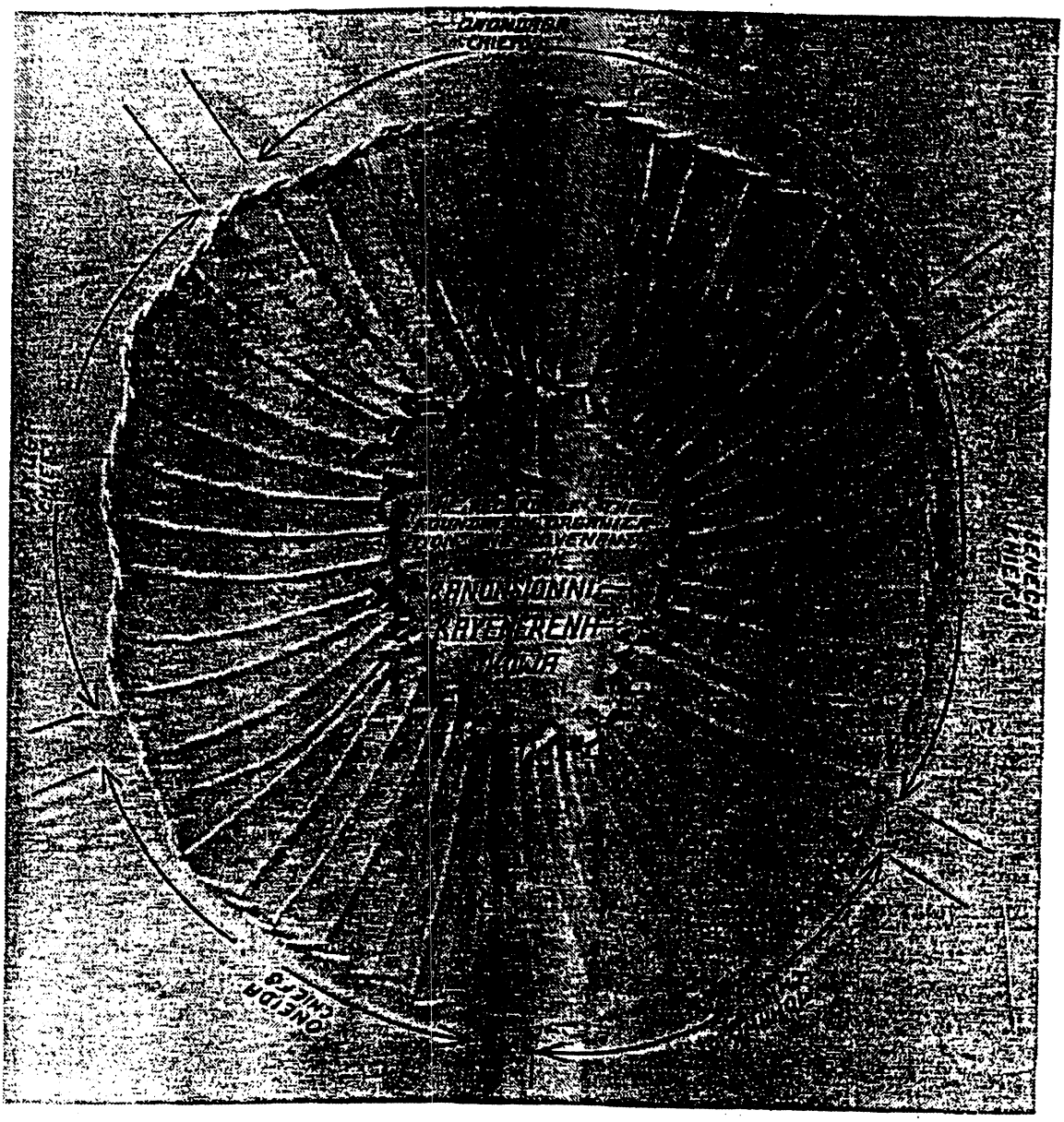
FIGURE 2.—PLAN OF THE GRAND RIVER, 1828, BY THE REV. ROBERT LUGGER [Public Archives of Canada]

(C) Map of the Six Nations at 1828 (source: Johnston, 1964: lxxxvi)

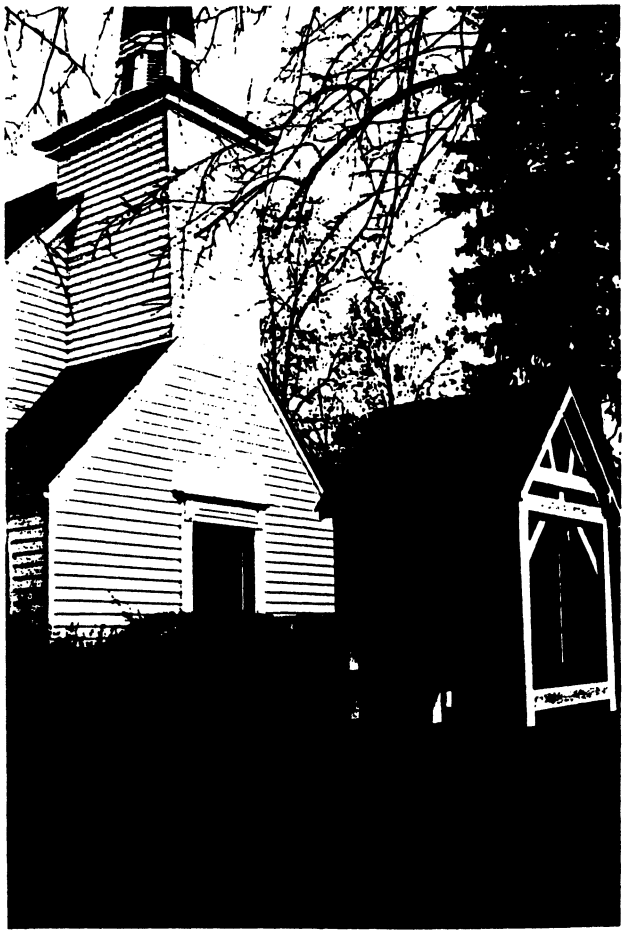
Two Row Wampum



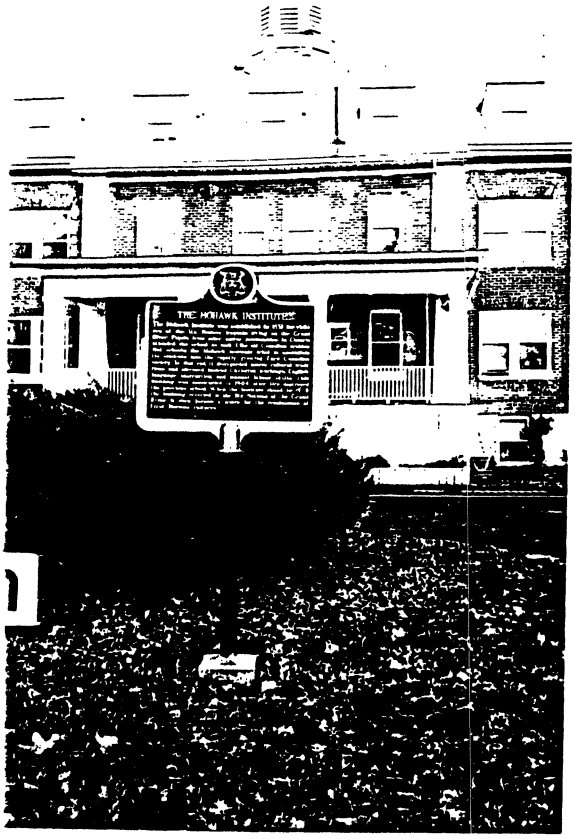
(D) Two Row Wampum (source: Goodleaf, 1995: 8)

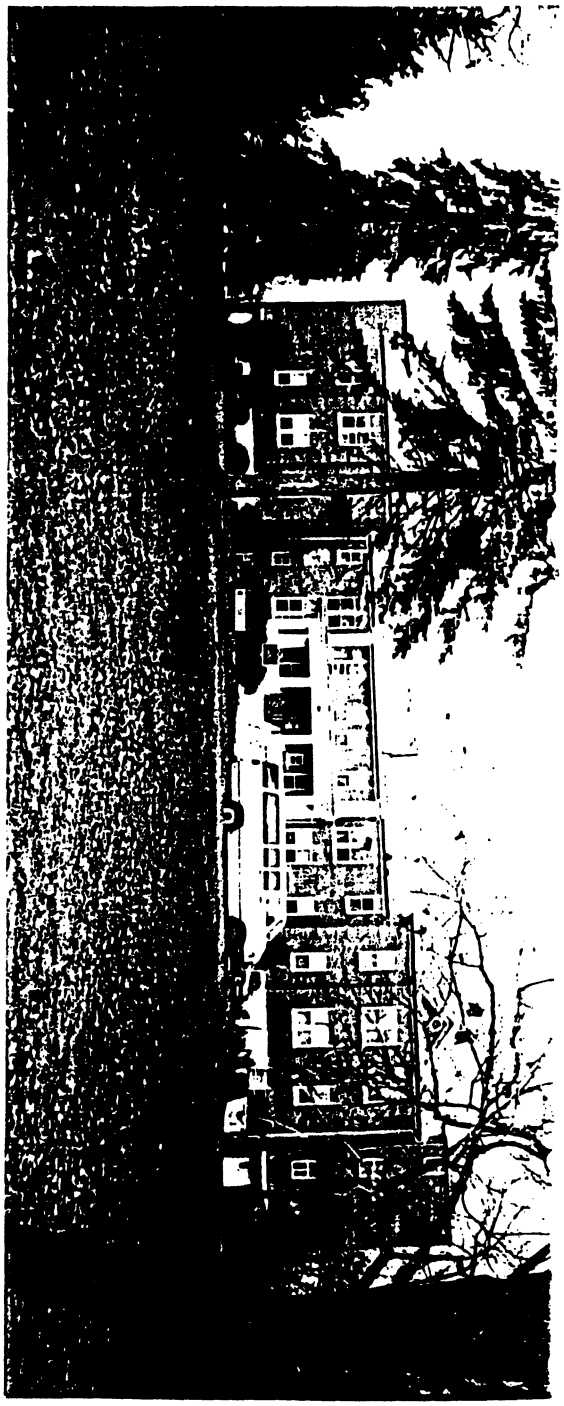


(E) The Circle Covenant (source: Tehanetorens, 1993: 6).

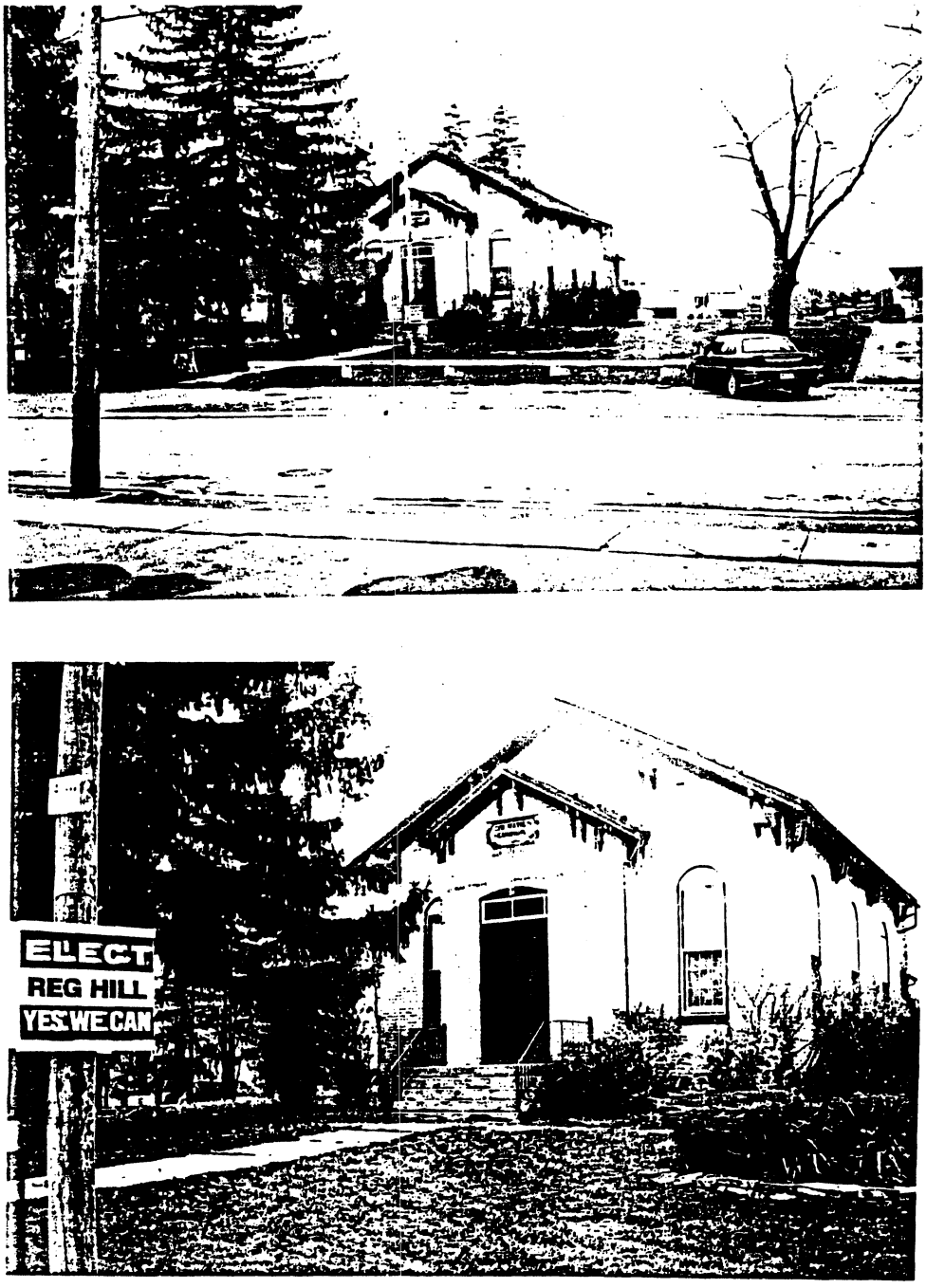


(F) Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks, built in 1785, is testimony to the connection that some Grand River Haudenosaunee share with the British (photo: Martin Cannon, Brantford, ON, Fall, 2002).





(G) The Mohawk Institute (or "Mush-Hole") established in 1829 under The New England Company was a residential school for Haudenosaunee children of the Grand River Territory (photo: Martin Cannon, Brantford, ON, Fall, 2002).



(H) In October 1924, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police padlocked the original council house (shown here) which had housed the hereditary chiefs until that time and imposed an elected *Indian Act* council system in its place. The sign above the door reads: "Six Nation Council, 1863" (photo: Martin Cannon, Ohsweken, ON, Fall 2002).

(I) Veterans Park is located at Ohsweken, Ontario – in "the village" or centre of the reserve – and is intended to commemorate Grand River Haudenosaunee who participated in British, Euro-Canadian and American war battles (photo: Martin Cannon, Ohsweken, ON, Fall, 2002).

Indian Register

Registre des Indiens

Indian Register

5. (1) There shall be maintained in the Department an Indian Register in which shall be recorded the name of every person who is entitled to be registered as an Indian under this Act.

Tenue du registre

5. (1) Est tenu au ministère un registre des Indiens où est consigné le nom de chaque personne ayant le droit d'être inscrite comme Indien en vertu de la présente loi.

Existing Indian Register

(2) The names in the Indian Register immediately prior to April 17, 1985 shall constitute the Indian Register on April 17, 1985.

Registre existant

(2) Les noms figurant au registre des Indiens le 16 avril 1985 constituent le registre des Indiens au 17 avril 1985.

Deletions and additions

(3) The Registrar may at any time add to or delete from the Indian Register the name of any person who, in accordance with this Act, is entitled or not entitled, as the case may be, to have his name included in the Indian Register.

Additions et retranchements

(3) Le registraire peut ajouter au registre des Indiens, ou en retrancher, le nom de la personne qui, aux termes de la présente loi, a ou n'a pas droit, selon le cas, à l'inclusion de son nom dans ce registre.

Date of change

(4) The Indian Register shall indicate the date on which each name was added thereto or deleted therefrom.

Date de changement

(4) Le registre des Indiens indique la date où chaque nom y a été ajouté ou en a été retranché.

Application for registration

(5) The name of a person who is entitled to be registered is not required to be recorded in the Indian Register unless an application for registration is made to the Registrar.

R.S., 1985, c. I-5, s. 5; R.S., 1985, c. 32 (1st Supp.), s. 4.

Demande

(5) Il n'est pas requis que le nom d'une personne qui a le droit d'être inscrite soit consigné dans le registre des Indiens, à moins qu'une demande à cet effet soit présentée au registraire.

L.R. (1985), ch. I-5, art. 5; L.R. (1985), ch. 32 (1er suppl.), art. 4.

Persons entitled to be registered

6. (1) Subject to section 7, a person is entitled to be registered if

(*a*) that person was registered or entitled to be registered immediately prior to April 17, 1985;

(*b*) that person is a member of a body of persons that has been declared by the Governor in Council on or after April 17, 1985 to be a band for the purposes of this Act;

(*c*) the name of that person was omitted or deleted from the Indian Register, or from a band list prior to September 4, 1951, under subparagraph 12(1)(*a*)(iv), paragraph 12(1)(*b*) or subsection 12(2) or under subparagraph 12(1)(*a*)(iii) pursuant to an order made under subsection 109(2), as each provision read immediately prior to April 17, 1985, or under any former provision of this Act relating to the same subject-matter as any of those provisions;

(*d*) the name of that person was omitted or deleted from the Indian Register, or from a band list prior to September 4, 1951, under subparagraph 12(1)(*a*)(iii) pursuant to an

Personnes ayant droit à l'inscription

6. (1) Sous réserve de l'article 7, une personne a le droit d'être inscrite si elle remplit une des conditions suivantes :

a) elle était inscrite ou avait le droit de l'être le 16 avril 1985;

b) elle est membre d'un groupe de personnes déclaré par le gouverneur en conseil après le 16 avril 1985 être une bande pour l'application de la présente loi;

c) son nom a été omis ou retranché du registre des Indiens ou, avant le 4 septembre 1951, d'une liste de bande, en vertu du sous-alinéa 12(1)*a*)(iv), de l'alinéa 12(1)*b*) ou du paragraphe 12(2) ou en vertu du sous-alinéa 12(1)*a*)(iii) conformément à une ordonnance prise en vertu du paragraphe 109(2), dans leur version antérieure au 17 avril 1985, ou en vertu de toute disposition antérieure de la présente loi portant sur le même sujet que celui d'une de ces dispositions;

d) son nom a été omis ou retranché du registre des Indiens ou, avant le 4 septembre 1951, d'une liste de bande, en vertu du sous-alinéa 12(1)*a*)(iii) conformément à une

order made under subsection 109(1), as each provision read immediately prior to April 17, 1985, or under any former provision of this Act relating to the same subject-matter as any of those provisions;

(*e*) the name of that person was omitted or deleted from the Indian Register, or from a band list prior to September 4, 1951,

(I) under section 13, as it read immediately prior to September 4, 1951, or under any former provision of this Act relating to the same subject-matter as that section, or

(II) under section 111, as it read immediately prior to July 1, 1920, or under any former provision of this Act relating to the same subject-matter as that section; or

(*f*) that person is a person both of whose parents are or, if no longer living, were at the time of death entitled to be registered under this section.

ordonnance prise en vertu du paragraphe 109(1), dans leur version antérieure au 17 avril 1985, ou en vertu de toute disposition antérieure de la présente loi portant sur le même sujet que celui d'une de ces dispositions;

e) son nom a été omis ou retranché du registre des Indiens ou, avant le 4 septembre 1951, d'une liste de bande :

(I) soit en vertu de l'article 13, dans sa version antérieure au 4 septembre 1951, ou en vertu de toute disposition antérieure de la présente loi portant sur le même sujet que celui de cet article,

(II) soit en vertu de l'article 111, dans sa version antérieure au 1er juillet 1920, ou en vertu de toute disposition antérieure de la présente loi portant sur le même sujet que celui de cet article;

f) ses parents ont tous deux le droit d'être inscrits en vertu du présent article ou, s'ils sont décédés, avaient ce droit à la date de leur décès.

Idem

(2) Subject to section 7, a person is entitled to be registered if that person is a person one of whose parents is or, if no longer living, was at the time of death entitled to be registered under subsection (1).

Idem

(2) Sous réserve de l'article 7, une personne a le droit d'être inscrite si l'un de ses parents a le droit d'être inscrit en vertu du paragraphe (1) ou, s'il est décédé, avait ce droit à la date de son décès.

(J) Sections 6(1) and 6(2) of the Indian Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. 1-5).

Schedule of Interview Questions

Past

Can you tell me about the traditional roles of women among the Six Nations?

Can you tell me about the influence that women held in terms of governance and decision-making?

Are there any words in the Haudenosaunee languages that you can share with me that describes the role of women or the relationship between men and women? What do(es) the word(s) mean exactly?

Can you tell me about the influence that women hold among the Haudenosaunee with respect to citizenship, group membership or nationality?

In what ways have the traditional roles of women changed or evolved, if at all, in your view?

Do women still hold positions of influence here at Six Nations? How have these positions changed in your lifetime?

Present

How much do you recall of *Indian Act* legislation that discriminated against Six Nations women? How did this affect you directly?

What do you recall of legal protests or the women involved in them where section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act* is concerned? How did these protests affect you?

Have you ever been involved in any political efforts or lobbying involving women's issues? The *Indian Act*?

How does a Haudenosaunee woman avoid getting caught up in the *Indian Act* way of thinking? What are the greatest challenges in this regard?

Have the Haudenosaunee succeeded or not in getting caught up in the *Indian Act*?

Future

In coming years, what major issues will confront the Six Nations in terms of gender inequality? In terms of maintaining traditional roles?

What roles will women play in relation to the struggle for self-determination and nation-building here at Six Nations in coming years?

(K) Interview Questions

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Thesis Title: Colonialism and the Transformation of Gender Relations at Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve: A Study of Resistance & Continuity.
by Martin John Cannon

Sago, and thank you for agreeing to participate in my research. This document is intended to provide you with some background to my work, its purpose, and to inform you of what you might expect from this interview.

Purpose: My PhD dissertation explores the role of women - past and present - at Six Nations. In particular, I would like to compare the roles of women prior to the first Europeans with those of women following the *Indian Act* in order to understand the changes that have taken place. Through the use of interviews, I am hoping to gain your knowledge and wisdom.

Procedure: In this interview, I intend to ask a series of open ended questions about your experience as a member of the Six Nations. I also intend to ask you about women's roles - past and present - at Six Nations, as well as your thoughts on the coming generations. I am planning to record interviews through the use of my tape recorder. **Note: These tapes are strictly confidential. They will be stored in the security of my home and will never be sold or loaned to anyone without your permission.**

No Irregular Procedures: In this interview, I do not intend to use any new or experimental methods intended to trick or deceive you. My aim is to ask a series of open-ended questions that will provide you with an opportunity to explain your experience as a member of the Six Nations.

No Negative Consequences: Some of the questions I will ask deal with the *Indian Act* and its impact on the Six Nations. Should we encounter any questions dealing with the *Indian Act* (or anything else) that you would rather not answer, please inform me and I will reword or disregard them entirely.

Research Benefits: In writing this thesis I am hoping to understand more fully the roles, responsibilities, and position of women at Six Nations. In doing so, I will preserve a proud and important history and, hopefully, make a contribution to the Six Nations community.

Selection of Participants: I have selected participants on the basis of what I perceive as

(L) Informed Consent Document

their ability to help me understand the topic in which I am dealing. In the majority of cases, I am most interested in hearing the voices and experience of various women who might be diverse on the basis of age, political involvement, religious beliefs, and so on. I am also interested in hearing the voices of men.

Confidentiality: All interviews are kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcription of my interviews to protect your identity. Should you share with me anything about any position you may hold at Six Nations, I shall represent it fictitiously in the body of my work to protect your identity.

Participation in this interview is voluntary.

Participation in this interview can be ended at any time.

Should you wish to learn more about your rights of participation, please contact the Graduate Programme in Sociology at York University, Toronto, Ontario at 416.736.5013

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in Martin Cannon's project as explained above and the possible risks from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

_____	_____
Signature of Participant (or legally authorized representative)	Date
_____	_____
Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Investigator

(L) Informed Consent Document (Contd.)

An Introduction to *A History of Politics and Women's Status at Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve*

The history of politics and women's status at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory is a version of history that has, in many ways, yet to be written. To be sure, the history itself is one that belongs to the diverse and heterogenous generations of women and other individuals now residing at the Six Nations. But the "version" that I present here is one that is intended to draw attention to two things. One is to the relationship between patriarchy and colonialism and the way that these injustices have shaped political organization and gender relations among the Grand River Haudenosaunee[1] in ways that have yet to be documented. The other is to my own unique perspective as a status Indian and Six Nations band member, a perspective that I would like to put forth as having been shaped by the very injustices I describe.

In the pages that follow – and to emphasize this point – I develop a "version" of history that embodies my own identity as a person of mixed Anglo-Haudenosaunee heritage, a Six Nations band member, and the descendant of a woman who lost (and later

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[1] The word Haudenosaunee, meaning "People of the Longhouse" (a reference to the distinctive houses in which my Grand River ancestors once resided), may differ depending on the Six Nations person or community to whom one is speaking. For example, Taiaiake [Gerald] Alfred (1995: 38; 1999: xi) refers to his people (the people of Kahnawake Mohawk Nation) as *Rotinohshonni*. Doxtator (1996) chose the word *Rotinonhsyonni*. I use the word *Haudenosaunee* as it is one that is most familiar to me, and also one that has at times been used by the Six Nations people in political dealings with the Canadian state (see Haudenosaunee Confederacy, 1983). All words used henceforth in this dissertation are in Mohawk (my grandfather's language), and I am grateful for the advice provided by David Kanatawakhon (Mohawk) in this regard (also see Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, 1990).

acquired) Indian status under the *Indian Act.* I am concerned with the history that has already been written about the Six Nations; a history that I do not feel has focused enough on the status of women in the face of nineteenth and later-twentieth century political change and organization.

That Haundenosaunee women are missing from the contemporary political history of the Six Nations is a peculiar omission. Haudeonsaunee women are believed in particular to have held esteemed status among the historic Haudenosaunee or Iroquois. As I elaborate in Chapter One, women held the ability to make political decisions (Parker, 1916/1984: 11; Brown, 1975); to select and prepare men for their positions as chiefs (ibid); and also, to influence the decisions of a hereditary or Confederacy Council (Eastlack-Shafer, 1941/1990: 93). As heads of matrilineages, women were also central to the clan system of kinship organization (see North American Indian Travelling College, 1984; Doxtator, 1996; Morgan, 1901).

The literature has focused, in other words, on the past where the roles and responsibilities of women are involved. But what kinds of disruption resulted from colonial policy such as the *Indian Act,* as well as a *coincident* history of racialization and patriarchal intrusions which took place at the Grand River Territory? This question has received less attention, and it is not the only question that has gone unanswered in the literature.

Indeed, what happened to Haudenosaunee women after colonization? What happened as an elected form of Indian Act governance, intended to replace all traditional

forms, was imposed upon the Six Nations Haudenosaunee at Grand River Territory in 1924? How have women's roles in social and political processes as claimed in the academic literature been changed at Six Nations? Do women still occupy the same status they once occupied? What took place at the Six Nations following the introduction of the *Indian Act* and various other colonial intrusions? These and other questions are a logical extension of the previous literature documenting women's status and influence among the Haudenosaunee.

At the same time, these are questions that have received only particular kinds of attention – as I will describe in a moment – from well-intentioned scholars who have concerned themselves with the Six Nations Haudenosaunee (Shoemaker, 1991). As such, the history that I undertake in the chapters to follow is indeed a "version" of history. It is one that seeks to connect the currently disparate literatures on women's status, colonialism and political history at the Six Nations. It is a history that intends to document the coincident history of colonial and patriarchal injustice, especially as it relates to the imposition – and accommodation – of colonial policy.

The history of patriarchal and colonial injustice – injustices that are inseparable from one another – have rarely been understood in terms that show their interrelationship, or as I am proposing, their *coincidence* in the literature (see Ng, 1993). Even Weaver (1970a, 1970b, 1972, 1974, 1984, 1994a, 1994b) in her pioneering analyses of social and political history of the Six Nations reserve did not elaborate the roles that Haudenosaunee women – Longhouse or otherwise – were playing in terms of political organization at

mid-twentieth century Grand River. Moreover, Shimony (1961/1994) in her now popular work on twentieth century traditionalists (or Longhouse adherents which I define in coming pages) did not consider the impact of a council elected by male suffrage at 1920s Grand River, nor the traditional roles of women as related to political organization. This too is a peculiar omission given the abundance of academic literature that exists on the esteemed status and influence that women held among the Haudenosaunee.

In other words, Haundenosaunee women have been "hidden from history" wherever the scholarship that exists on politics and their status at Six Nations is concerned. These omissions are not necessarily specific to the history of politics among the Grand River Haudenosaunee. In fact, the Swedish historian, Gunlög Fur, has asked some important questions about the overall scholarship that exists on Indigenous history as well as "gender relations" (2002). She is intent on acknowledging what has been left out of Indigenous history, especially when it comes to gender and women's status. As she observes at some length:

> "Indian history"has largely painted images of forests peopled only by men, momentous councils visited only by white and red males, or battles in which warriors performed feats of courage ... We know that the sources are one-sided and formed in a European patriarchal perspective and that this is a major reason why women are invisible ... But it is not sufficient to note that. The theoretical question must be, somewhat flippantly, what did women do when men made history? Women were somewhere and they were decidedly active; they did not exist suspended in a timeless vacuum awaiting the return of men with the meat and the treaty, or in anticipation of their singular, anomalous appearances in a few sources. A great many studies have shown that women were fully occupied growing maize and other food products, preparing skins, mining lead, healing sicknesses and injuries, leading ceremonies and so on ... (ibid: 76)

The issue to which Fur is drawing attention is an important one, especially among the Haudensaunee where women are said to have wielded considerable political influence prior to colonization. This issue of historical omission concerns me greatly. At the same time, I am intent on reflecting critically on the historical interpretation I provide. It will be important, in other words, to think seriously about how the historic Haudenosaunee thought about things like "gender" and "matriarchy" without using the categories of contemporary, Eurocentric scholarship to describe them (ibid: 76-77).

I am conscious, as well, of the various kinds of history that have been written about Indigenous women; an issue that has been being discussed at length by historians like Nancy Shoemaker (1991, 1995, 2002). In her extensive work on Aboriginal women and history, Shoemaker is critical of the scholarship that exists on "American Indian women" in general, including "Iroquoian" or Haudenosaunee women, explaining that:

> American Indian women are one group whose history remains shadowy. When packaged by academics for an academic market, their history tends to follow a prepackaged formula, much like the history of white women before revisionism set in. For the period before contact, American Indian women are generally depicted as powerful and respected members of their communities. Then colonization, cousin to industrialization, initiated a loss of women's power and status. This type of narrative history – sometimes called a declension narrative because change is cast of terms of decline – is especially prominent in the history of Iroquois women ... Interest in the role of women in Iroquois society continues today. Most of this interest, however, has focused on the period after European contact and before colonization, roughly the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Very little historical research has looked at Iroquois women after colonization, when some of the most radical changes in Iroquois society occurred. And yet, it is widely thought that Iroquois women lost status and power (1991: 39).

As Shoemaker suggests, "American Indian women" are a prepackaged formula when it

comes to the writing of academic history. They are "depicted", as she suggests, "as powerful and respected members of their communities" before colonialism took place which resulted in "a loss of women's power and status". Shoemaker's suggestion about these "declension narratives" is interesting, and ought to be placed into context as part of a much broader trend in history that is seeking to dismantle "the antiquated stereotype of Aboriginal people as passive victims in the era of settlement" (Brownlie & Kelm, 1994; also Carter, 1999). These are a set of issues with which I am also concerned.

In fact, I am seeking to challenge the "declension narratives" to which Shoemaker draws reference. I consider, for example, how women's esteemed status was maintained – especially among Longhouse adherents – at mid-nineteenth and twentieth century Grand River. I argue that despite the rapid pace of social change – as well as differences in acculturation – some women maintained social and political influence by embracing a religion that incorporated the matrilineal aspect of clans, the original ceremonies, as well as the autonomy of the Confederacy or traditional government. I provide further challenge to "declension narratives" in presenting the words of study participants who suggested to me that women's traditional roles are still understood; that they are still known; and that they are still followed in the ceremonies. Based on my own research and analysis, I therefore share in the critique of historical approaches that are discussed by Shoemaker. But I intend also to explore some of the assumptions posited by Shoemaker where the status of women is concerned.

I challenge, for example, the assumption that a great deal is known about

women's "power" and "respect" before colonization; and also, that too much is assumed where words like "matriarchy" and "gynocracy" are used to describe women's power and "Iroquoian" social organization. In Chapter One, I do this by comparing what has been said about the status of Haudenosaunee women in the literature, with some of the oral tradition and stories of which I possess knowledge that suggest a more interdependent, dynamic or dialectical relationship between the roles and responsibilities of both men and women. In doing so, I am not entirely committed to the use of "gender" to describe these relationships despite my use of the concept in this research.

Similar to the concept of "sexuality", for example, the concept of gender may assume some core essence that is believed to be similar cross-culturally. But recent literature has suggested that a broad spectrum of "gendered" behaviour and diversity may have existed at the time of early contact (see Roscoe, 1988; Whitehead, 1993; Cannon, 1998). In fact, anthropologists and historians alike are becoming increasingly concerned with the concept of gender as an analytic category (see Fur, 2002). In any historic or cross-cultural interpretation, modern-day Western categories – such as that of "gender" – may be unknown to the culture or past under study. This is a position that is broadened and elaborated by sociologists who take a social constructionist approach to the history and study of gender relations. I am concerned with, and sensitive to, all of these issues, though admittedly, it is an avenue of investigation that I do not explore in any detail in the pages that follow.

I share, however, in Shoemaker's argument that too little is known about

"Iroquois society", "gender relations", and "Iroquois women" following colonization. I want to suggest, in other words, that a great deal has yet to be considered from a perspective that is historic, sociological, and perhaps more specifically, *one that treats colonial injustice as coincident with and inseparable from sexism.* Consistent with the knowledge I possess as a person of mixed Anglo/Haudenosaunee heritage, and as an educator who is concerned with undertaking respectful research in Aboriginal communities, I suggest that this work include the voices of Haudenosaunee women, those of the Longhouse religion at Six Nations; and most especially, the male and female descendants of women who lost and/or later acquired Indian status. I represent only some of these voices in Chapter Five. Combined, these are individuals who I believe to embody a small aspect or dimension of "colonialism" which has not yet been documented or developed in the sociological literature. They are also best positioned to identify the issues that are most pressing where future inquiry is concerned.

Indeed, I am suggesting that the very definitions we have of "colonialism" in the literature may need to be recontemplated and reorganized. Consider, for example, the colonization process that is defined by the sociologist Jim Frideres in his 7th Edition of *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (2005). As Frideres notes, the colonization process has seven "aspects" or "attributes". As he describes these:

> The first concerns the incursion of the colonizing group into a geographical area ... The second ... is its destructive effect on the social and cultural structures of the indigenous group ... The third and forth aspects of colonization are the interrelated processes of external political control and Aboriginal economic dependance. In the standard practice of colonization the mother country sends out representatives

> through which it indirectly rules the newly conquered land ... A fifth attribute of colonization is the provision of low-quality social services for the colonized Aboriginal persons in such areas as health and education ... The six and seventh aspects of colonization relate to social interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and refer to racism and the establishment of a colour-line (ibid: 2-5).[2]

Frideres' definition of colonialism has been indispensable to sociologists concerned with Aboriginal peoples and justice related issues. At the same time, I would like to acknowledge that patriarchy and sexism – issues that are inseparable from colonial injustice, racism, and even heterosexism (Cannon, 1998) – have not yet been developed in definitions of the colonization process (see Ng, 1993). Nor has the actual trajectory of theoretical approaches and frameworks which sociologists have used to consider "Aboriginal issues" or "Native Studies" been charted systematically (See Wotherspoon & Satzewich, 1993: 1-14; Steckley, 2003). It is at this juncture of sociological omission and my own personal identity, that I see myself contributing to the sociological literature on Aboriginal peoples; and also, to the history of the Grand River Haudenosaunee.

What brought me to Six Nations was, in other words, a determination to research, shed light on and indeed raise awareness about some of the ways that women's status has been transformed or at least "disrupted" by nineteenth and twentieth century colonial intrusions. In doing so, my work can be situated at the level of "macrosociology", or that which has focused comparatively on aspects of human social organization and structure;

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[2] It is worth noting that this same definition of colonization appeared in the 6th Edition of *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts* (2001: 4-7).

including patterns of social change as this relates to gender relations, political organization, ideology, religion, demographics and so on (see Landstreet, 2004). At the same time, and as I detail more fully in Chapter Five, I am intending to document *the coincident history of both patriarchal and colonial injustice* from the perspective of my own identity, experience and mixed ethno-cultural heritage (neither of which lend themselves well to binary racial categorizations).

In the pages that follow, I am proposing to illustrate that the *Indian Act* is responsible for making gender discrimination the foremost of "Aboriginal issues" in the minds of *both* female *and* male descendants of women who acquired status under *Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (1985) and who lost it under section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act* (1951). From my own perspective – that of a person who has experienced institutionalized patriarchy in the *Indian Act* as part of what I consider to be an "Indigenous knowledge" that I possess – I have frequently refused to separate "Aboriginal issues" from "women's issues" because this would require that I choose between issues that affect me as a status Indian (and Six Nations band member), and those that affect me as the *male* descendant of a woman who lost Indian status under the infamous section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act*. It is not easy, nor is it acceptable to me as a Haudenosaunee person that I be expected to think of these issues as separate from the full multitude of other colonial injustices imposed on the Six Nations and other Indigenous peoples. Nor is it acceptable that academic research that is concerned with either political organization, gender relations or women's and men's statuses continue to neglect this kind of

"multidimensional"analysis.

To me, there is no way to separate "Aboriginal issues" – those that are of common concern to all Aboriginal people – from "women's issues"; especially since the history of colonial policy injustices and processes of racialization in what is now called Canada have everything to do with the history of patriarchy and sex discrimination. When history is framed otherwise, it is not only underdeveloped, it negates the female – *and male* – identities of those who have been affected by *both* sex discrimination *and* other colonialist minded policy intrusions. The details of colonial policy, and the statutory subjugation of Aboriginal women and their descendants – which I outline in detail in Chapter Four – are overlooked in this process. Put simply, I am committed as an academic to providing a version of history that is attentive to the social structural changes that took place at Six Nations as a result of colonialism. I am attentive, as well, to the importance of my identity and experience where documenting some of these changes is concerned.

I cannot divorce or otherwise separate myself from the analyses I provide of social-structural change, or even the reading I give of the existing literature on (and about) the Six Nations in pages that follow. My participation is marked by the years I have spent in getting to know more about the community in which I am connected through an Oneida mother, but upon which I have never been able to reside permanently. As I will describe more fully in Chapter Five, my journey into the literature on political history, women's traditional status, and the history of sex discrimination is decidedly

shaped by my experience of sex discrimination at the hands of the Canadian state. This experience has left me concerned about what little is known (especially in some political, legal and academic circles) about Haudenosaunee women; Six Nations political history; the *Indian Act*; the history of sex discrimination; and the transformation of gender relations following early colonization. The importance of identity and experience – and of situating oneself in research in ways that I am suggesting – has been discussed at length in feminist scholarship, and in the literature on autoethnography (see Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Feminist standpoint theory has recommended that women look to their everyday experience as a starting point for research because it is out of the structural factors that shape everyday life that knowledge ought to derive (Smith, 1987, 1990; Hartsock, 1989). It is, furthermore, out of personal experience that new ways of knowing and even social transformation can emerge. That emphasis is placed on identity and personal experience in feminist methodology may seem inconsequential, but in fact, it creates the conceptual framework out of which an Indigenous standpoint theory can emerge from academic arenas (see Foley, 2003). It also shapes the way in which I describe history in the pages to follow, and the foundation upon which my research – as discussed in Chapter Five – is based. In looking inward and to personal experience, I hope to demonstrate a way of knowing about history that reveals more about who I am as an Aboriginal person, and to propose that there are many others who can tell a similar (albeit different) story about the experience of colonization, patriarchal discrimination, and the existing history of Grand

River Territory. In doing so, I am indebted to feminist standpoint theory and to the theoretical (and decidedly materialist) premises upon which it is based.

I have taken active part in some of the history I recount in the pages to follow, and I cannot help but be engaged as a full study participant in the research that I undertake. First, I have an academic and personal interest in learning more about – and respecting – Six Nations stories, history and nation-to-nation agreements as I have struggled to regain a lot of this knowledge because of sex-discriminatory legislation. Second, I am concerned with the statutory subjugation of Haudenosaunee women, and the discrimination that is now directed at their female *and male* descendants because I have experienced this discrimination first hand, and I want to expose the fundamental human rights injustices it has created. Third, I address the startling absence of literature about Haudenosaunee women historically and the manner in which gender relations were reshaped by colonization because it is key to understanding who I am and where I come from. Finally, I am concerned with stories of social change as these have been recounted in the literature about the Grand River Haudenosaunee.

As my subtitle suggests, I am determined to illustrate the nature and extent of continuity and change among the Grand River Haudenosaunee. I do this from a perspective that is not entirely different from other academics who have written about Six Nations history. Having said that, I look to the knowledge I possess about the community in which I am familiar to provide a long overdue critique of analytic concepts such as "cultural continuity" and "resistance" as these are frequently used to describe the

Haudenosaunee in Chapter Five. These analytic concepts have been used by historians (and social scientists) to describe a set of details and phenomena that, as I will argue, requires greater elucidation.

I also take the insights that have been provided by historians about the preservation of the Confederacy government and the traditions of the Longhouse, considering in turn what some of these historic developments must have meant for the status of women among an historic and changing Six Nations. My analysis is, put simply, concerned with some of the social structural changes specific to gender relations and women's status which took place after colonization; and also, with the intrusion and subsequent accommodation of colonial policy at Six Nations.

Overall, I intend to illustrate that a history of women's status is one that has resulted from a complex process of intrusion, adaptation, and accommodation that took place historically at Six Nations. More generally, I argue that women's status was indeed transformed – and also maintained – following colonization in a way that contributes to the scholarly omissions addressed by Shoemaker and the definitions that have been provided of colonization in the sociological literature.

A History of Politics and Women's Status is comprised of five chapters in total. In Chapter One, I explore what is known about gender relations, kinship organization, governance and the roles of women among the historic Haudenosaunee. I do not, however, limit my analysis to a review of the historic and anthropological literature. In fact, I include some of the stories that I know to be Haudenosaunee from a perspective

that contemplates the roles and responsibilities of both women and men. I arrive at a series of conclusions about the complementary roles of men and women (Anderson, 2000) which ought to pave the way for a more holistic and culturally sensitive understanding of women's esteem and influence among the Haudenosaunee. I challenge, in other words, the existing literature that utilizes analytic concepts like "matriarchy" and "gynocracy" to describe women's status and responsibilities; and I suggest that further cross-cultural research is required in these areas relating to the Grand River Haudenosaunee and Indigenous peoples in general. But I am not only concerned with conceptual or analytic problems, nor only with those involving the status of Haudenosaunee women in the historic past.

In Chapters Two and Three, for example, I look to the changes brought about for an entire Six Nations as religious influence, residential schooling, government policy and colonial interference led to religious dissimilarities, differences in acculturation and a cultural willingness among some Haudenosaunee to experiment with and sometimes reconfigure traditional social and political processes. Combined, I argue that these multifaceted and systemic forces served to shape the Grand River community and politics, leading some individuals to break with ancient customs such as matrilineality and political procedures which historically elevated women into positions of influence. I suggest, in other words, that colonial interference and related injustices combined to produce distinct forms of subjugation for Haudenosaunee women at late nineteenth and early twentieth century Grand River, although the maintenance of cultural traditions is

unmistakable, especially among traditionalists or Longhouse adherents.

Haudenosaunee women and their descendants continue today to endure further subjugation at the hands of the Canadian state through the *Indian Act.* In Chapter Four, I discuss this history in detail; documenting especially, those sections of the *Act* that have historically determined matters of governance, citizenship and Indian status. As I will also discuss in Chapter Five, the dismantling of patriarchy – which developed as part of and throughout the colonization process – is today further complicated by hierarchies based on Indian status and women's marriage which continue to be affirmed and consolidated through various practices stemming from the *Indian Act.* I discuss the way in which these simultaneous forces of "racist patriarchy" (Cannon, 1995) have worked together to both define – and divide – some First Nations people, including members of the Grand River Territory. In doing so, I hope to show how and why the emphasis must shift from thinking about racism and sexism as separate categories or domains of experience toward thinking about racism and sexism as systems of relations which have structured and organized (re)productive activities (Ng, 1993: 50).

In the fifth and final chapter of *A History of Politics and Women's Status at Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve*, I am concerned with the information I gathered in interviews I conducted between August and November, 2001. This chapter has two major goals. I am concerned first of all with thinking critically about qualitative research methods that have been used to study Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Smith, 1999, 2000); and also, with positioning myself as researcher in ways that are described and supported

by sociologist Dorothy Smith in her critique of "conceptual imperialism" and "women's standpoint epistemology" (Smith 1987; 1990). Second, and more importantly, I aim to represent as closely as possible the thoughts and views of my study participants, especially as they relate to women's traditional and contemporary statuses, the *Indian Act*, and the "two constituencies" as these have been currently defined in the disparate literatures on women's status and politics at Grand River.

In general, I structure the knowledge I gathered from study participants around four broad themes: *Women's Traditional Roles; Tradition and Change at Contemporary Six Nations; The Indian Act, Sex Discrimination and the Six Nations Haudenosaunee*; and finally, *The Legacy of 1924.* On each of these issues, the people I interviewed at Six Nations shared with me their thoughts and insight. But as I explain, I do not intend to suggest that the "themes" I discuss are those that were chosen by the people I interviewed, nor that I am representing things that are important to everyone at Grand River Territory. In fact, the version of history I present here is one that is written from my own perspective as an individual who – for reasons discussed – would rather not separate colonial injustices from sexism, or "Aboriginal justice issues" from "women's issues".

As such, the conclusions I reach in my Sixth and final Chapter are based on the information I was intent on gathering from people who had much to say about what has already been written about the Grand River Haudenosaunee in the academic literature. I am fully responsible for suggesting that their views will require further consideration, and possibly, future research on a collaborative scale. In my own view, this type of research

will not only contribute to a much overdue history of politics and women's status at Grand River, but also, to the history of colonization and women's history as that is concerned with all Indigenous men and women.

Chapter One
Women's Status and Gender Complementarity among the Haudenosaunee

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the traditional status of women among the Six Nations Haudenosaunee or Iroquois Confederacy. The Six Nations, including the Mohawk, Onondaga, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida and Tuscarora are referred to, collectively, as the Haudenosaunee. The Haudenosaunee, or "People of the Longhouse", each have separate histories and languages. Moreover, they have not always formed a collective nation along the Grand River in Ontario. As Druke (1986: 303) explains, and as I will detail in Chapter Two, "These people moved to Canada from their homeland, in what is now New York State, from the late-seventeenth through the early-nineteenth centuries".

The community to which I belong – the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory – is therefore unique in that all of its residents come from one of the six individual nations known in academic circles as "the Iroquois". It is important to note, however, that the word "Iroquois" is one that is seen as unfavourable to many members of the Six Nations. The word itself is also unflattering, for as Snow (1994: 2) points out, it is one that derives from the pidgin language used by Basque and Algonkian traders who – following Cartier's route along the St. Lawrence in the late sixteenth century – referred to the Haudenosaunee as "Hilokoa" or "killer people". I use the word "Iroquois" to give my work the exposure it requires in academic settings, and also, to alert those who are unfamiliar with the preference that is given to words like Haudenosaunee and the Six

Nations.

This chapter will also explore what is known as the *Kayanerenhkowa.*[3] The *Kayanerenhkowa* or Great Law of Peace is sometimes referred to by anthropologists as "The Constitution of the Six Nations" (Parker, 1916/1984). It refers to a sophisticated and complex system of principles which promote peace, responsibility to the natural world and future generations, consensus in government, accountability, and so on, among the Haudenosaunee (see also, Parker, 1916/1984; Williams and Nelson, 1995; North American Indian Travelling College, 1984; Thomas, 1994).

The chapter will utilize, but is not limited to, anthropological evidence in undertaking to understand the importance of the *Kayanerenhkowa.* Whenever possible, I incorporate elder testimonies on the Great Law of Peace, as well as the words of Haudenosaunee women. Though I will also discuss the *Kayanerenhkowa* in upcoming Chapters, it is significant to this chapter in that one fourth of its "clauses" (a word I put into quotations because the Great Law is normally something that is orated) recognize and affirm the influence of women in Haudenosaunee culture (see Parker, 1916/1984, North American Indian Travelling College, 1984).

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[3] The word for the Great Law of Peace may differ depending on the Haudenosaunee person or community to whom one is speaking. For example, Taiaiake [Gerald] Alfred (1995: 20; 1999: xvi) refers to the Great Law of Peace as *Kaienerekowa.* The word *Gayanashagowa* is used in the work of Robert B. Porter (1998), an Associate Professor of Law, a member of the Seneca Nation in what is now New York State, and Director of the Tribal Law and Government Center at the University of Kansas. I use the word *Kayanerenhkowa* on the advice of David Kanatawakhon.

It is important to note that there is no one official "version" of the *Kayanerenhkowa*, and that the Great Law itself is based on *principles* as opposed to *words* (see Williams and Nelson, 1995: 1-2). It is nonetheless commonly regarded as the Constitution of the Six Nations or Iroquois Confederacy (see Porter, 1998: 817, and Wallace, 1946/1997: 34). Early parts of this constitution tell the story of events in the life of a wise man, The Great Peacemaker[4], who first brought the word of peace to the Haudenosaunee at an estimated date of 1192 (Johansen, 1995).

The *Kayanerenhkowa* is also significant to those concerned with the study of America and American Constitutional history. It is believed, for example, that the Great Law of Peace influenced the development of the United States Constitution; a point of vigorous debate in the academic literature. At least one scholar has argued that the historic and ethnographic documents do not support the suggestion that "the League of the Iroquois provided a model for the Constitution or the ideas embodied in it" (Tooker, 1988). Others have argued that the Great Law "provided for federalism, separation of powers, equitable distribution of wealth, accountability of elected officials, freedom of assembly, speech, and religion and a system of natural rights" (Jacobs, 1991: 497).

Despite these important debates, there are two things for certain. First, universal

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[4] The Great Peacemaker is sometimes referred to by another name in the anthropological literature, but I have learned from traditional people that his "Indian name" should not be spoken in public or outside of ceremony. My objective is to honour that instruction as Indigenous Knowledge, and to respect my ancestors and other Haudenosaunee people in doing so.

suffrage and the rights of women did not appear in the Constitution as originally written (ibid). Second, the United States Congress acknowledged the contribution of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the *Kayanerenhkowa* to the confederation of the original thirteen colonies and development of the United States Constitution in October of 1988 (S. Con. Res. 76, 100th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1988); H.R. Con. Res. 331, 100th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1988)).

This chapter is not only concerned with the Great Law of Peace, or its relationship to the United States Constitution. I will also explore what is known about gender relations, kinship organization, as well as the centrality of women to the clan system, traditional governance, and the story of creation. I will address the problem of interpreting women's influence among the Haudenosaunee. In doing so, I look critically at the idea of "matriarchy" to describe Iroquoian social organization as well as women's power. I put forward the idea of "gender complementarity" in its place, and in proposing this idea, I am indebted to the teachings of colleagues (Anderson, 2000), and the Indigenous knowledge of elders, family and friends.

Historical Background: Lewis Henry Morgan, the *League of the Ho-de'-no-sau-nee*, and Iroquoian Women

The esteemed status of Haudenosaunee women was of interest to those coming into early contact with the Six Nations. The earliest missionaries, for example, were fascinated by sets of social relations which challenged European intellectual, social and

moral beliefs about women's subjugation to men's authority.[5] As early as 1724, Father Joseph Lafitau of the Society for Jesus explained at some length:

> Nothing ... is more real than this superiority of the women. It is of them that the nation really consists; and it is through them that the nobility of the blood, the genealogical tree and the families are perpetuated. All real authority is vested in them. The land, the fields and their harvest all belong to them. They are the souls of the Councils, the arbiters of peace and of war. They have charge of the public treasury. To them are given the slaves. They arrange marriages. The children are their domain, and it is through their blood that the order of succession is transmitted. The men, on the other hand, are entirely isolated ... their children are strangers to them (quoted in Brown, 1975: 238).

To be sure, Lafitau does not specify the "Indian" groups that he is describing. As Brown (1975) explains, "It may be the Iroquois, Huron or both". But in turning attention toward the work of Henry Lewis Morgan, however, there is reason to believe that Lafitau was most likely describing the Iroquois. As Morgan observed very early on, Iroquoian women held enormous power economically, and were also central to Iroquoian kinship and political institutions (Morgan, 1901, Morgan, 1881/1965).

The work of Henry Lewis Morgan is of key importance to any discussion of the statuses held by women among the Haudenosaunee. Morgan (1818-1881) himself was an early ethnographer and lawyer who made a significant contribution to the body of academic literature that exists on kinship organization, and the importance of the clan system to Haudenosaunee social organization (Jary & Jary, 1991: 318). He was also

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[5] For scholarly analysis of the missionary project, particularly among the Huron and Montagnais-Naskapi Nations of what is now called Eastern Canada, and what this meant for women, see Karen Anderson (1991), Eleanor Leacock (1980: 25-42) and Somer Brodribb (1984: 85-103).

intent on exploring and documenting the roles of women among the Haudenosaunee.

His overall contribution (however unintended), in *League of the Ho-de'-no-sau-nee* (1851/1964) as well as *Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines* (1881/1965), for example, was to outline the importance of women in the overall functioning of social and political organization among the Six Nations. These texts also contained important observations regarding descent reckoning, residence patterns, and the transmission of property that would later prove significant to those developing theories of *mutter reicht* (Mother right), and matriarchy as a universal stage in culture (Engels, 1884/1968).

For Morgan, the fundamental basis of Haudenosaunee social organization was the clan system. In his view, clans were of enormous significance. In addition to performing various ceremonial and kinship related functions, he observed the way in which clans also governed mate selection and otherwise regulated marriage patterns. As he quite accurately described the Haudenosaunee, they practiced clan exogamy: always marrying inside of the Nation, but outside of one's clan. "All the institutions of the Iroquois ...", he explained:

> ...[h]ave regard to the division of the people into tribes. Originally with reference to marriage, the Wolf, Bear, Beaver, and Turtle tribes being brothers to each other, were not allowed to intermarry. The four opposite tribes, being also brothers to each other, were likewise not allowed to intermarry ... In process of time, however, the rigour of the system was relaxed, until finally the prohibition was confined to the tribe of the individual, which, among the residue of the Iroquois is still religiously observed. They can now marry into any tribe but their own. Under the original as well as modern regulation, the husband and wife were of different tribes. The children always followed the tribe of the mother (Morgan,

1851/1964: 83).

Morgan established that kinship organization was governed by the principle of clan (or "tribe" as he put it) exogamy.[6] In doing so, and as I will discuss in Chapter Three, he acknowledges an aspect of social structure that continues to regulate marriage selection among some of the Haudenosaunee at Six Nations even to this day (Jacobs, 1991; Porter, 2001). For now, it is important to note, and quite significantly so, that Morgan identified the importance of women to the overall functioning of Haudenosaunee social and kinship organization. "All of the institutions of the Iroquois", as he quite duly noted, were regulated by the clan system, and the transmission of clan membership took place through one's mother (ibid).

The importance of the clan system to Iroquoian political organization cannot be overemphasized. In addition to performing various ceremonial and kinship-related functions as discussed by Morgan, the clan system worked to regulate land holdings (Williams & Nelson, 1995). The clan system also played a major role in conflict resolution. This latter function of clans is represented in the work of sociologist Ronald Glassman (1986). As a contemporary sociologist exploring a topic first elaborated by Morgan, Glassman's work is of importance to any understanding of Haudenosaunee

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[6] Indeed, the *Kayanerenhkowa*, or Great Law of Peace establishes the importance of clan exogamy in noting that "People of the Hotinonshonni having the same clan shall accept one another as relatives regardless of the nation they belong to and they shall treat one another as relatives. Men and women of the same clan are forbidden to marry among themselves" (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 48).

kinship and political systems.

For Glassman, clans not only assist in the overall administration and social control aspects of tribal societies, they also act as a protection – or actual "impediment" as he puts it – to both tyrannical and despotic tendencies as they may exist in kin-based societies (ibid: 193).[7] As he describes at some length, members of a tribal society are so imbedded in the clan organization that a responsibility and loyalty to other clan members constrains their social behaviour (ibid: 194-199).[8] Thus, Glassman argues that the clan systems act as a safeguard against the only internal despotic tendency that exists in tribal societies, namely, war-based or "military" organizations (ibid: 195). In sum, the clan system – as the central kinship institution integrating members of tribal societies – can be considered as the key to understanding tribal democracies (ibid). For those interested in the study of First Nations, and "kin-based" political institutions – particularly that of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy – Glassman's is a contribution that cannot be overlooked.

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[7] I borrow the concept "kin-based societies" from the work of Landstreet (2003). In doing so, I am meaning to draw attention to those societies whose *primary* means of integration – or way of connecting people together socially – is that of kinship bonds and marriage.

[8] The clan system was not *the only thing* that moderated Haudenosaunee social behaviour. As Porter (1998: 819-820) has noted: "Because of its foundational belief that all human beings have the power of rational thought and that all significant decisions must be achieved through consensus, Haudenosaunee society was afflicted with relatively little interpersonal conflict and transgressions of community norms. Individual behaviour was governed by a strong unwritten social code that relied upon social and psychological sanctions, such as ridicule and embarrassment, as the primary methods of enforcement".

To be sure, the clan system did ensure a kind of loyalty among the Haudenosaunee. More importantly, the clan system connected people together socially and allowed for the coordination of political activities. These functions are very much embedded in teachings about the origin, and importance of clans. The clan system has been explained at some length by Cayuga elder, Jake Thomas. Because his words so well describe the origin and importance of the clan system to Haudenosaunee political life, they warrant quotation at length:

> The clan system began long ago when a wise man told the people to follow him and he would show them how to comfort one another and how to settle differences and make decisions about their lives. He took the people down to a [...] river where they saw a huge tree with a wild grapevine that grew down from the branches and stretched across the river.
>
> The wise man led the way and as they crossed the river, the vine shifted. Some people were carried to the other side and others were not. Now the people were divided; some were on one side, some were on the other side, of the water. He then advised them to camp where they were for the night and told them that whoever went for water and wood in the morning should remember what they saw.
>
> Early the next morning those who went to the river saw an eel and a turtle and those who went into the woods saw a kildeer and a hawk. As they continued, they saw a bear and a deer. The group camped on the other side of the river saw a wolf, a turtle, a heron and a beaver. The wolf and the deer became the two leading clans of the Iroquois, representing both sides of the river.
>
> The wise man said "Now these things you have seen will be your clans. *This river that has divided you, has shown you that the clans of nations on one side of the water will support the clans of nations on the other side. This is the way it shall always be. One nation will support another, and in this way you will reach consensus.* All the different clans will become one voice. Everyone will have a voice in each clan. *Anytime you have something to discuss, you will come together and reach consensus and support one another in the decision making.* When there is a death in a clan, another clan may come forth to console and comfort the other clan members, thus achieving respect in the nation" [emphasis mine] (Thomas & Boyle, 1994: 147-148).

The teachings recounted by Jake Thomas are of fundamental importance to understanding Haudenosaunee political organization in general, and, simultaneously, the position of women.[9] First, and foremost , Thomas identifies the origin of the clan system in accordance with traditional Haudenosaunee beliefs. Clans adopted the names of animals, he explains, following the instructions given by a wise man. It is not uncommon for anthropologists to include discussions of "totemism" as this relates to clans (see Keesing, 1981: 330), but Thomas provides some of the oral tradition surrounding this in the foregoing quotation.

The story of the origin of clans also draws attention to the different roles and responsibilities that Iroquoian people were instructed to follow from early times. They are based on, and rooted in, original principles passed on through many generations – including today's generation – by Iroquoian elders. Within the story that Jake Thomas narrates, there is an important and powerful metaphor. This metaphor suggests that harmonious relations involved each clan functioning in accordance with its own set of roles and responsibilities *without losing sight of a balanced and unified end.* The story maintains that individuals – in order to function harmoniously together as a collective whole – must remain loyal to the roles and responsibilities of their clan.[10] Just as animals

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[9] Another version of this history of clans can be found in the book *Clanology: Clan System of the Iroquois* (Native North American Travelling College, 1993: 2-7).

[10] Indeed, the responsibilities of each clan are outlined in the *Kayanerenhkowa,* or Great Law of Peace, and represent the basis upon which decision making takes place. The North American Indian Travelling College (1984: 34) has explained this decision making process as follows: "The Council of the Mohawks shall be divided as follows:

on either side of a river work together in(ter)dependently, so too were humans to work together in in(ter)dependence, consensus and unity.[11]

Combined, this story provides important spiritual direction. It also provides a metaphor for both understanding and facilitating the larger process of decision making by consensus. These political processes have earned the Haudenosaunee a reputation that is famous for its political sophistication, and arguably represented the very principles that were required to unite the original thirteen colonies into American confederation though they did not adopt the clan system (see Jacobs, 1991; Tooker 1988).

Finally, in explaining the importance of the clan system to the overall socio-political functioning of Haudenosaunee culture, Thomas reveals the importance that women played in maintaining the very core of Haudenosaunee social structure. As

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Teharihoken, Haienwatha and Satekariwate are of the Turtle Clan and they are responsible for hearing the matters of the people. If the matter is of importance, the Turtle Clan ... will discuss, deliberate and seek a solution before sending the matter over to the Wolf Clan: Sarihowanen, Teiohenkwen, and Ononhekowa. They will deliberate on the matter and discuss the importance of the question. If they find nothing wrong with the solution as presented by the Turtle clan, the matter will be returned. The Turtle Clan ... will then give the matter to the Bear Clan: Tehennakarineh, Astawenseronta and Shoskonharowaneh, who have been listening to the to the discussions of the of the Turtle and Wolf. If the Bear ... agree, they will sanction the matter. When everybody is of one mind and in accordance with the [Great Law], the Bear ... will announce the decision".

[11] It is not uncommon for references to animals to appear in the traditional stories of Indigenous peoples. As Gregory Cajete (1994: 99-100) points out "whole clans and societies traced their ... essence of power and social place to animal totems. They recognized animals they hunted as being the personifiers of their sense of themselves as a particular group within the greater community of Nature. Therefore animals, and the way that Indigenous people viewed their relationship to them, formed an infrastructure for social organization".

discussed, all children - both male and female - inherited their mother's clan and clan name since the Haudenosaunee were a matrilineal society (see also Eastlack Shafer, 1941/1996: 74). Clan membership was of some significance socially as it provided children with a sense of social connectedness, and responsibility among the Haudenosaunee. Depending on the family and clan to which one belonged, it was also of great significance politically since the position of chieftainship could only be inherited through maternal lineages[12]. As the Cayuga elder Jake Thomas once explained of this:

> Everyone is born into a clan ... and the clan name is always passed down through the mother's side. My mother was Cayuga. This is why I could become a chief, because I fit into the bloodline of the Sand piper clan. It is up to the clan mother to decide if I am worthy enough to become chief. This chieftainship could be taken away from me at any time if my conduct is not appropriate in the eyes of the clan mother. We have only one chief of that clan. I am the chief of the Sandpiper clan of the Cayuga nation (Thomas & Boyle, 1994: 149).

To be sure, the roles of women in relation to the clan system take on a new significance given the words of Thomas. First, if the clan system was of vital importance to establishing roles and responsibilities for each individual Haudenosaunee, and if women were central to the system of bequeathing clan membership to children – clans being the very basis of Haudenosaunee social and political organization – then women quite clearly

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[12] Lineage is the word that is used to describe a group of people who trace descent to a common ancestor through male or female links (Stone, 2000: 66). Historically, the Haudenosaunee were matrilineal and traced descent through women, or "heads of matrilineages" as they could be called. Clan membership was also determined in this manner, though the links between members of a clan – the word that is use to describe the kin groupings made up of lineages – may not be as readily known or traceable (Parkin, 1997: 17-18).

occupied positions of great importance that would have far exceeded those of women among patriarchal Europeans. Further, if Haudenosaunee women could institute or impeach individuals as this relates to the position of sachem[13], then they would have held an enormous influence politically. They quite literally had the power to depose chiefs, and remove them from office (see Mann, 2000). The latter is supported by several authors, some of them anthropologists, who have considered Haudenosaunee political organization (see esp. Parker, 1916/1984; Mann, 2000: 178, Jacobs, 1991).[14]

John Noon, in his *Law and Government of the Grand River Iroquois* (1949), for example, noted the importance of women as this related to political organization and social control. He also refers to women's influence as *matriarchal*, a point to which I return later in the chapter. As he put it:

> The clan government more than any other was dominated by women and the function of this government reflects the economic interests of their sex. The chief woman or matriarch of the clan, termed *go yani* derived her position from two status mechanisms, age and membership in the chiefly lineage. The duties of the

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[13] Sachems is the word used in the story about the *The Great Law and the Formation of the Grand Council* as that appears in the book *Traditional Teachings* (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984). It is used there to refer to the 9 Mohawk, 9 Oneida, 14 Onondaga, 8 Seneca and 10 Cayuga chiefs (ibid: 30) that comprised the original Confederacy. My use of the word here and in upcoming chapters is intended to draw attention to both the original and present-day Confederacy, "hereditary" or traditionally chosen chiefs..

[14] Women's ability to depose (and appoint new) chiefs may also have been enabled through the *Kayanerenhkowa* or Great Law of Peace. Consider, for example, the following from a book version of the story referring to the process relating to the removal of "sachems": "After three warnings the clan warriors acting upon the orders of the Clan Mothers shall discharge the Sachem and shall install another chosen by the Clan Mothers to take his place" (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 46).

> matriarch were to select clan officials, to coordinate the economic activity of female clan members, to render decisions on the adoption of captives, to warn erring chiefs to mend their ways and to depose them if the warning was not heeded [italics in original] (1949: 36-37).[15]

In this citation, it is uncertain why Noon chooses the word "matriarch" to describe the role and function of the Haudenosaunee clan mother. Quite conceivably, the fact that women held such positions of influence and authority among the Haudenosaunee was so far removed from his own experience that he could not find the words to describe them beyond those suggesting some outright control and domination. Nonetheless, Noon alerts us to the positions of influence that women held with respect to political systems. This is important to understanding Haudenosaunee social and political organization. In latter parts of this chapter, I will discuss the scope and magnitude of women's authority based on primary and secondary sources. For now, it is enough to note that women of chiefly lineages[16] (as well as other women for that matter) held significant influence with respect to appointing, and removing, male members from their chiefly positions.

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[15] *Gawaso:waneh* or Arthur Caswell Parker (1916/1984: 11) also documented the roles of women in the Iroquois Confederacy, when, in 1916 he wrote of the Constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy: "[The] "lords" or civil chiefs were nominated by certain noble women in whose families the titles were hereditary; the nominations were confirmed by popular councils both of men and of women and finally by the confederate council. Women thus had great power for not only could they nominate their rulers but also depose them for incompetency in office".

[16] My use of "chiefly lineages" here – and in succeeding chapters – is meant to draw attention to the work of Hewitt (1920: 530) and Noon (1949: 36 at note 68) who propose that not all lineages enjoyed the right of possessing a chiefly title among the historic Haudenosaunee, suggesting in turn the presence of some aristocratic leanings among the Six Nations.

The words of Jake Thomas also present us with an important area for further investigation even if beyond the scope of this dissertation: notably, the extent to which the political power structure of the Haudenosaunee has been maintained and also reshaped by colonialism. For example, if we know, as Glassman (1986: 132) and elders such as Thomas have told us, that the clan system acted as a safeguard against despotism, and that decisions were made through consensus in Council, then what happened to accountability to one's clan or kin group as the *Indian Act* system was imposed on the Six Nations? Moreover, if we know – as Morgan, Glassman, and Thomas tell us – that women held enormous political influence including the ability to appoint and depose candidates for traditional chieftainship, then what happened as the *Indian Act* system started to exclude women (at least in an official sense) from both election and governing procedures? One can only assume the degree to which community level patriarchy and Eurocentric models of governance became increasingly institutionalized at Six Nations during the years 1924 to 1951 when only men had the official right to vote in band elections and participate in political affairs (Cannon, 1995: 15 & 16).[17] But at what pace

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[17] At the same time, there is reason to believe that the traditional government (or Haudenosaunee Confederacy) has developed a more harmonious working relationship with *Indian Act* governments in Haudenosaunee communities (see Chapter Five). Though dated now, in a presentation to the *Special Committee on Indian Self-Government* in 1983 (Canada, 1983: 93), a representative of the Confederacy explained: "We are developing fine relationships with most of the Indian Act governments. But the reason why this is happening is because the people in the band council system in our communities is going to spell the destruction of our communities and the destruction of our way of life. That is dawning on them. Now they are saying: Wait a minute, we do not want to be any part of that ... Let us return power where it properly belongs, let us

were these systems institutionalized? Moreover, what traditional systems were maintained through this process of accommodation and adaptation?

To sum up, Henry Lewis Morgan made an important contribution to the study of Haudenosaunee kinship organization. In describing the importance of women to the maintenance of the clan system, he also occupies a position of importance where the early study of Haudenosaunee women is concerned. His suggestion that clan membership was passed through one's mother is also elaborated in the words of Haudenosaunee elders as I have considered. Beyond his work on matrilineal descent and the clan system, Morgan also described the importance of women as this relates to inheritance, property, and the bestowing of title.

Property, Inheritance and Bestowing of Titles

While the roles and responsibilities of all individuals were clearly demarcated among the Haudenosaunee, women were indispensable to the overall functioning, and maintenance, of Haudenosaunee systems of inheritance. In discussing property and the bestowing of title, Morgan (1851/1964: 84) noted:

> As the whole Iroquois system rested upon the tribes as an organic relation of people, it was very natural that the separate rights of each should be jealously

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return it to the original governments. The original governments have opened a dialogue and are working along in the local communities, through local committees, or whatever, to make that happen." More research of a community based sort would be required in these areas to determine the current extent of relationships in this regard, but see Chapter Five.

> guarded. Not the least remarkable among their institutions, was that which confined *the transmission of all titles, rights and property in the female line to the exclusion of the male*. It is strangely unlike the canons of descent adopted by civilized nations, but it secured several important objects. If the Deer tribe of the Cayugas, for example, received a sachemship at the original distribution of these offices, the descent of such title being limited to the female line, it could never pass out of the tribe ... By operation of this principle, also, the certainty of descent in the tribe, or their principal chiefs, was secured by a rule infallible; for *the child must be the son of its mother, although not necessarily of its mother's husband.* If the purity of blood be of any moment, the lawgivers of the Iroquois established the only certain rule the case admits of, whereby the assurance might be enjoyed that the ruling sachem was of the same family or tribe with the first taker of the title.

Morgan thus emphasized that – in addition to the bestowing of chieftainship titles – the transmission of property was also passed through one's mother. Moreover, the female line of descent was said by Morgan to have offered a certainty that was not possible through the male line. This latter observation was represented in the work of Friedrich Engels (1884/1968) forming the basis of his assertion that women's once elevated status in human societies resulted from their being the only truly ascertainable parent of a child.

Indeed, Engels believed that the rise of the class system fostered the decline of women's power gained through their ability to visibly create new lives, and also, to ascertain unequivocally genealogical connections. When inheritance came to involve the bequeathing of capital, men were ideologically successful in strengthening their connections to children. This revolutionary change, of which Engels provides few empirical examples (Ritzer, 1992: 468), resulted in what he called the "world historical defeat of the female sex" (Engels, 1884/1968: 32, 42, 57, 158). In his estimation, this was the historic time in which women became relegated to the position of passive

incubators (also see O'Brien, 1981). With that in mind, it would seem that the Haudenosaunee were aware implicitly of women's importance as this relates to their established connection to children well before Engels or Morgan decided to write about it. Moreover, there is reason to believe that women's connection to children was revered, affirmed and made indispensable to Haudenosaunee social and political structure.

In addition to the certainty of the maternal connection, there is also reason to believe that women were in the best position as grandmothers, mothers and aunts to estimate the character of the male Chiefs of whom they were responsible for appointing (see Solomon's "The Woman's Part", quoted in Krosenbrink-Gelissen, 1991: 142-3). As one individual at Six Nations explained it to me:

> [T]he clan mother would look around and "select" a young child. From the time that child was small, well, they say she would watch that child grow observing that the child had leadership ability, that the child had common sense, and that he was going to be a good leader some day. So they would begin grooming that child for leadership from the age of 7 to 13, that is when you were groomed for leadership (pgs.5-6, Interview Transcript #2, 13 August 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).[18]

In sum, women's connection to children is of great significance to some Haudenosaunee.

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[18] The format for citation that I use here will follow consistently throughout the chapters, including Chapter Five where I consider the interviews I held with people in greater detail. I have developed this style and format not because I understand it to be Haudenosaunee, but rather, to include some of what I consider to be the most pertinent information about the interviews themselves: the date and location. As I note in Chapter Five all but two were conducted at Six Nations. I have numbered my interview transcripts one to five, and in the chronological order of which I conducted them. Some transcripts are longer than others and so I include pagination. I cite them accordingly as "Interview Transcripts" in my bibliographic reference.

In past and present times, it enables – among other things – a connection for women as clan mothers or heads of matrilineages to select and prepare new political leadership.

The practice of maternal descent, however, is not only significant to chieftainship titles and the bestowing of individual designations. As Morgan also suggested, maternal linkages were a governing factor where *property* was concerned. But the idea of *property* is as significant as it is confusing where attempting to understand women's influence among the Haudenosaunee is concerned. This is largely because property is burdened with capitalist connotations of "private ownership", and can, furthermore, be misrepresented as the basis of Haudenosaunee economic organization. In order to gain an understanding of women's importance as this relates to the transmission of property, it is necessary to explore the meaning of ownership – more specifically, communal ownership – through Haudenosaunee conceptions of the land.

To be sure, the idea of land ownership existed among the Haudenosaunee prior to the first Europeans. The clans were central to these systems of land tenure, and formed the basis of spatial organization. As Williams and Nelson (1995: 19) suggest: "By the late 1700s at Six Nations Reserve, we can see maps showing the fields around the villages divided into sectors, by clan". This likely represented a physical manifestation of principles contained in the Great Law, where it was established early on that "[The] clans, distributed through their respective nations, shall be the sole owners and holders of the soil of the country, and in them it is vested as a birthright" (*Kayanerenhkowa* as quoted in Williams and Nelson, 1995: 19).

The heart of 18th century social life and even before would have clearly revolved around village life itself. The villages of the Haudenosaunee housed a division of labour that was based largely on sex (see Druke, 1986: 300; Fenton, 1998: 22-23, 26-27, 112, 214). In terms of space, these villages were palisaded, defended and comprised of several longhouses. A distinction in terms of boundaries was made between the village and fields (where the legendary Iroquoian crops of corn, beans, and squash grew) as well as the wood's edge (Williams & Nelson, 1995: 21).[19] As renowned horticulturalists whose subsistence activities included hunting (Druke, 1986), the men were responsible for cultivating – or preparing – the soil for crops and use, as well as hunting. Men were further responsible for that which took place "beyond the wood's edge", the greeting and welcoming of outsiders, warfare, and for dealing with other nations politically (Fenton, 1998: 214).

With the exception of preparing the soil for planting or cultivating it, women were collectively responsible for gardening or horticulture, and thus – as heads of matrilineages – have sometimes been referred to as "owners" of the soil (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 49). This aspect of land tenure, is clearly explained in the *Kayanerenhkowa* or Great Law. Here it is established that "The ... descent of the people of the Hotinonshonni shall run in the female line" (ibid). Moreover, there is reference

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[19] *Onenha* (Corn), *Ohsaheta* (Beans) and *O'nyonhsa* (Squash) are sometimes referred to as the "Three Sisters" and, together, are regarded as the supporters of life. In this regard, the corn, bean, and squash spirits receive honour as does the Creator when there is a ceremony for him (see Thomas & Boyle, 1994 :68-69).

also to land ownership as this relates to the Haudenosaunee. As the Great Law establishes: "Women shall be considered the founders of the Nation.[20] *They shall own the land, and soil.* Men and women shall follow the status of their mothers" [emphasis mine] (ibid).

The idea of women as owners of the soil and land - combined with matrilineal descent - is thus important to any discussion of women's status among the Iroquois. Like Morgan, some have attributed the esteemed status of women to this factor alone (see Jenness, 1932: 137). Others have concentrated on women's power as economic in nature (Brown, 1975). If women owned the land and soil and were, moreover, responsible for distributing it to their descendants, then they were indeed fundamental to the maintenance of Iroquoian social organization. The idea of ownership, however, should not automatically be interpreted as suggesting some notion of private ownership. Gerald [Taiaike] Alfred, who happens to be Mohawk, clarifies this point rather succinctly:

> Like all Indigenous philosophies, ours are founded on the belief that *the human relationship to the earth is primarily one of a child to a mother.* The land was created by a power outside of human beings, and we must respect the fact that human beings did not have a hand in making the earth: *we have no right to dispose of it as we see fit. The land was created by another power's order, therefore "possession" by man in any form is unnatural and unjust.* The Indigenous belief, reflecting a spiritual connection with the land established by the Creator, gives human beings special responsibilities within the areas they occupy

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[20] Parker's translation of the *Kayanerenhkowa* reads differently than that of the North American Indian Travelling College, and I will discuss how this is important in latter parts of this chapter. Instead of "Women shall be considered *the founders* of the Nation", Parker translates as follows: "Women shall be considered *the progenitors* of the Nation" (1916/1984: 42).

> as Indigenous peoples, linking them in a "natural" way to their territories. [emphasis mine] (1993: 9).

Alfred makes clearer what is meant by "ownership" where the Haudenosaunee are concerned. First, and most obviously, ownership is characterized by the role of stewardship and custodianship among the Haudenosaunee. At the heart of this role is a unique and balanced relationship with both the land, and the environment. There is an understanding that people must balance (or strive to balance) their own needs with that which surrounds them; notably, manifestations of other life forms whether they be animal, environmental or spiritual. This does not mean that people cannot take from, or utilize, their environments, but that they have a *responsibility* to it. Individuals, quite simply, have a responsibility for maintaining the cycle of life. As Alfred (ibid: 10) puts it: "All societies must take sustenance from the land, but we must, at the same time, remember that *the inherent value of the earth goes beyond human beings' sustenance needs*" [emphasis mine]. Thus, for the Haudenosaunee, ownership is perhaps best understood as involving principles of balance, harmony and respect.

The words "property" as well as "ownership" may be problematic when describing Haudenosaunee conceptions of the land. In contemporary sociological usage, the terms are often meant to refer to a set of *rights* that an owner of something has in relation to others who do not own it (Robertson, 1987: 462). The industrialist, for example, is said to "own" the means of production, while the labourer must sell his or her labour in exchange for access to the means of production, and a wage.

But as Alfred suggests, the Haudenosaunee do not believe that the earth can be bought and sold as private property (also see Snyderman, 1951: 15). It was created by another power's order. Accordingly, what does it mean to say that women owned the land and the soil? Moreover, if we know that private ownership does not exist among the Haudenosaunee, then how could we consider ownership as a source of women's influence? Finally, and in light of the above considerations, what support is furnished to Haudenosaunee historians who suggest that women's influence results from their relationship to the land?

In answer to these questions, it is important to consider two issues. The first is that women's relationship to the land is one that is as old as the Haudenosaunee themselves. It is important, in other words, to consider the Haudenosaunee story of creation as well as women's capacity to sustain life through childbearing and, originally, the earth itself. Second, it is important to consider women's participation in economic organization. Women tended to the land by cultivating it, and there is reason to believe that this would have provided them with a degree of influence relative to the overall economic organization of the Haudenosaunee. Indeed, both of these issues require further contemplation where Haudenosaunee women are concerned.

To be sure, women share a relationship with the earth and soil that is different from that of Haudenosaunee men. This relationship is established in one of the oldest Haudenosaunee stories: that of creation itself. In this story, as I will describe in greater detail later in the chapter, a woman, *Tekawrahkwa*, falls from the "sky world" and lands

on a turtle's back. Upon her arrival, she is greeted by the many water abiding animals who in turn place earth on the turtle's back so that she may plant the food bearing seeds which she has brought with her.

Tekawrahkwa also gives birth to twins following her arrival, and upon her death, is buried in the new earth. This burial in the new earth is of fundamental significance to the Haudenosaunee. As Deborah Doxtator (1997: 32-33) has noted:

> Sky Woman in the creation story ... becomes even more connected with the earth. Following the birth of the twins, she dies and merges with the earth, her body bringing forth important plants such as tobacco, strawberries, corn, beans and squash. Subsequent children born to the women created on the earth are referred to as the new faces pushing up from the earth. In the "Thanksgiving Address", that sets out the order of the universe, the earth is "our mother who supports our feet".

As the original inhabitant of "Turtle Island", *Tekawrahkwa* is regarded among the Haudenosaunee as the very first person to have resided in this life world. As Doxtator suggests, *Tekawrahkwa* is also the first to have died, and thus, to have *merged* with the earth as we currently experience it. This is vastly significant to traditional teachings as it is a Haudenosaunee woman who is recognized as the predecessor of the Nation. *Tekawrahkwa* is quite literally, the first of the Haudenosaunee. She is the individual responsible for energizing the earth with the "eternal potential" of Haudenosaunee existence (see esp. Myers, Peters & Dumont, 1998: 13). In modern times, it is moreover, her female descendants upon whom we rely for the continuity of human development. Women are in other words the very individuals to whom we trace our earliest origins, and continue to rely for continuity and survival.

It is of no small significance that the Haudenosaunee continue to give thanks to "Mother Earth" in ceremonies such as the Thanksgiving address. That thanks is given to the earth as the "mother who supports our feet" is indicative of a social structure that accords respect to women. It is indicative of a social structure that maintains an understanding of women's capacity to sustain life through childbearing and, originally, the earth itself. When thanks is given, it is not only to Mother Earth, but the potential of all women to create and maintain life.[21] The question of ownership cannot be understood outside of these principles. In short, if women "own" the land, it is insofar as they embody the soil itself. Women are, in essence, *progenitors of the Haudenosaunee Nation* (Parker, 1916/1984: 42). To be sure, women inherited this position from *Tekawrahkwa's* status as the original earth being. That this status forms part of the *Kayanerenhkowa* is doubtlessly a reflection of their being the first to arrive on earth.

Conversely, women's status as "owners" of the soil and land is unlikely the sole outcome of *Tekawrahkwa's* role as progenitor of the nation. Nor is this status the simple result of women's roles as life-bearers. Indeed, and based on the literature, there is reason to believe that women's status as owners was tied also to a) the clan system of kinship organization, and b) the economic status held in households.

Morgan spoke at length about the relationship between ownership, inheritance and

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[21] As Williams and Nelson (1995: 20) have suggested: "There is indeed a special connection between the women and our Mother the Earth. It is the women's function to bring forth and nurture life, just as the Earth does. Their relationship with the soil is only a small part of their link with bringing forth life".

the clan system in his work. In his *Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines* (1881/1965), he identified "mutual rights of inheritance of the property of deceased members" to be one of the ten "rights, privileges, and obligations" conferred and imposed upon members of a clan.[22] He later reaffirmed the importance of women to systems of property and inheritance in his *League of the Ho-De-No-Sau-nee or Iroquois* (1901). In speaking of "family relationships" in the first volume of that text, he noted:

> Not the least remarkable among their institutions, was that which confined the transmission of all titles, rights and property in the female line to the exclusion of the male ... The inheritance, for the protection of tribal rights, was thus directed from the lineal descendants of the sachem, to his brothers, or his sister's children, or, under certain circumstances, to some individual of the tribe at large; each and all of whom were in his tribe, while his children, being in another tribe ... were placed out of the line of succession (ibid: 79-80).

The inheritance of property was thus restricted to the female line among the Haudenosaunee.[23] It was, moreover, a functioning of the clan system of kinship organization to which women were fundamental. But ownership was not the only basis

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[22] Morgan identified ten functions of clans, including: 1) election of sachems and chiefs by clan mothers; 2) right to depose sachems or chiefs for misconduct by clan mothers; 3) obligation not to marry within the clan; 4) mutual rights of inheritance of property of deceased members; 5) reciprocal obligations of help, defense, redress of injury; 6) right to bestow names on members; 7) right to adopt strangers; 8) common religious rites; 9) common burial place, and 10) participation in council of the clan (Morgan, 1881/1965: 7).

[23] Morgan quite clearly understood property to include the land in his writing. As he wrote of the Haudenosaunee: "Having neither currency nor trade, nor the love of gain, their property consisted merely of planting lots, orchards, houses, implements of the chase, weapons, articles of apparel, domestic utensils, personal ornaments, stores of grain, skins of animals, and those miscellaneous fabrics which the necessities of life led them to invent" (Morgan, 1901: 317).

upon which women held authority. Indeed, it also stemmed from their overall economic statuses.

As Morgan himself observed, women held enormous influence over the everyday affairs of the household in general. Referring rather ambiguously to "village matrons", he explained:

> After the single daily meal was cooked at the several fires the matron was summoned, and it was her duty to divide the food, from the kettle, to the several families according to their respective needs ... This mere glimpse at the ancient Iroquois plan of life, now entirely passed away, and of which remembrance is nearly lost, is highly suggestive. It shows that their domestic economy was not without method, and *it displays the care and management of woman, low down in barbarism, for husbanding their resources and improving their condition* [emphasis mine] (1881/1965: 65).

In this statement, Morgan suggests that the distribution of food rested with women. He proposes that women exercised "ownership" over the food supply, and that women's influence is tied directly to early economic organization. In making that assertion, Morgan laid the foundation for others to elaborate the roles of women as this relates to modes of distribution and economic organization. In his work on the Haudenosaunee, for example, Alexander Goldenweiser (1912: 469) noted that : "The husband, in ancient times, could regard as his own only his weapons, tools, and wearing apparel, his wife owned the objects of the household, the house itself, and the land". Likewise, in his extensive work on the Haudenosaunee, William Fenton (1998: 214) also spoke of the "control" that women exercised over the village and the fields. And finally, Brown (1975: 251) has suggested rather conclusively that:

> The unusual role of Iroquois women in politics, religion, and domestic life ... cannot be explained by Iroquois kinship structure, nor can it be attributed to the size of the women's contribution to Iroquois subsistence. *The powerful position of Iroquois women was the result of their control of the economic organization of their tribe* [emphasis mine].

Accordingly, and to return to the original question I posed, what reason might we have to establish that women were "owners" of the soil due to their economic roles?

To be sure, references to women as "owners" of the soil extends beyond the respect that is accorded to women for bringing forth and nurturing life. With respect to ownership, women must surely have enjoyed an esteemed status, especially relative to their position in the clan system of kinship organization and in the historic division of labour. As mentioned, the Haudenosaunee were primarily horticulturalists whose division of labour was based on sex. In this regard, most of the gardening was carried out by women, who worked collectively in the fields with other women (ibid). The literature that does exist suggests that women both held and exercised a degree of control over what was produced in common (see Brown, 1975, Williams and Nelson, 1995: 20). At the same time, very little has been written on the nature of this "ownership", least of all by the Haudenosaunee themselves. This is likely because the idea of ownership as outright possession – as Taiaiake Alfred points out – did not exist among them. Based on the literature, though, it is not unreasonable to suggest that women may have been regarded as the "properest owners" – especially of food – given that it was they who laboured on the lands while men acted as political representatives and also hunted.

The women of Six Nations who met with Major Thomas Proctor, a United States

representative, may also hold some insight on the nature of women's ownership. On the 15th of May 1791, for example, the women of the Six Nations are said to have noted:

> You ought to listen to what we women shall speak, as well as to the sachems for *we are the owners of this land – and it is ours; for it is we that plant it, for our and their use*. Hear us, therefore, for we speak of things that concern us and our children, and you must not think hard of us, while our men shall say more to you; for we have told them [emphasis mine] (quoted in Williams & Nelson, 1995: 20).

Women were responsible for the planting and harvesting of the "three sisters": *Onenha* (Corn), *Ohsaheta* (Beans), and *Ohnyonhsah* (Squash). What they tended to, in other words, was logically owned by them in the sense of having gardened it. Beyond that, women were unlikely to have held outright possession of the earth, especially since ownership in the sense of private ownership was not at all granted to the Haudeonsaunee by the Creator. Nor would women have held outright power over those who did not have a hand in production, since we can assume with relative confidence that reciprocity governed economic distribution among the Iroquois (see Richter, 1992: 18-23). Ownership of the soil, in short, should not be construed as meaning the outright possession of goods as forms of private property.

To sum up, women's status as owners of the soil is important to understanding the esteemed status of women among the Haudenosaunee; however, it cannot be understood outside of cultural context. As discussed, ownership is best understood as a role of stewardship or custodianship. Ownership does not enable individuals to buy and sell the land for private interests; rather, *ownership is something that involves a set of responsibilities*. Indeed, the idea of "soil" itself – particularly as it appears in the

Kayanerenhkowa or Great Law – most likely refers to the part of the land that is used to grow things (Williams and Nelson, 1995: 20). Understood in this way, women exercised a special connection to the land, for it was women who were responsible for the growing of the "three sisters". That the earth is regarded as female as suggested in the creation story also afforded women a special connection to the earth and to the soil. This connection is maintained today through the story of creation, as well as the thanks that is given to "Mother Earth" in the Thanksgiving address and other ceremonies (see Shimony, 1961/1994).

Haudenosaunee Women and Residence Patterns

Women's prestige was not only limited to their economic roles or their relationship to the soil. They are also believed to have been central to patterns of residence among the Haudenosaunee. Upon marriage, men resided with the family of their wives. As Randle (1951: 171) describes of the process historically:

> Sometime after adolescence her marriage would be arranged by her mother and the mother of a suitable man. Marriage would not change her residence, her name, or her place in the clan. The older women, especially the mothers of the spouses, were the ones responsible for the success of the marriage and would do their best to keep it going. But if their efforts failed, a broken marriage worked little hardship on the wife or young child. Another spouse might be brought into the maternal group, and the child's support was the concern of the maternal line, and his name and inheritance came from his mother's brother.

A woman did not change her place of residence following marriage. As well, her husband and children would live among her kin, and all the rights of property and inheritances

would be channeled through the female line of descent. In effect, the Haudenosaunee were, as Randle notes, "matrilocal" which "gave the woman the utmost in security" (ibid).

The nature of Haudenosauenee society as matrilocal[24] has been of particular interest to anthropologists. There also appears to have been some exceptions to this rule. As Morgan wrote in his *Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines* in 1881:

> Each household was made up on the principle of kin. The married women, usually sisters, own or collateral, were of the same gens[25] or clan, the symbol or totem of which was often painted upon on the house, while their husbands and the wives of their sons belong to several other gentes. The children were of the gens of their mother. While husband and wife belonged to different gentes, the preponderating number in each household would be of the same gens, namely, that of their mothers. *As a rule the sons brought home their wives*, and in some cases the husbands of the daughters were admitted to the maternal house. Thus each household was composed of a mixture of persons from different gentes; but this would not prevent the numerical ascendancy of the particular gens to whom the house belonged [italics mine] (1881/1965: 64).

Morgan uses the concept of gens here to draw attention to people who are related through their female ancestors. But in suggesting that "sons brought home their wives", the practice of matrilocal residence patterns becomes confused. The general pattern, in other

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[24] By matrilocal, I mean "the postmarital residence pattern in which a married couple lives in the household or place of the bride's kin"(Stone, 2000: 31)

[25] The term "gens", or plural "gentes", was used by Morgan to describe the matrilineal clan organization of the Haudenosaunee even though, as Stone (2000: 68-69) and others (Parkin, 1997: 18) have pointed out, the term refers to and is normally reserved for describing patrilineal clan organization such as that of the ancient Romans (ibid).

words, would seem to have been patrilocality[26], even despite the "numerical ascendancy" of maternal relations comprising a given household. Perhaps the Haudenosaunee were not at all matrilocal. Perhaps the wives of men lived more often – as a rule – with their husband's families.

The matter I am identifying has been explored, and debated, at length by anthropologists seeking to confirm definitively the presence of matrilocality among the Iroquois. Of twenty-three ethnographic cases taken from the early seventeenth century, Richards (1967: 51) found that "ten described a pattern which was clearly not matrilocal; nine described patterns which were probably not matrilocal, three described a pattern which probably was, and one described a pattern not consistent with either matrilocal or patrilocal residence." In short, Richards suggest the Iroquois were not predominately matrilocal – at least in the first half of the seventeenth century (ibid).

The contradiction I am elaborating has yet to be resolved in the literature on Haudenosaunee women and kinship organization. In all likelihood, there was flexibility that existed in relation to these systems as Morgan and Richards acknowledge. Moreover, as Richter (1992: 20) has noted: "A young husband being groomed for leadership ... may have remained in the longhouse in which he was born, but one of lesser stature went to live with a wife more prominently placed in her own lineage." Put simply, there was "considerable pragmatic variability in [matrilocal] residence patterns" (Doxtator, 1996:

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[26] By patrilocal, I mean "the postmarital residence pattern in which a married couple lives in the household or place of the husband's kin"(Stone, 2000: 31)

74), especially following contact – and since the time in which Morgan and other anthropologists decided to write about the Haudenosaunee.

Matrilocality is, in other words, widely assumed in scholarly circles as a distinguishing feature of Haudenosaunee social organization before the first Europeans. Moreover, it remains in the memory of the contemporary Haudenosaunee, for as one traditional person at Six Nations explained to me:

> [O]ur homes, our actual homes, were the women's homes. The men that were part of that were married into it or the sons ... [T]he home was based on the women's clan and that was what she was: the owner or the caretaker of the home ... There wasn't really any concept of owning it, but they were the ones that were responsible for it. That was part of the clan system (pg. 3, Interview Transcript #4, 12 October 2001, Toronto, ON).

In short, matrilocality among the Haudenosaunee was very much tied to the matrilineal clan system, the heads and keepers of which were women. To be sure, the matrilocal structure of residence patterns – when it did occur – afforded women significant influence. Not only did women determine a child's clan affiliation, they played a key role where residency was concerned. This is an aspect of Haudenosaunee social relations, and women's influence that cannot be overlooked, and that also requires additional research and analysis.

By way of summary, women enjoyed esteemed status among the Haudenosaunee. Politically, women were responsible for the nomination and removal of men from their positions as chiefs. These and other responsibilities were enshrined in the *Kayanerenhkowa*, Great Law of Peace, or Constitution of the Haudenosaunee

Confederacy. In terms of kinship, children (male and female) inherited clan identities as well as chiefly lineages and other titles from their mothers. As "owners" of the soil (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 49), women also occupied significant positions where systems of social and economic organization are concerned, and were of central importance to the story of creation. In short, Haudenosaunee women occupied important and influential positions. According to some, these were positions of power. It is to a discussion of that issue that I now turn.

Haudenosaunee Women: The Nature of Women's Power

The status of women in early Haudenosaunee society has attracted the attention of anthropologists, sociologists and feminist theorists. Some have argued that the Haudenosaunee were matrilineal and matrilocal prior to European contact (Randle, 1951; Brown, 1975, Eastlack Shafer, 1941/1996: 74). Others have spoken of the Haudeonsaunee as a matriarchal society. Consider the words of Matilda Joslyn Cage, an American suffragist and colleague to Elizabeth Cady Stanton who was among the first of early feminists to speak of the Haudenosaunee as "matriarchal". As she declared in 1893, referring to the Seneca among whom she had lived in what is now upstate New York "Never was justice more perfect, never civilization higher than under *the Matriarchate*" [emphasis mine] (quoted in Wagner, 1988/1990: 224). As she later wrote "the division of power between the sexes in this Indian republic was nearly equal" (quoted in Wagner, 1988/1990: 224). Her reference to "matriarchy" has not been the only one in feminist

literature.

Paula Gunn Allen, a literary critic who happens to be of Lebanese and Laguna Pueblo descent, also argues for the concept of matriarchy though not entirely specific to the Haudenosaunee. In fact, as she explains of indigenous societies in general:

> Traditional tribal lifestyles are more often gynocratric than not, and they are never patriarchal ... Among gynocratic tribal peoples the welfare of the young is paramount, the complementary nature of all life forms is stressed, and the centrality of powerful women to social well-being is unquestioned (Gunn Allen, 1986: 2-3).

By "gynocratic", I understand Gunn Allen to be referring to the notion of "gynocracy", which is defined by *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (1993: 1166) as a society that is "based on the government of women or women as the ruling class". Gunn Allen, in other words, does not develop the concept of "gynocracy" at any great length in her work. This ought to lead us to question the use of "gynocracy" or perhaps even "matriarchy" to describe the Haudenosaunee. In fact, for the remainder of this chapter, I want to consider the use of both gynocracy and matriarchy as concepts to describe gender relations and the nature of Haudenosaunee social structure.

To be sure, the idea of matriarchy *can be used* to describe the Haudenosaunee. In terms of social organization, women would have been quite clearly significant to a kinship structure that prioritized maternal descent and – at least at some points in history – matrilocality. If we think of matriarchy as involving these aspects of social structure, then it is consistent with sociological definitions of matriarchy that refer to a social organization where the mother was head of the family (Hale, 1990: 173, 335-336, 571;

Jary & Jary, 1991:297-298). Further, it is consistent with Friedrich Engels' theory of matriarchy. In the terms set out by him – though he never defines it specifically – matriarchy was none other than the power that was ascribed to women based on the importance of maternal descent. This criterion alone – though radically transformed with the emergence of private property – characterizes the Haudenosaunee. In short, they were quite clearly a matriarchal society under Engels' and others' conceptions. Yet in placing them under these definitions, the idea of balance and complementarity, I would like to argue, as well as additional sources of women's prestige are overlooked.

Women in Haudenosaunee society held extraordinary power politically in comparison to the patriarchal European, especially in terms of political autonomy and decision-making. This power was tied intimately to the clan system, and it was engendered in the *Kayanerenhkowa*, or Haudenosaunee Constitution. As already discussed, heads of matrilineages – or "clan mothers" – could institute as well as impeach hereditary chiefs under the Great Law of Peace (Parker, 1916/1984: 11). As well, these women also held the ability to influence decisions of council (Eastlack Shafer, 1941/1990: 93); initiate and stop wars (Eastlack Shafer, 1941/1990: 92-93; Mann, 2000:); decide on whether captives would be adopted or killed (Jacobs, 1991: 503, Eastlack Shafer, 1941/1990: 92); and held their own councils in turn (Carr, 1884: 230, Parker, 1916/1984: 55).[27] Combined, these abilities would have quite clearly *institutionalized*

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[27] The *Kayanerenhkowa* provided for separate clan councils for women; notably "The women of every clan in the Hotinonshonni shall have a continuous Council Fire

women's power in terms of decision making among the Haudenosaunee. Having said that, I do not believe that matriarchy – when defined as social organization based on the mother as head of the family – does justice to the complexity of women's power, nor does it do well at explaining it. I will discuss this in the coming pages. To date, definitions of matriarchy have also overlooked women's active role in, and contribution to, structures of economic organization. As discussed, women were responsible for the land and soil, as well as the crops that grew in the villages and fields. This gave women an access to resources, and perhaps even a degree of influence over the distribution of those resources that was fundamental to women's elevated status before the first Europeans. As some sociologists have noted, this access to productive resources may have lead to relations among the sexes that were *egalitarian* in nature (Landstreet, 2001: 162-165). Further research will be required to determine the degree to which Haudenosaunee women exercised economic autonomy, the types of responsibility that was held for the land and soil, as well as the types of authority they held over economic distribution. Furthermore, any definition of "matriarchy" – especially when applied to the Haudenosaunee – needs to consider the nature and scope of this influence.

As a final consideration, and one that I would like to make more central in the

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burning for the purpose of holding a Council meeting of that clan when it is necessary in the interest of the people. The decision of the women's council shall then be introduced to the Council of the League by the Head Warrior of that Clan." (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 58). The power that women held in these councils appears not to have been arbitrary, but rather, was guided by a general rule of consensus, and the women "trustees" themselves were nominated (Hewitt, 1933/1990: 58).

literature, the concept of "matriarchy" when applied to the Haudenosaunee does not consider the centrality of women to both traditions and ceremonies. It does not capture the relationship between male and female responsibilities that is so pervasive in the traditional stories, philosophies and Indigenous knowledge held by the Haudenosaunee. In the time leading up to the writing of this dissertation, some people – a few of them Haudenosaunee – have also expressed scepticism to me over the term "matriarchy". None of them has denied the political and clan related influence of Haudenosaunee women, but they have explained to me that the origin and grounds for women's preeminence ought to be seen as stemming from traditional understandings. As one of the people whose testimony I consider in greater detail in Chapter Five explained to me early on in my research:

> I think that [authority] isn't what our matriarchy was about ... ours was about balance between men and women, and men and women had certain roles and responsibilities. And so it's a matriarchy in a sense that your clan and your family come from the women. That's what our matriarchy is about. And so it depends on where you get your definition from ... [O]ur power came from the balance between the men and the women ... and that's what was maintained ... Women had their roles and men had their roles. And in order for that to be maintained, there was respect between the two (pg. 2, Interview Transcript #4, 12 October 2001, Toronto, ON).

This person also suggested that:

> The matriarchal society was about knowing your identity. As soon as you're born, you know what your clan is and you know what your responsibilities are within your family. Whether you're a man or whether you're a women, or a boy or a girl (ibid).
>
> Responsibility, balance and a respect between the genders. These issues have not

received any serious consideration in the literature on the Haudenosaunee or "Iroquois", however important they are contemplating women's esteemed statuses. This is regrettable, for if as Barbara Mann (2000: 124) has suggested "[T]he best place to start in reconstructing the political role of Iroquoian women is with women's tradition", then I would argue that traditional teachings and other Haudenosaunee stories are fundamental to developing an understanding about gender relations, as well as women's positions of influence. Indeed, when I think about the traditional teachings that I know to be Haudenosaunee, even a short investigation of them leads me to suggest a *culture of gender complementarity*, rather than using concepts such as "gynocracy" or "matriarchy". At the same time, there are two tensions that exist in proposing such a re-evaluation of gender relations and women's status based on a reading of traditional stories. The first of them involves the matter of using oral tradition[28] where historical inquiry into certain aspects of Haudenosaunee social structure is concerned. The second involves use of a male/female binary when referring to the history of gendered understandings held by Indigenous peoples prior to the arrival of First Europeans. It is to a brief and preliminary analysis of these issues that I now turn.

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[28] By "oral tradition", I am meaning to draw attention to the narratives or stories held by Aboriginal peoples that have been, and continue to be, transmitted by word of mouth over at least a generation (von Gernet, 1996). Oral traditions can be contrasted with oral histories which are recollections of individuals who were eyewitnesses or had personal experience with events occurring in their lifetime (ibid).

Oral Tradition, Storytelling and Gendered Ways of Knowing: Some Preliminary Notes

The use of oral tradition where the study of women's status, gender relations, and Haudenosaunee social structure is concerned represents an important and valuable source of information. Having said that, oral tradition has come under scrutiny in recent debates in both legal and academic circles (see Cruikshank, 2002: 3-5, 22-23). As John Borrows (2001) suggests, oral tradition can provide for an important body of evidence and/or proof of prior events, and it can also shed light on meanings associated with the past. But Borrows (ibid) also describes how oral traditions present us with a particular set of challenges, arising in part because of their unique source and transmission. His work ought to be placed into broader context as an emergent scholarly discourse. It follows recent legal cases involving the oral tradition of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

In the late 1980s, oral traditions received considerable attention in Canadian law. At the time, the Gitksan and Wet'suet'en Nations, located in what is now called British Columbia, brought a land claim before the British Columbia Supreme Court. In doing so, they insisted on using traditional narratives and stories (often referred to as myths, folklore, legends or even ethnohistory among some anthropologists and historians) as a means of substantiating their entitlements (Cruikshank 2002: 22). In 1991, the British Columbia Supreme Court dismissed their use of oral tradition, referring to it as a set of "beliefs" which stood in contrast to the "facts" contained in historical and archival documents (ibid). Later – in 1997 – the Supreme Court of Canada reversed this decision in the now famous *Delgamuukw* case, instructing judges to adapt evidentiary standards

"so that the Aboriginal perspective on their practices, customs and traditions and on their relationship with the land, are given due weight" *(Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, 1997, para. 84).

The *Delgamuukw* case is important, especially where the use of oral tradition is concerned. In the first instance, it has allowed for judicial decision makers to place oral traditions "on an equal footing with the types of historical evidence that courts are familiar with" (ibid, para. 87). At the same time, it has introduced a number of challenges that are of equal significance to academics. Following *Delgamuukw*, some anthropologists questioned whether oral traditions would be reduced to "simple messages" when placed on an equal footing with other written and archival documents (Cohen, 1989; Cruikshank, 2002: 22). Others asked if courts were willing and able to evaluate oral tradition and storytelling on their own terms rather than as simple sources of "data" (Borrows, 2001: 29; Cruiskshank, 2002: 23). Generally speaking, the challenge of admissibility, especially where oral tradition is used to shed light on things like gender relations and women's status, requires further contemplation.

Historical objectivism, or the belief in a neutral, value-free and objective writing of history, continues to remain hostile to the use of oral tradition. This issue has received the attention of several generations of scholars in the academic context. In the 1970s, for example, the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss pointed to knowledge production (whether Aboriginal, academic, oral or written) as a process that is both socially and culturally mediated. Of course, he did not raise this issue in the (post)modern language of

historians and others concerned with the stories of Aboriginal peoples. Instead, he spoke of "mythologies", and he provided a challenge to academics accustomed to drawing a distinction between mythology and history (1978: 40). As he quite boldly questioned of objectivists at the time (ibid: 41): "When we try to do scientific history, do we really do something scientific, or do we remain astride our own [sic] mythology in what we are trying to make as pure history?"

The challenge posed by Levi-Strauss is important in that it summons historians and other academics to consider how objectivism is thought frequently to stand in dichotomous relation to its perceived opposite, relativism. Such a dichotomy, as Levi-Strauss was perhaps the first to point out, does little to acknowledge how all of historical knowledge is culturally mediated – or produced – and how truth is socially constituted. The dichotomy does little to displace, in other words, the privilege that historians and other academics have historically exercised over Indigenous truth claims. These are important issues involving knowledge and power, and it is useful to consider whether the "Aboriginal/academic or orality/literacy dichotomies are counterproductive" – as von Gernet has questioned (ibid: 2-3) – especially where history based on oral narratives is thought of as entirely separate from history based on written documents. The challenge, in other words, will be for historians and other academics to question the control, and the authenticization of history, and how various voices have been included and excluded in that distinctly historical process (ibid: 2-3).

Having noted these sets of complexities, there are two issues that I think need to

be addressed in prefacing what follows in this chapter, particularly where my use of oral tradition to shed light on the matriarchy question, women's status and gender relations is concerned. The first of these considerations involves a closer contemplation of history, or more importantly, historic change and the way this impacts – and has impacted – on oral tradition. A second, though intimately related issue, requires that we think more closely about gendered ways of knowing.

To be sure, very little has been said or written about gendered understandings as held by an historic Haudenosaunee. Thus, this leaves open to further inquiry the means through which gendered behaviour and identity were realized among my ancestors. In the pages that follow, I do not intentionally overlook (or otherwise silence) a series of additional possibilities where the realization of "gender", behaviour and identity among an historic Haudenosaunee is concerned. In fact, I would like to acknowledge the precise opposite – even though I make reference to notions of "male-ness" and "female-ness" throughout. Notably, that some category may well have existed beyond the rigidly dichotomous and Eurocentric notion of male and female among a pre-contact Haudenosaunee (see Cannon, 1998). I am suggesting, in other words, that the fragments of oral tradition I represent in the remainder of this Chapter may not have evaded the influence of present day conventions, concerns and values. The question I share with John Borrows (2001: 11), however, is this: how much have oral traditions changed over time, and what implication does this have in terms of the value by which some of the stories are assesed?

In the contemporary context, it is important to contemplate social structural change, and the subsequent historical validity that can be attributed to oral tradition. On one side of the academic argument, there has been a body of scholars who are opposed to attaching any historical validity to oral tradition in light of these changes. Consider the work of Robert Lowie, for example, an influential American anthropologist who is most broadly cited as holding a low view of oral tradition (Borrows, 2001: 6; von Gernet, 1996:). In 1917 (at 958), he wrote that he could "not attach to oral traditions any historical value whatsoever under any conditions whatsoever". Others, like Borrows (2001), have presented a challenge to this type of all-or-nothing argument by at once agreeing, and disagreeing with it.

As Borrows (ibid: 11) suggests, it is undeniable that stories can change over time, but the assumption that oral tradition is therefore "unreliable", "in error", and "contaminated" does not take into sufficient account "the checks and balances in language, people and culture" as that helps to sustain an ongoing memory of stories (also see Ladner, 1996). He also suggests that, "the permeability and fluidity of oral tradition through time ... does not lesson the value of oral tradition, it only provides us with a different value by which it should be measured". In short, Borrows (ibid: 12) suggests that oral tradition, "is no longer about passing a message unchanged around a circle, but about giving meaning to the message that is consistent with its original formulation while it is being circulated." Oral tradition is also about "creating a message that is faithful to the original while drawing on the skills and understanding of the people in the group to

make the message meaningful for them" (ibid). Having made note of these points, I would like to consider them more systematically in relation to my own work.

With respect to the "checks and balances" to which Borrows makes reference as helping to sustain oral tradition and ongoing narrative memory, it is clear that there has been a commitment to this at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Consider for example, the public recitations by the now deceased Cayuga elder, Jake Thomas, at 1990s Grand River. In these recitations, Thomas recounted – as I will try to represent in upcoming pages – the story of creation, the Great Law of Peace, as well as the story of Handsome Lake (see Chapter Two). In each case, he made inevitable and extensive reference to the roles and responsibilities of Haudenosaunee men and women in his narrations (see Thomas, 1994). His recitations in 1994 lasted some nine days, and later that year, were distributed on audiovisual tapes (ibid). The event itself has been acknowledged by at least one academic who spent time among the Grand River Haudenosaunee. As Annemarie Shimony (1961/1994: xix) – an anthropologist whose work I detail extensively in upcoming Chapters – wrote: "attendance is large, and the listeners profess to being uplifted and inspired".

The recitations of Jake Thomas are significant to the discussion at hand. On the one hand, they attest to a determination by both Christian and Longhouse adherents – the difference between whom I will discuss and describe in upcoming pages – to preserve the rich cultural knowledge of the Haudenosaunee people . These types of forums are important, especially if we consider them as creating the kinds of "structured

opportunities, spaces, and places for the public telling and hearing of oral traditions" to which Cruikshank (2002: 23) makes reference. These recitations, as Cruikshank suggests, are "social occasions where stories can be told, interpretations debated, and disagreements aired" (ibid). They are, in my view, exemplary of the kinds of "checks and balances" to which Borrows makes reference where the maintenance of narrative memory is concerned.

Having said that, there is nothing to suggest that these kinds of social occasions evade the influence and interest of present day social conventions, concerns and values to which I have already made reference – including some of the more Eurocentric understandings of gender that are clearly dichotomous and binary. And so we arrive back at the question that behoves us as scholars working with oral traditions: how reliable are stories as a source of information about the past? Also, what level of insight do they shed on gender relations?

There are no easy answers to these questions. Historical narratives are neither static or unchanging, nor are they unequivocally immune to the revision of several generations of Haudenosaunee orators who carry the responsibility of sharing traditional stories (Nabakov, 2002: 90). But just as Borrows suggests, there may be differing and sometimes shifting purposes – beyond questions of reliability or validity – by which oral traditions ought to be assessed (2001: 12). In the case of women's status and gender relations in particular, perhaps the true value of traditional stories rests in the challenge they present to patriarchal understandings about men's and women's roles. I am

suggesting, in other words, that the importance of the stories I consider in the pages to follow resides in the challenge they have posed to hierarchical understandings of gender relations – defined for the most part as "matriarchal" or "gynocratic" in the literature on the Haudenosaunee.

To be sure, historical narratives as possessed by the Haudenosaunee are created through human agency, and I am not suggesting that they are immune to the need for further verification (Nabakov, 2002: 89). In fact, the way in which various symbols or themes have been carried into contemporary oral tradition has been a significantly understudied area (ibid: 101). Having made this point, I want to present an alternative view of the issues at hand, especially where the matter of women's status and gender relations is concerned.

To put the matter differently: I want to suspend for a moment the question of accuracy and historic validity where oral tradition is concerned, and think instead about the contribution that is offered in the stories I consider (in all of their dynamic and fluid complexity) where past and present day gendered ways of knowing are concerned. Only then, can these stories be more fully appreciated and useful in teaching us about women's status and gender relations among the Haudenosaunee.

The argument I am presenting here is very much indebted to the work of Cruikshank (2002). It is based also on the arguments presented by Nabakov (2002: 101) about the richness of oral tradition as that has developed in part through a collision of cultures (ibid; also Wolf, 1982). Combined, these sets of arguments acknowledge that

stories may indeed change over time, but that this does not forestall their potential as a major force and strategy where realizing women's esteemed status and cultural continuity are concerned.

Beyond issues of historical accuracy, then, the importance of the stories I am about to consider lies in their ability to enable an understanding of women's status and gender relations – however inadequate – beyond the current patriarchal model. Put differently, I am offering an engaged reading of these myths and traditional stories that I think ought to inform the debates and discussions that are held about matriarchy in the literature on the Haudenosaunee It is to a consideration of these issues that I now turn.

The Duality of Creation, *Kayanerenkowa,* and the Case for Gender Complimentarity

Haudenosaunee teachings and stories rarely use words like "gynocracy", "power", "authority", "influence", "status" or even "control" when referring to women's status and gender relations. In the language of Eurocentric scholarship, however, one could quite safely assume that women held influence above and beyond their European counterparts, especially since the Haudenosaunee were matrilineal and – at least at some points in history – matrilocal. As heads of matrilineages, they were most likely positioned into more significant roles among households. But in order to understand more fully the nature of women's status among the Iroquois, I would like to suggest that it is necessary to examine the teachings of Iroquoian elders and educators versus that of embracing concepts that embody some existing interpretive or sociological framework. These

stories, I would like to suggest, shed insight into the status of women as attained through a relationship between the genders that was dynamic, fluid, and dialectical[29].

To be sure, the role of women cannot be understood apart from the roles of men, or without first acknowledging the Haudenosaunee story of creation. As discussed, this story has been passed on through many generations of Six Nations people. The story itself identifies a woman who lives in the Sky, and who gives birth to a daughter, *Tekawrahkwa*. *Tekawrahkwa* falls from the Sky world and lands on a turtle's back. She becomes the first of the *Onkwehonwe*, and it is believed that she gave birth to twins upon her arrival.

The word *Onkwehonwe* is one that is sometimes used by the Haudenosaunee to refer to the earth's "original people", and it is meant to draw attention to the memory that is held by many Haudenosaunee about how we came to exist on this land before the arrival of the first Europeans (Myers, Peters & Dumont, 1998). Many Haudenosaunee still have memory of how the *Onkwehonwe* came to occupy the earth, and it is a memory that is tied intimately to the story of *Tekawrahkwa*, and the very first guardians of *E'tinoha*[30] or *Mother Earth.*

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[29] By dialectical, I am meaning to draw attention to the relationship that exists between men and women, as well as the unique set of responsibilities that are believed to exist traditionally between them in their everyday material realities.

[30] The word I use here is likely from the Oneida or possibly Cayuga languages, or may be old enough to have dropped from contemporary usage. The more contemporary Mohawk usage would be *Yethinoha* or *Yethi'nihstenha*, all meaning "Mother Earth". I wish to thank David Kanatawakhon for this teaching.

According to the story itself, the twins (one of them male and the other female) of *Tekawrahkwa* are understood to embody the dualities of good and evil, positive and negative, and so on (ibid). The struggle between the twins is said to further symbolize the natural inclination of the life world; namely, the disposition toward balance, equilibrium and symmetry (ibid; Thomas, 1994).

The significance of the creation story is key to understanding the esteemed status of women among the Iroquois. In addition to giving birth to twins, *Tekawrahkwa* was also the first of the *Onkwehonwe* to die and be buried in the new earth world. This is significant to understanding the continuity of human development, for as Myers, Peters & Dumont (1998: 13) explain,

> Instead of her spirit returning to her mother's land that spirit is released into the new earth and energizes it with the eternal potential of Ongwhewhowhe [sic] existence. This is where our concept of *E'tinoha – Mother Earth* comes from.

Women are thus fundamental to the Iroquois story of creation. Moreover, women's ability and potential to sustain humankind is continually affirmed through the very concept of Mother Earth itself – a principle that is widely recognized even today. As already discussed, "It is the women's function to bring forth and nurture life, just as the Earth does" (Williams & Nelson, 1995: 20). The importance of women, however, should not be interpreted as deriving only from their role in human development or the power to give and sustain all of life. Rather, it is important to consider how within this traditional story women stand in a kind of dynamic interdependence with men.

As Myers explains, the eternal potential of *Onkwehonwe* existence is realized

through the interaction of physical male and female (Myers, Peters & Dumont, 1998: 13). Among other things that result from this interaction, "The child ... is considered a gift from *E'tinoha* to the clan of the child's mother" (ibid: 13). What this suggests is that men and women – by virtue of their genders which I have referred to as "complementary" – both contribute to restoring and maintaining the balance of the universe (also see Anderson, 2000). And while women are indisputably central to the story of creation in terms of descent reckoning (the child is, after all, a "gift" to the mother's clan), and to the giving and sustaining of life, the importance of men – in terms of both roles and responsibilities – is simultaneously, and inseparably, affirmed.

The relationship between male and female is an important one, especially if we accept for a moment – and uncritically so – that the world is comprised of several *dualities* as Myers, Peters & Dumont (1998: 3) point out. Some of these dualities include positive/negative, seen/unseen, birth/death, and so on. To be sure, none of these dualities need to be considered as antagonistic, nor as standing in a hostile or dichotomous opposition to one another. Instead, they can be understood as regulated – as is the case with all pairs of things – by a world view which is distinctly Haudenosaunee, and which presupposes that all of life strives to achieve and maintain a balance. As Myers, Peters & Dumont (ibid: 6) explain, "The indigenous person sees the world as always and naturally striving to maintain an equilibrium and symmetry – everything will ultimately try to achieve a balanced solution". To be sure, the dialectical relationship between female and male does not escape this natural inclination – a teaching that is

vastly significant where shedding insight into the nature of women's status and gender relations among the Haudenosaunee is concerned.

Balance and complementarity are critical to understanding both gender relations and the status of women among the Haudenosaunee. As discussed, women and men contribute to the overall balance of things through their dynamically interdependent and complimentary roles. Balance is, in other words, maintained through the interaction of men and women in the (re)creation and sustaining of *Onkwehonwe* existence. The complementarity that exists between men and women is also maintained by the Haudenosaunee concept of "fire" within.

The concept of "fire" is an important and meaningful one. As Myers, Peters and Dumont (ibid: 16) have written:

> For the Haudenosaunee the concept of "Fire" is a powerful metaphor that is used to describe the "spirit" of all aspects of Life. We believe that everything is endowed with a *"Ga:jist"*[31] or Fire. It is seen as that invisible energy or force that causes Life to exist and grow.

Accordingly, all individuals are born with, and nurture, a personal fire from their birth, to adulthood, to elder years, and onward until death. This fire is maintained primarily by the people of one's clan and a common adherence to the four directions: north, south, east and west as well as kindness, sharing, trust and respect. Collectively, the fire is also maintained through one's interdependence with immediate and extended family,

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[31] The word *Ga:jist* is most often used to refer to sticks of matches. The word *Otsire* is more often used to refer to fire. I thank David Kanatawakhon for this teaching.

community, nation, Confederacy and all of creation (ibid: 16). Beyond our physical form as "humans", there is thus a spirit or inner energy that must be nourished.

But it is only in considering the composition of "fire" that we begin to understand the idea of "complementarity" or flow of balancing genders. In fact, fire itself embodies both male and female energies in decisive, and profound ways. As Myers, Peters & Dumont (ibid: 17) explain:

> *We apply male and female concepts to our descriptions of Fire and its components.* The flames of a Fire are referred to in a female context, while the heat from the Fire is referred to in male context. *These are important concepts to bear in mind because of their influence on how we see and describe Life and the World around us. The female and male together create the heat and energy of any form of existence.* Too much or too little of either causes an imbalance [emphasis mine].

In this written text, we gain insight into the importance of male and female energies. Each energy plays a part in perpetuating "the life and world around us". Men and women are fundamental to creating and maintaining balance and harmony in the life world, and both energies are meaningfully paired in a way to complement one another. This suggests that existence itself embodies both genders; an important and valuable insight into understanding gender relations among the Haudenosaunee prior to the first Europeans. There is reason also to believe that the "fire within" teaches all men and women about their roles and responsibilities toward maintaining equilibrium.

According to Myers, Peters & Dumont (ibid; 17), the composition of fire in a symbolic sense assumes that men and women have strikingly different, but inherently complementary, duties. As the authors explain of fire itself,

> The first duty of men is to ensure that the Fire never goes out. The responsibility of women is to insure that the energy required for our existence is constant and consistent. For this to be, then we must insure that the highest quality of logs are provided as fuel.

In sum, the symbolism of fire and its maintenance is a *responsibility* that is shared by Haudenosaunee men and women. Though very different, the duties of men and women are believed here to be truly in(ter)dependent, and contribute to the overall maintenance of existence itself. In this regard, we are led to see the responsibilities of men and women in a new way. Put differently, the roles and responsibilities of men and women are very different, but they both complement one another in a way that upholds the circle of life. In the very difference that defines them, the roles of men and women are, by their very essence, complementary.

Combined, the idea of gender balance and harmony permeates the Haudenosaunee world view. The stories I have considered describe the nature of gender complementarity, including one that is as old as the Haudenosaunee themselves: the Creation story and the acceptance of the *Kayanerenhkowa,* or Great Law.

The *Kayanerenhkowa* is commonly regarded as a "gift from the Creator for the purpose of saving the people of the Six Nations from destroying themselves" (Porter, 1998: 815). It is understood as well as being timely, because prior to the coming of the Great Law, and the establishment of the Confederacy, it was a time of great sorrow and terror for the Haudenosaunee. John Mohawk explains:

> All order and safety had broken down completely and the rule of the headhunter dominated the culture. When a man or woman died ... [t]he aggrieved family then

> sought vengeance and a member set forth with the purpose of finding [an] unsuspecting and arguably innocent offender and exacting revenge. That killing sparked a spiral of vengeance and reprisal which found assassins stalking the Northeastern woodlands in a never ending senseless bloodletting (1946: xvi).

Mohawk describes the context out of which a young man known to the Haudenosaunee as the Great Peacemaker brought a message of peace to the people. Sent to earth by the Creator himself – the Peacemaker's message had three parts: that of righteousness (*Karihwiyo)*, health (*Skennon)* and power (*Ka'shatstenhsera)* (Wallace, 1946/1997: 15). Righteousness, health and power were meant by the Peacemaker in the following ways:

> Righteousness means justice practiced between men and between Nations; it means a desire to see justice prevail. Health means soundness of mind and body; it also means peace, for that is what comes when minds are sane and bodies are cared for. Power means authority, the authority of law and custom, backed by such force as is necessary to make justice prevail; it means also religion, for justice enforced is the will of the [Creator] and has his sanction (Wallace, 1946/1997: 15, also see North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 18).

The importance of the Peacemaker's message cannot be underestimated. Though it is thought to have taken some time to reach the people, and moreover, to be accepted among them, it came at a time of great importance. The message of peace is also significant because the first individual helper to both hear, and enforce, the Peacemaker's words was *Tsikonhsase*, a Haudenosaunee woman.

Before the Great Peacemaker's visit to *Tsikonhsase*, it is said that she did not know peace herself. Influenced by the forces of evil, she is said to have fed and poisoned young warriors and hunters as they passed through her lodge (North American Indian

Travelling College, 1984: 19).[32] A very wise Peacemaker was aware of this behaviour, and when he entered her home, demanded that she stop the wicked practice. He spoke to her the words of peace, righteousness and power, and when he was finished, *Tsikonhsase* is said to have accepted them. *Tsikonhsase* also agreed to enforce the Peacemaker's great message.[33] *What followed is of key importance to anyone interested in the origin of women's political roles.* "Since you are the first to accept the [Great] Law of Peace ...", the Peacemaker is said to have informed *Jikonsesah*, "... I will declare that it shall be women who shall possess the title of Chieftainships. They shall name the Chiefs." (ibid).

Haudenosaunee women are thus recognized as being fundamental to the story of peace. Their status as holders of chiefly titles dates as far back as *Kayanerenhkowa* itself. Put differently, *Tsikonhsase* was the very first "clan mother". The responsibility of establishing peace, however, should not be interpreted as women's responsibility alone. In fact, the Great Peacemaker sought the help of another helper; *Tekarihoken,* a Haudenosaunee man.

Following his visit to *Tsikonhsase,* the Great Peacemaker is said to have

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[32] It is important to note that some today do not believe *Tsikonhsase* to have been an evil woman when the Great Peacemaker approached her.

[33] In my estimation, an interpretation for which I am solely responsible as a person of mixed Anglo-Haudenosaunee heritage, it is at this point that the very first *Onkwehonwe* – an *Onkwehonwe* who happened to be female – understood that *evil is a choice*. Indeed, *evil as a choice* is something that is built into the *Kayanerenhkowa;* itself something that is principled on trust, kindness, sharing and respect (and I am in no way intending to suggest that these are solely "feminine" traits). Indeed, the principles of trust, kindness, sharing and respect ought to be key to understanding Haudensaunee social organization.

journeyed onward toward the *Kanyan'kehaka*.[34] Here he is believed that he met up with a man – *Tekarihoken.* – who ate humans. *Tekarihoken* is said to have seen the Peacemaker's reflection as he peered into the kettle in which he was boiling a human. Mistaking it for his own, and persuaded by its beauty, he is said at that time to have given up on his practice of cannibalism.[35] At that point, the Peacemaker spoke to him the words of peace, righteousness and power, and when he was finished, *Tekarihoken* is said to have accepted them. *Tekarihoken* also agreed to enforce the Peacmaker's great message. *What followed is of key importance to anyone interested in the origin of men's political responsibilities*. "[B]ecause he was the first man [to] have accepted the Great Law of Peace ...", the Peacemaker decided that "... he would make [*Tekarihoken*] the first "Sachem" in the Mohawk Nation." (ibid: 20).

That the Peacemaker chose a male and female helper – *Tsikonhsase* and *Tekarihoken* – is of critical significance to understanding the establishment of peace among the Haudenosaunee. Moreover, I want to suggest that this aspect of the story of peace is crucial to understanding the nature of women's – and men's – responsibilities.

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[34] By *Kanyan'kehaka*, I mean "The People of the Flint" or Mohawk Nation (Porter, 1998: 807, note 3).

[35] In my estimation, which is entirely interpretive of this story from the *Kayanerenhkowa,* it is at this point that an *Onkwehonwe* – *Tekarihoken* – understood *the ability to reason* (and I am not suggesting that this is a solely "masculine" trait). I believe this is significant because the *Kayanerenhkowa* itself is principled on the power to think rationally – which is implicit in the renowned (and lengthy) Haudenosaunee practice of decision making through consensus. Indeed, many Haudenosaunee believe that rational thought is one of the principles upon which traditional governance is based.

"In choosing ... two helpers ...", as Williams and Nelson (1995: 14) have explained:

> [T]he Peacemaker was consistent with latter parts of the [Great] law. *There is a duality between men and women, a balance. Men and women have different strengths.* Though the role of Jikonsaseh [sic] and the women in the making of the law is less well documented in the creation of the [Great Law], the balance she represents must be recognized [emphasis mine].[36]

Women and men are thus fundamental to the story of finding peace among the Haudenosaunee. That *Jikonsaseh* and *Tekarihoken* were chosen to help the great Peacemaker enforce his words of peace, power and righteousness embodies the invaluable nature of male and female complementarity. As Williams and Nelson describe in the above, women and men may have separate and distinct roles, strengths, and responsibilities. The duality of their strengths is also inseparably intertwined and in(ter)dependent.

To sum up, I have wanted to suggest that the principle of gender complementarity is something that is intrinsic to the story of Haudenosaunee creation, the "fire within", and the story of peace. In my view, these stories are key to investigating, *theorizing about*, and understanding women's status and Haudenosaunee social structure. I have also discussed women's influence, as well as gender relations, through this principle of balance. My selection of stories from the *Kayanerenhkowa* and elsewhere is by no means exhaustive. Rather, I have sought to illuminate based on the stories, the importance of balance and harmony as this relates to understanding the roles of women, whatever their

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[36] For further discussion of the relative invisibility of the story of *Jikonsaseh* [sic] in the scholarly literature, see Davey (1999).

relative status to men. It is based on this discussion that I would like to draw three major conclusions.

First, that the roles of men and women are unmistakably distinct. Women and men among the Haudenosaunee quite clearly held autonomous and separate responsibilities related to all aspects of life including kinship, political organization, economic relations and the division of labor. These responsibilities, as I have suggested throughout the chapter, elevated the status of Haudenosaunee women, but also, demanded unanimity and *Ka'nikonhriyo* (or "good minds") of male sachems.[37] In this regard, maintaining the balance of the universe – and this is my key point – went beyond the separate and distinct spheres. Barbara Mann (2000: 98) takes a perspective that is similar to my own:

> [W]omen farm, men hunt, but, in the final analysis, all the people are fed. In a like manner, the women hold Clan Mother Councils, just as the men hold Grand Councils, but the two interface to provide community-wide consensus. Women have their own ceremonies, rituals, vision quests…just as the men have theirs, but together, the community forms a healthy spiritual whole. Moreover, each half is always fully apprised of what the other half is doing which works to ensure that its own half fits snugly into the space left for by its gendered complement. Men's

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[37] By "good mind", I mean that which is passed on to the Haudenosaunee from the *Kayanerenhkowa*. As Jake Thomas once explained of the good mind "The Creator…gave us appreciation, love, respect and generosity. This is what you carry in your mind. When you have this type of mind, you will be a good human being and behave according to the Creator's law. You will appreciate having good health. You will carry peace in your mind, and no matter whom you meet or where you go, you will always have this in your mind…generosity is …one thing that will bring unity and a good mind. Being generous includes showing respect to another person. If I respect another person, it is because I wish to show my good feelings. This became a tradition to us" (Thomas & Boyle, 1994: 145-146).

> councils await the decisions of women's councils. Women's planting assesses the strength of men's hunting. Gendering entirely permeates Iroquoian culture. It is Twinship ... in continual, human action.

Mann's assessment of gender relations and her use of twinship to describe it is interesting. It also supports the idea that women's elevated status cannot be understood properly without understanding the simultaneous and complementary statuses of men. Balance was maintained, in other words, through the dynamic interaction between men and women in maintaining *Onkwehonwe* existence. To reiterate my earlier point: the roles of men and women are complementary in the very difference that defines them.

A second conclusion is that balance and complementarity in what Western academics have referred to as "gender" actually demands that the roles, responsibilities and energies of both men and women be present now and into the Haudenosaunee future. As Sylvia [Skonaganleh:ra] Maracle has explained on at least two occasions, there are two interpermeable halves in life – one female and the other male – and both halves have to be there to make it complete (Kane and Maracle, 1989:12, also see Anderson, 2000:173: 174). Understood in this way, the maintenance of balance and complementarity can be considered as a responsibility of both men and women. As Gerald [Taiaike] Alfred (1993: 8) has noted:

> The Creator, Sonkwaiatison[38], gave a gift to our people: awareness that our own existence as human beings is embedded in a web of life that encompasses the entire universe. But, this knowledge brings with it responsibility, and in that, we

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[38] Alfred uses the word *Sonkwaiatison* here to refer to the Creator. In coming pages, I use the word *Shonkwaya'tihson* which refers to the same thing.

> have a profound responsibility to ensure that we demonstrate respect and promote balance and harmony in all of our relationships. We are responsible for ensuring that the Creator's original balance is maintained.

The promotion of "balance and harmony in all human relationships" is therefore an all-pervasive responsibility of the Haudenosaunee stemming from the Creator's original instruction. This is most certainly true of the relationships between male and female, for as Alfred (ibid: 13-14) further suggests:

> [I]t seems there are twin responsibilities for men and women: men must acknowledge, respect, and work to help eliminate the heavy burden that women carry; and women must commit themselves to making the nation livable from within the culture. A continuing neglect of either one of these responsibilities will end the cycle of life as surely as any "environmental catastrophe" [emphasis mine].

As Alfred suggests, it is imperative that the twin responsibilities of men and women, in the final instance, be upheld.

A third and final conclusion based on the preceding discussion and analysis is that women's roles must be understood as they exist simultaneously, and in cooperation with the roles of men. This has a number of implications, particularly for the scholarly analysis that might take place about the Haudenosaunee. To be sure, political organization, and more specifically, women's political roles might more become better understood if we include some analysis about the concepts balance and complementarity that I have proposed. This does not mean dismissing women's esteemed statuses as heads of matrilineages, or as the persons responsible for – among other things – appointing and deposing chiefs. Instead, I am meaning to suggest that women are only

but one half of a more wholistic understanding of Haudenosaunee political organization and history. The influence that women exercised over their own, as well as men's councils, was unlikely to have been despotic or arbitrary in accordance with Haudenosaunee principles of peace, unanimity and consensus. It behoves us to find out more about how these sets of gender relations may have worked historically so that we might think of their incorporation today. It requires that historians take a more anti-patriarchal approach to history.

To suggest that women's roles have always existed in simultaneity, or in dialectical relationship of complementarity with men, is not an easy thing to describe, document, or otherwise theorize about. It is also stands in contrast to the notion of "gynocracy" – a concept proposed by scholars such as Paula Gunn Allen (1986: 2-3) – which is the most useful for describing and understanding women's status among the Haudenosaunee. To be sure, the structure of Haudenosaunee social organization did empower women, and that empowerment is upheld through many traditions and stories, some of which I have considered here. But women's influence is also recognized and affirmed throughout the story of *Kayanerenhkowa,* or Great Law of Peace. And based on my earlier discussion, Haudenosaunee political and social structure was not structured solely on a government of women or women as the ruling class.

Indeed, women held esteemed statutes by virtue of their connection to the earth and soil, the centrality they play in the Great Law or *Kayanerenhkowa*, and their positions as clan mothers and heads of matrilineages. Systems of government involved; moreover,

the responsibility of both women (who possessed the official titles of hereditary chieftainships and who were in the best positions as mothers to judge a young man's character and appoint them as chiefs) and men (who were responsible for deliberating on all confederate affairs while upholding the great Peacemaker's message of peace, power, and righteousness). Combined, the roles of men and women involved a balance of responsibilities which, as some of the stories and subsequent understandings seem to suggest, worked in a dialectical relationship to one another.

Conclusion

By way of summary, this chapter has surveyed the literature on women in Haudenosaunee society. In doing so, I have proposed that women held esteemed statuses in relation to their European counterparts. Women held the ability to make political decisions, which ranged from nominating, and removing men from their positions as chiefs, to influencing the decisions of the Confederate council, and also, to holding their own councils. As heads of matrilineages, women were also a determining factor where chieftainships and clan membership was concerned. Women were, moreover, able to initiate wars, negotiate the terms of peace, and decide on the fate of captives. In short, women were central to Haudenosaunee political (and social) structure.

In reviewing the literature, I have discussed the *Kayanerenhkowa* as well as other stories which make reference to women and men. Based on that discussion, I have proposed that principles of balance, harmony and respect are intrinsic to the creation

story, "fire within" and story of peace, and that these principles are key to investigating, theorizing about, and understanding women's status. In offering this as a new perspective, I have suggested that it is useful to consider how these responsibilities are dynamically interdependent with those of men. In short, I have suggested that gender complementarity is a more capable concept than is "matriarchy" or "gynocracy" for understanding Haudenosaunee society in general.

Significantly, this chapter has attempted to integrate the words of Haudenosaunee women. Whenever possible, I have used the words of women (and men) to describe the nature of women's traditional roles and responsibilities. I have, moreover, illustrated that the memory – and, in part, the practice – of these and other traditions are intact among Six Nations, an issue that I will contemplate in further detail in Chapter Five. To be sure the memory of women's responsibilities is rather remarkable given years of colonial policy which sought to transform them. In the preceding discussion, however, I have said nothing about the extent to which Haudenosaunee political organization has been maintained and, notably, reshaped by colonialism.

What happened as the *Indian Act* system started to exclude women – at least in an official sense – from both electoral and governing procedures, for example? Also, what happened to accountability to one's clan or kin group as the *Indian Act* system was imposed on the Six Nations? What happened to matrilineal descent? In Chapters Three and Five, I explore these questions in greater detail. For now, it is important to consider the social changes brought on by religious influence, as well as the impact of these

changes on women's roles through the late eighteenth and later nineteenth centuries at Grand River Territory.

Chapter Two
Political Autonomy, Religious Influence and the Transformation of Women's Status at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, 1775 - 1890

This chapter is one of two that is historical in focus. It is intended to document the history of Six Nations of the Grand River Territory by paying close attention to issues of governance, as well as the Six Nations' claim to autonomy and independence. I am concerned here with some of the historic treaties made between the British and Haudenosaunee on a nation-to-nation basis. I will consider some of the historic wampum – embroidered belts made of shells, quills or glass beads – which served to formalize or "certify" these agreements. As part of this discussion, I also address the historic complexities which shaped the social structure of an early Six Nations Reserve, including allegiances to the British, as well as Euro-Christian religious influences. I consider the social changes brought about by this influence – including the Christian and "Longhouse" religions – at Six Nations. I pay very close attention to issues of cultural continuity or cultural persistence, and I offer a reading of what these influences meant for women in particular, and the Haudenosaunee nation in general. In conclusion to the chapter, I propose that the impact of early European influence would have been different for nineteenth century Haudenosaunee women depending on their religious affiliation as either Christian or "Longhouse".

History of the Grand River Settlement, 1775-1842[39]

It was not until after the War of Independence – in the year 1784 – that the Six Nations community at Grand River began to take shape. However, the history of the Six Nations of the Grand River – Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, Cayuga and Tuscarora – begins well before the late 1700s when war broke out between the American colonies and Britain. Before this time, the Six Nations had resided south of the Great Lakes and a considerable distance from Southwestern Ontario in what is now known as the states of Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio (Johnston, 1964: xxvii - xxviii).

Prior to contact with first Europeans, the Haudenosaunee practiced horticulture and engaged in the cultivation of corn, beans and squash (Sagard-Theodat of the 1623 Recollet Order of Missionaries, quoted in Johnston, 1964: xxix, 7-11). They resided in sedentary villages, engaged in hunting and fishing, held councils, and were historically respected for their military strength and prowess (Johnston, 1964: xxix; Wallace, 1971: 367).

Women, as discussed in Chapter One, were central to kinship and political organization prior to contact. It is further believed that residence patterns were matrilocal (Johnston, 1964: 30-32, also see Chapter One). Governance among the Haudenosaunee was established through the clans, in which membership was dependent on one's mother.

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[39] The history of Six Nations of the Grand River is reviewed in greater scholarly detail than I am able to provide here by the Charles M. Johnston in *The Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River* The Champlain Society For The Government of Ontario, University of Toronto Press, 1964.

As Doxtator (1996) suggests, women quite literally enabled the clan system, and were responsible for the nomination (and deposing) of Confederacy Chiefs. In short, women were of fundamental importance to Haudenosaunee social and political structure (Johnston, 1964: xxix, 28-29, 30-31).

Prior to (and following) contact with eighteenth century Europeans, the Haudenosaunee were politically sophisticated people. According to oral tradition, the Six Nations became a Confederacy of Five Nations[40] as early as 1192[41], complete with a set of "constitutional" principles to adhere to (see North American Indian Travelling College, 1984). The Confederacy itself was governed by a council made up of fifty nominated chiefs (Johnston, 1964: xxx). Each nation had a distinct set of roles and responsibilities to follow. "[T]he Mohawks were called "the fountain of good works", the sponsors of crucial matters in the councils; the Senecas, the keepers of the "western door"; and the

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[40] It was only on 1715 that the North Carolina residing Tuscarora joined the Confederacy making them the "Six Nations" (Johnston, 1964: xxvii, also see Wright, 1993: 115).

[41] Throughout this dissertation, I refer to the year 1192 as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's date of origin. As Johansen (1995) suggests, this earlier date assigns responsibility for the founding the Confederacy to the Great Peacemaker, and is consistent with the oral tradition of the Haudenosaunee (see North American Indian Travelling College, 1984, also Chapter One). Having said that, the issue of dating is an extremely political act even though it has attracted considerable academic debate. As Simon (1983: 28) notes: "Historians and anthropologists have made estimates that range from 1450 to 1660". The date of 1450 is supported by Snow (1994: 57-60), who cites archeological evidence to substantiate his claim, as well as Tooker (1978: 418-441) who, among other things, rejects evidence that the Confederacy was formed as a consequence of European contact.

Onondagas, the firekeepers and the custodians of the wampum" (ibid: xxx). In short, the Haudenosaunee – prior to the arrival of the first Europeans – possessed elaborate political organization. They operated a form of government that was distinguished in its complexity. In Chapter Three, I contemplate this history of governance – as well as political change among the Six Nations – in greater detail.

The American War of Independence plays an important role in understanding the history of the Six Nations. The war itself demanded that the Haudenosaunee support one of two parties – American or British – and it also demanded that they decide on whether to become involved. In the case of the Six Nations, loyalties were divided (ibid: xxxiii). In the years both preceding and throughout the conflict, some of the Haudenosaunee were loyal to Britain, others campaigned for the Americans, while still others attempted neutrality (ibid).[42]

Under the influence of the Mohawk Chief *Tehayentaneken*, or Joseph Brant (1743-1807) – educated, literate, and politically astute – a considerable portion of the Six Nations were rallied to the side of the British King and remained loyal allies (Johnston, 1986: 12). When the conflict subsided in 1783, the Six Nations – under the influence of Brant – approached the British *as loyal allies* for compensation in land and the continuance of autonomy. These assurances were important to the Haudenosaunee, as no definitive provisions concerning their territorial rights were included in the Treaty of Paris

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[42] For scholarly analysis of the American Revolution, particularly the role played by the Iroquois, see Graymont (1972, 1991).

when the war ended in September, 1783 (The Six Nations, 1924: 6; *Issac et al. v. Davey et al.* (1974) 51 D.L.R. (3d) at 174).

The land upon which the Six Nations currently resides – 30 km southeast of Brantford, Ontario, Canada has been significantly diminished over time (Table A), and was originally to constitute six miles on either side of the Grand River – from its mouth to its source (Tables B & C). I address the history of land encroachments and attrition in greater detail in Chapter Three. For now it is important to establish that a sizable "six mile" portion was granted on October 25th, 1784 under the promise of Sir Frederick Haldimand, then Lieutenant Governor of what would later be called Canada (Noon, 1979: 17; Johnston, 1964: 50-51; 1986: 13).[43]

In the winter of 1784 through to the spring of 1785, an estimated 1300 Haudenosaunee journeyed from New York State to the Grand River Valley via the Niagara Peninsula (Johnston, 1964: xi). Others stayed in what would later become the United States. Of the 1300 who migrated to Grand River Territory in the late 18th century, "there were about 450 Mohawks, 380 Cayugas, 200 Onondagas, 125 Tuscaroras, 75 Senecas and a handful of loyal Oneidas" (ibid, 52). Grand River was, thus, an original

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[43] The Haldimand land grant followed the instruction provided by Haldimand himself on March 23rd, 1784 to Lieutenant Colonel John Butler to purchase land "from the Mississauga Indians – originally a northern people of Ojibwa stock who had settled in the region before the Seven Years' war – a "tract of Country ... situated between Lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron" (Johnston, 1964: xxxviii, 43). Notably, the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nations are still neighbors and friends to the Grand River Haudenosaunee.

and "multi-national" community (Doxtator, 1996).

Grand River has remained "multi-national" in its composition, and has still today been shaped by the allegiances that Brant shared with the British.[44] As one historian has suggested, these allegiances were very important – as were the sizable number of Mohawks who relocated to Six Nations. Indeed, the sizable number of Mohawks, it has been argued, led to an incorporation *and reshaping* of social institutions involving the allotment of lands (ibid: 94, 110). In Chapter Three, I consider this inclination to experiment with outside influences in greater detail. Having said that, it is important to establish that not all of the Haudenosaunee were champions of the British interest, or cause, as was indeed broadly the case at early Grand River.

In fact, many of the Senecas, Oneidas, Tuscaroras and Cayugas stayed in what is now known as Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio states. In a 1792 census prepared for what would later become the United States, it was estimated that "nearly 1700 Senecas and over 600 Oneidas had ignored the opportunity of accompanying other Indian refugees

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[44] One of my earliest recollections of being Haudenosaunee was realized in attending with relatives – through the early 1980s – the annual "Bread and Cheese Day" festivities held annually at the Six Nations reserve. The event itself dates back to 1860 when Queen Victoria "sent funds to buy bread and cheese ... to ensure that none of the Six Nations, her faithful allies, would be hungry on May 24th, her birthday" (Beaver, 1997:110-114). Years later, I would read of the "highly prized communion service presented to the Six Nations by Queen Anne" (Johnston, 1964: ixxx), and one of my siblings would marry in an Anglican church, Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks (Table F). Combined, these events – as well as the presence of those in the community who still write hand written letters to the Queen – have served to remind me of the connection my ancestors have shared with the British.

to British soil" (New York Historical Society, Henry O'Reilly Collection Papers relating to the Six Nations Indians, quoted in Johnston, 1964: xli). After the war, the focus was on securing a working agreement with American government officials to reside on tribal lands (ibid). Many Haudenosaunee believed they would have these lands secured. In New York State, however, a policy of alienating the Haudenosaunee from lands by intimidation, threats, bribery and outright fraud was frequently adopted (Wallace, 1972: 163).

The Haudenosaunee eventually negotiated three major treaties with the Americans after the Revolutionary War, including the Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1784), the Treaty of Canandaigua (1794), and the Jay Treaty (1794) (Hauptman, 1981: 3-5). Combined, the treaties were intended to end the hostility that had developed between the Haudenosaunee and American settlers (ibid); to recognize the collective and sovereign status of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (ibid), and to allow for free and unrestricted trade and border passage to the Haudenosaunee living in both Canada and the United States (ibid).[45]

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[45] The free and unrestricted trade and passage of Haudenosaunee between Canada and the United States as originally negotiated in the Jay Treaty has not always been honoured, and has attracted considerable attention and debate in recent years. As Hauptman (1981: 17) has noted, the "seizure of property as contraband, indiscriminate arrests and flagrant disregard of rules by customs and immigration officers" has been something that has confronted the Haudenosaunee who move between borders. In 2001, the matter of unrestricted border crossing was brought before the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of *Mitchell v. Minister of Natural Revenue* [2001] 1 SCR 911 where it was decided – among other things – that the Haudenosaunee (and indeed all status Indians) are liable to pay duty on goods that move between Canada and the United States. For further context, see Mitchell (1989) and Porter (1998).

At present, there are several Haudenosaunee communities in what is now called the United States, including the Allegany reservation (near modern day Salamanca, New York State), Cattaraugus (near Gowanda), Tonawanda (near Buffalo), and the historic Onondaga reservation[46] (near Syracuse, New York State) (Wallace, 1972: 4).[47] The history upon which these reservations were established stood in great contrast to the circumstances which led to the establishment of the Grand River Reserve – lands that were granted by Sir Frederick Haldimand (see Porter, 1998: 821-841).

The Haldimand land grant is an important part of the history of the Six Nations settlement (see Simon, 1983). In addition to representing that which finally brought the Six Nations to the Grand River Valley, Haldimand's Proclamation has also been thought – in both current and past times – as an indemnification of loyalty to the King's cause during the War of Independence. The grant is frequently thought to have left in place, the ongoing independent and autonomous status of the Haudenosaunee which – prior to contact – was simply taken at face-value (see The Six Nations, 1924). Put differently, the

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[46] Onondaga is regarded as a place of symbolic importance to many Haudenosaunee, as it is believed that "The Great Tree of Peace" was planted at Onondaga after the Confederacy itself accepted the *Kayanerenhkowa*, or Great Law of Peace, from The Peacemaker. Beneath this great white pine tree, the weapons of War – which are said to have caused so much warring and social destruction before the Peacemaker's arrival – are said to have been buried. As Tom Porter (see North American Travelling College, 1993: inner leaf) further explains of the tree itself: "Its branches spread out to provide the people with shelter protection and comfort. Its roots extend to the four directions welcoming others who wish to follow the Great Law of Peace".

[47] For scholarly analysis of the Haudenosaunee and the rise of New York State, see Hauptman (1999), Beauchamp (1905/1976).

Haldimand Proclamation may implicitly have placed the Haudenosaunee under British protection, but did not make them "subjects" of the British Crown.[48] In the years to follow Haldimand's grant, this understanding of an independent status was clearly reflected in the actions of Brant himself. As early as 1788, he began to grant large tracts of land to various individuals in the form of nine hundred and ninety nine-year leases (Hill, 1994).[49] He also saw that some of his friends and associates got land "not for a price, but as a gift" (Kelsay, 1984: 372). As Johnston (1964: xlii) has noted:

> [I]n 1787, a number of families, all friends or acquaintances of Brant – the Dochsteders, the Nelles ..., the Huffs ..., and the Youngs – were issued deeds by the chief clearly stipulating that their grants, to extend in length "three miles back from the [Grand] River", were to "be possessed by their recipients and their posterity forever" and, it is worth noting, were "never to be transferred to any other".

To be sure, Brant offered land deeds to people with whom he was well acquainted[50] near modern-day Brantford (originally known and Brant's Ford) and elsewhere along the Grand, based on lands which he took to have been granted to the Haudenosaunee in fee

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[48] Williams (1982: 235) has put this succinctly: "The Six Nations are a dependency of Great Britain, *not by virtue of a subjugating act of the British*, but by voluntary and sovereign act of the Six Nations in accepting the unconditional promise of the British Crown to protect the Six Nations" [emphasis added].

[49] This is true of the lease granted to one John Huff. As principal chief and agent to the Six Nations, Brant executed this lease for the nine hundred and ninety nine-year term in 1808,with an annual rent of "one pepper corn" per year (see P.A.C., Indian Affairs, Records and Correspondence of the Deputy Superintendent General, XXVII, quoted in Johnston, 1964: 109).

[50] Docksteder, Nelles and Young were known to Brant through his military pursuits alongside the British (Kelsay, 1984: 372).

simple, defined by legal academics as absolute ownership of property with no restrictions on its transfer (McKee, 1996: 47, 52-53). He acted on the assumption that the Confederacy had constituted a "distinct national community", or as Johnston (1964: xiiv) has noted, one that regarded itself as "competent to arrange as it saw fit its own relations with other sovereign states such as Great Britain and the United States". At the same time, Johnston does not detail what may have motivated Brant in making these kinds of historic decisions.

On the one hand, *Tehayentaneken* may have been interested in providing annuities to the Grand River Haudenosaunee through the leasing of lands.[51] Perhaps he undertook these transactions as a "Europeanized entrepreneur" who was interested in the instruction, "ingenuity of, and examples set by, white merchants and farmers" along the Grand River (ibid: xliii & 275-276, also Hill, 1984; Kelsay, 1984). On the other hand – though perhaps simultaneously – Brant's land transactions reflected a Confederacy who had realized that

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[51] The annuities provided to the Six Nations through leases (to the Stedman, Beasley, Wilson (later Cozens), Rousseau, Wallace, Jarvis and Canby families) are discussed in Kelsay (1984: 594-595). They are said to have totaled about 40,000 pounds in the year 1798. Hill (1984) documents the loss of some of these annuities to investment – against the consent of the Grand River Haudenosaunee – in the Grand River Navigation company during the mid-nineteenth century. "Before 1834", as he notes "most of the funds were invested in British government bonds earning three percent, a small but safe return. By 1840 Six Nations funds amounting to £25,733 had been invested in England while bonds and other securities to the amount of £7,629 had been purchased in Upper Canada. Other investments made by the Upper Canadian government on behalf of the Six Nations, such as £300 to a Brantford church fund, £600 in Cayuga Bridge stock and a large investment in the Grand River Navigation Company later proved unwise and unproductive" (ibid: 20).

their Grand River Territory – "Six Miles deep from each Side of the Grand River beginning at Lake Erie, & extending in that Proportion to the Head of the said River"[52] – *exceeded their probable needs* as an agricultural people at the end of the fur trade (The Six Nations, 1924: 10).[53] Whether the latter motivation was one held by Brant is unclear. That some of Brant's actions caused a disturbance within the Confederacy, and indeed between the Six Nations and the Crown itself, however, is for certain.

Within the Confederacy, the various deeds and grants which were undertaken and honoured by Brant in the years following the Haldimand Proclamation had for some represented an uncomfortable step away from traditional principles, specifically, as these relate to land tenure and holdings. "In pre-contact times...", as Noon (1949: 97) notes, "land was not a commodity which could be conveyed" (also see Chapter One). But in the terms set out by Brant, transactions involving the "transference of rights" and "ownership of real property" began to take shape (ibid, 97-99). So disturbing was this to some members of the Confederacy, that they became suspicious of Brant's motivations (see Johnston, 1964: xivii), and action was taken in September of 1800 by two Mohawk men – Aaron and Issac Hill – to "depose" Brant as Chief (ibid: xiiv, 54). The dealings of Brant

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[52] Taken from *Haldimand's Proclamation of October 25, 1784* (quoted in Johnston (1964: 50-51), also see Tables B and C)

[53] As Johnston (1964: xliii) notes, the late eighteenth century represented the end of an economic era characterized by the trading of furs. As he notes: "As early as 1796 the Board of Trade in London had satisfied itself that the "Fur Trade cannot now probably be carried on, to any great Extent on the East-ward of the Lakes, and it will gradually diminish in Proportion as the Country becomes cultivated and inhabited". This may have been another motive of Brant in his sale of Grand River lands.

as relates to land and real estate, thus, caused disruption in early Six Nations politics.

The British Government, and subsequently, the Crown itself also protested Brant's land dealings. In the Crown's view, Sir Frederick Haldimand did not possess the authority to dispose of properties belonging ultimately to Westminster without their final approval (ibid: xiv). Moreover, the Crown contended, the question of land and property had already been set out in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. In that early statute – dated some twenty-one years before the Haldimand grant – the British had afforded themselves ownership of all lands in the new colony, requiring that all purchases be channeled through their dominion (see Borrows, 1997: 160-161). As a portion of that Proclamation had read:

> [I]f at any Time any of the said Indians should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be Purchased only for Us in our Name, at some public Meeting or Assembly of the said Indians, to be held for that Purpose by the Governor or Commander in Chief of our Colony respectively within which they shall lie (quoted in Johnston, 1964: 70).

Accordingly, the Crown believed itself to be a final authority where the ownership, purchase and distribution of lands was concerned in the new dominion. As early as 1763, the Six Nations – and all First Nations for that matter – were viewed as wards of the Crown, a Crown that endeavoured to "protect" the Haudenosaunee from unscrupulous white settlers intent on exploiting the lands that had been held in trust for them (see Tobias, 1983). At best, the Six Nations had rights of prior occupancy. But from the British point of view, lands were neither granted in fee simple (at least in the mind of early settlers), nor were the Six Nations viewed as maintaining sovereignty (see Johnston,

1964: xiv).

Rights to the land were, rather, *usufructuary* in scope and also in character (see generally Bell & Asch, 1997: 48-49; McNeil, 1997: 147, also see *Issac et al. v. Davey et al.* (1974) 51 D.L.R. (3d), at 180). In other words, the Haudenosaunee were thought to be entitled to the use and enjoyment of the land so long as the various entitlements and arrangements did not interfere with legal ownership remaining vested in the early colonial government, and later, the Crown. Lands were to be used by Aboriginal peoples in what is now called Canada, but lands could not be owned by them – this is what is commonly referred to by legal scholars as *usufructuary* rights to the land (ibid).[54]

This position of the early British was upheld through the Grand River Valley throughout the late eighteenth century. As a representative of the Crown, as well as Haldimand's successor, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, maintained the Six Nations lands were an "estate in leasehold" and not in fee simple (Johnston, 1964: xivi). In doing so, he offered the Simcoe Deed of 1793, which is often regarded by the Canadian government to have replaced the original Haldimand grant (The Six Nations, 1924: 14). The deed as tendered made the sale and leasehold of all lands conditional upon the Crown's final approval, or as Simcoe himself had proposed:

> IT IS OUR ROYAL WILL AND PLEASURE that no transfer, alienation conveyance sale gift exchange lease property or possession shall at any time be

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[54] It is also something that has been understudied in sociological literature. More research is needed to determine the historical development of the belief in usufructuary rights among newcomers.

> made or given of the said District or Territory or any part or parcel thereof by any of the said Chiefs Warriors Women or people person or persons whatever other than among themselves ... Provided always that if at any time the said Chiefs Warriors Women and people of the said Six Nations should be inclined to dispose of and surrender their use and interest in the said District or Territory or any part thereof the same shall be purchased for Us, our Heirs and Successors at some public meeting or assembly of the Chiefs Warriors and people of the said Six Nations to be holden for that purpose by the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor or person administering Our Government in our Province of Upper Canada, IN TESTIMONY whereof, WE have caused these our Letters to be made patent and the great seal of our said Province to be hereunto affixed (Simcoe's Patent of the Grand River Lands to the Six Nations, January 14, 1793, quoted in Johnston, 1964: 74).

The Simcoe Deed thus rendered Brant's sale of Grand River lands contrary to British interest. Under its terms, the right to sell or otherwise alienate any part of the Grand River territory was strictly forbidden by the Crown (Noon, 1949: 87). To be sure, this set the way for – and was entirely consistent with – later Indian Affairs policy within the Dominion which defined "Indian Reservations" as estates in leasehold from the Crown for the sole use and benefit of "Indians" (ibid, 1949: 88). Brant himself rejected the terms of the Simcoe Deed. In his view, lands were granted in fee simple under the Haldimand grant. As late as 1924, and even still today, the Six Nations Confederacy does not see the deed as binding on them in any way (ibid, 1949: 86; Johnston, 1964: xivi, at note 8). As the Six Nations chiefs once described of the Deed itself:

> The *unaccepted* document ... has ever since [the time of Brant] remained in the custody of British or Canadian officials, and at the present time is supposed to be among the archives of the Canadian Government [emphasis mine] (The Six Nations, 1924: 14).

Although it was tendered by John Graves Simcoe, the Simcoe Deed is thus not

acknowledged by the Six Nations Confederacy. This is because the Deed itself required that all land exchanges and/or leases at Six Nations be subject to the Crown's final authority, and in this regard, was seen as a violation of early nation-to-nation agreements. Oddly, the sentiment of Simcoe as expressed in the Deed itself stands in slight contradiction to the Deed's preamble – as I will discuss shortly – and also to statements made in 1794 regarding the Six Nations Confederacy. At that time, and as Williams (1982: 159) has noted, Simcoe understood the protocol for dealing with the Six Nations on political matters, and had produced at a public meeting with them – as was typically requested by the Haudenosaunee – "a paper record of past promises". In doing so, Simcoe noted:

> This clearly shows, Brothers, that what we told you, is proved to be just and true: — *the documents, Records and Treaties between the British Governors in former times, and your wise forefathers, of which in consequence of your request, authentic copies were transmitted to you, all established the Freedom of your Nations.*
> Brothers:
> *These authentic papers prove that no King of Great Britain ever claimed absolute power or sovereignty over any of your Lands or Territories* that were not fairly purchased or bestowed by your Ancestors at Public Treaties, they likewise prove that *your natural Independency has been preserved* [emphasis added] (ibid:159).

The autonomy and independence of Britain's Iroquoian allies was thus affirmed by Simcoe in 1794. Notwithstanding Simcoe's attempt to restrict Brant's leasing and selling of land to Europeans in the Deed of 1794, Six Nations independence was also implied in the Deed's preamble, since it was noted therein that the Haudenosaunee had right to occupy the Grand River lands in accordance with the "several customs and usages

of Chiefs Warriors Women and all people of the Six Nations" (see The Six Nations, 1924: 15). While the issues of land and control as originally initiated by the Simcoe Deed are still outstanding, and a source of conflict to this day, the early land conveyances made by Brant were nonetheless – and much to his delight – "formally registered and sealed on February 5, 1798" under Simcoe's successor, Lieutenant Governor Peter Russell (Johnston, 1964: l).

Early Nation-to-Nation Agreements, and the Claim to Six Nations Independence

The Haldimand Proclamation and the Simcoe Deed are both integral to understanding the political history of Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, however, neither of these documents stands as the only agreement between the Haudenosaunee and British. Probably the most significant among the more ancient agreements established between the two parties are *Guswenqah* or Wampum (see Johnston, 1986; Williams, 1982; Haudenosaunee Confederacy, 1983: 31A: 8).

Wampum are beaded belts often embroidered from fresh water shells, porcupine quills, and in later times, glass beads. In current times, they continue to be acknowledged by the Haudenosaunee for religious, administrative, and official purposes. As Williams (1982: 158) has noted, the belts were not treaties, but were "evidence" of agreements and promises used in the same way that written records were used by the Europeans. Put differently, wampum belts were "credentials", "certificates of consolidation", or as Tehanetorens (1993: 3-4) further explains:

> Wampum guaranteed a message or a promise ... Treaties meant nothing unless they were accompanied by wampum ... No Iroquois individual or nation would think of breaking a word or treaty if the treaty was made over a sacred wampum belt. With every important treaty wampum belts were exchanged ... every law passed by the Iroquois Council was recorded with a certain string or belt of wampum.

Accordingly, wampum were of great significance to the Haudenosaunee, for they functioned to formalize agreements and, as Patricia Monture (1999: 36-37) has explained, were neither easily forgotten nor destroyed. This is especially true of the Two Row Wampum.

The Two Row Wampum dates to 1613 and is represented on a beaded belt which contains two purple beaded lines against a white backdrop (see Table D). As Williams & Nelson (1995: 3) have described, "The two row wampum ... symbolizes the river of life on which the Crown's sailing ship and the Haudenosaunee canoe both travel". The three white rows are recognized as symbolizing an everlasting "peace, friendship, and respect between the two nations" (quoted in Johnston, 1986: 32, also see Monture-Angus, 1999: 37). The metaphor of the British vessel and Confederacy canoe, moreover, functions to characterize two distinct jurisdictions which were ordained in 1664 to co-exist independently (Borrows, 1997: 164-165). As Johnston (1986: 11) has explained of these separate jurisdictions:

> The two were to co-exist as independent entities, each respecting the autonomy of the other. The two rows of purple wampum, representing the two governments, run parallel, never crossing. The two vessels travel together, as allies, but neither nation tries to steer the other's vessel. In the relationship envisioned by the Two Row Wampum, neither government has the authority to legislate for the other.

In the twenty first century, the Two Row Wampum – as a symbol of one of the earliest agreements between British and Haudenosaunee – continues to be of tremendous significance. For the Six Nations Confederacy, the Two Row Wampum establishes an historic relationship with the British Crown as an independent nation and also as allies. Moreover, the Two Row Wampum embodies the principle of separate jurisdictions. From this perspective, the actions of John Graves Simcoe – acting as a representative of the British Crown – and in seeking to restrict the Six Nations administration of land conveyances constituted a British "foot" in the Haudenosaunee canoe. In short, his actions violated the principles set out in the ancient Two Row Wampum.

Included among other agreements which are important to understanding the history of Six Nations autonomy are the Covenant Chain and Circle Covenant Wampum. The former was first established in 1664 during a meeting between the British and Haudenosaunee, and was later affirmed at the Treaty of Niagara in 1764 (see Williams, 1982). At this gathering, and as Borrows (1997: 161) has noted, "a nation to nation relationship between settler and First Nations peoples was renewed and extended, and a Covenant Chain of Friendship, a multination alliance in which no member gave up their sovereignty, was affirmed". The Chain itself – composed of metal, untarnished, and symbolic of a strong lasting union – was different from traditional wampum, but was – and is -- nevertheless afforded a similar respect. As an agreement that symbolizes the British and Haudenosaunee nations bound together in an *autonomous* and *independent* relationship, it is also regarded as a covenant requiring effort, and ongoing renewal

(Williams, 1982: 64-65). As the Haudenosaunee chiefs explained in 1793 to Sir William Johnson – then Superintendent of Indian Affairs:

> [F]or our parts, we are not used to silver, and cannot brighten the chain, which we are apprehensive begins to weaken from the rust it has contracted; we must therefore entrust you to brighten and preserve the same in order to prevent it from breaking (quoted in Haudenosaunee Confederacy, 1983: 31A:7).

To be sure, the "renewal of commitments" and the "removal of tarnish" from the Chain was taken seriously by the Haudenosaunee. As Williams (1982: 65) has noted, these acts were "not merely symbolic acts which preceded the business of meetings and councils. It was the primary purpose of many councils". That either nation would breach the Covenant's commitments – through lack of faith, or inattentiveness – was, and is, said to allow the Chain to "slip from one's grasp" (ibid: 64). In modern times, the Haudenosaunee have outwardly stated that they await the Chain's renewal (Haudenosaunee Confederacy, 1983: 31A:8).

Another wampum is the Circle Covenant Wampum, which is also fundamental to understanding Haudenosaunee assertions of independence. This wampum is a record marking the existence of the Confederacy brought into existence by the Great Peacemaker and his helpers, *Tsikonhsase* and *Tekarihoken* (see Chapter One; also see Tehanetorens, 1993: 6-7; North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 19-20). As discussed in Chapter One, the Great Peacemaker is believed to have brought a message of *Karihwiyo* (righteousness), *Skennen* (health) and *Ka'shatstenhsera* (power) to the Haudenosaunee as early as 1192 (Wallace, 1946: 15; also see North American Indian Travelling College,

1984: 18).

The Great Peacemaker further established the *Kayanerenhkowa,* Great Law or Haudenosaunee Constitution upon which traditional – or "hereditary" – governance is based (Parker, 1916/1984; North American Indian Travelling College, 1984). The *Kayanerenhkowa* is of fundamental importance to understanding traditional governance, for as Porter (1998: 817) has noted:

> [I]t sets forth a variety of mechanical rules governing the process by which member nations address confederate affairs, including the management of diplomatic and military relations with the other continental powers, trade relations with governmental and private interests and colonial relationships with client tribes.

The Circle Covenant Wampum therefore embodies the very "origin myth" from whence the Confederacy gained its authority, definition, organization and functioning as an independent sovereign confederacy of nations (see Haudenosaunee Confederacy, 1983: 31A:13). In this way, it has been referred to as "The Magna Charter of the League of the Five Nations"[55] – or as Tehanetorens (1993: 6) suggests, one of the most *sacred* of Haudenosaunee wampum.

In terms of its physical description, the Circle Covenant Wampum is a large circle – formed by two intertwining strings – from which there extend fifty additional strings of

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[55] It is important to note that the *Ska ruh reh* [Tuscarora], or "shirt wearing people" (Porter, 1998: 809 at note 8), are nowhere present in the Circle Covenant Wampum. This does not mean that they are not part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in modern times, but rather *affirms* that the Circle Covenant Wampum long precedes the year 1715 when the Tuscarora, collectively, joined the Confederacy. Conversely, it also means the Confederacy was formed well before the year 1715.

wampum flowing inward (see Table E). The fifty wampum strings are said to represent the fifty Chiefs of the Confederacy – in the order in which they would otherwise sit in Council – in particular, "fourteen Chiefs representing the Onondagas, eight representing the Senecas, nine for the Mohawks, nine for the Oneidas, and ten for the Cayugas" (Tehanetorens, 1993: 6). The longer strand of wampum represents "the seventh Onondaga Chief who bears the title of *Hononwiyendeh*, who was appointed Keeper of all of the other records of the League" (ibid, 7).

The story of the fifty strands of wampum extending inward dates from the time of the Great Peacemaker – who is said to have been sent by the Creator himself to deliver his message (see Chapter One). "When the Confederacy was formed ...", as Tehanetorens (1993: 6) has recounted, "...the Peacemaker had each of the fifty chiefs join hands in a circle and he ordained that all should be of equal rank and carry individual titles". On the inside of the circle – as symbolized by the Chief's hands bound tenaciously – all of the "clans, laws, ceremonies, ways and traditions" of the Haudenosaunee are protected; and the "security, peace and happiness" of each and every generation are said to be maintained (Haudenosaunee Confederacy, 1983: 31A:4).

Chiefs are free to leave the circle, but if they do so, they are said to *submit to the law of a foreign people* (see Tehanetorens, 1993: 7; and Johnston, 1986: 9). Further, they are said to take on title of *Tehonatonkohton,* or "they who have alienated themselves" (Tehanetorens, 1993: 7). To the extent that *Tehonatonkohton* means to forsake the very Magna Charter of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, this wampum is important to

understanding the past and present-day position of the Six Nations. The concept of *Tehonatonkohton* – and even *Guswenqah* – is, in other words, significant toward understanding the Haudenosaunee claim to independence; both from the time of Joseph Brant and onward.

But it is surely a misnomer – even historically inaccurate – to understand the early exchange, leasing or selling of lands at Six Nations, as merely a "jealous attempt to preserve or defend political autonomy" (see Johnston, 1986: 17). When these and other historical events – as I will address in Chapter Five – are understood as simple acts of "resistance" or "protest", there is a disavowal of historic treaties, the nation-to-nation relationship between British and Haudenosaunee, and most importantly, Haudenosaunee tradition. As a result, *cultural misinterpretation* ensues. If, as I have suggested, the Six Nations Confederacy has undertaken to manage its own affairs based on historic treaties, ancient custom and law that was given by the Creator, spirituality, and the tenets of the Circle Covenant, then this management is not really about "resistance" or "protest" at all. On its own terms, these acts of administration are specific to the Haudenosaunee themselves as a nation. They are affirmations of the *Kayanerenhkowa,* or Great Law, and – as expressed through the Circle Covenant itself – *affirmations of collective identity.* In Chapter Three, I will contemplate the way in which these *affirmations of collective identity* through the Circle Covenant, specifically, are simultaneously and inseparably tied to upholding and affirming the traditional statuses and roles of women. For now, it is important to recognize the importance of the Covenant to understanding Haudenosaunee

"sovereignty".[56]

It is unclear why the Six Nations are thought to have lost their independence. As the Haudenosaunee Confederacy still explains today, Six Nations autonomy has been upheld on many occasions historically onward from the time of early wampum, through the Haldimand Grant and – notwithstanding his attempt to restrict Brant's leasing and selling of land to Europeans – the later Simcoe Deed. Among the history of other dealings between British and Haudenosaunee taking place on a nation-to-nation basis are included: General Brock's address to the Six Nations as an independent people which solicited and gratefully secured allies during the War of 1812 (The Six Nations, 1924: 9); the waiving of systems of imposed taxation – under claim of British sovereignty – at Six Nations Territory (ibid: 11); Dominion Parliament's address to the Six Nations people which solicited and gratefully secured allies during World War I (ibid: 12); and most

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[56] In using the word sovereignty here, I am not suggesting it is the one that best describes the relationship between, or the agreements held with the British and Haudenosaunee. In fact, there might surely exist better words in any of the Haudenosaunee languages to better describe these relationships. See esp. Alfred (1999: 55-69) who suggests that sovereignty – is "an exclusionary concept rooted in an adversarial and coercive Western notion of power". It is therefore, he says, an "inappropriate" and "self-defeating" concept for the Haudenosaunee to be using because "so long as sovereignty remains the goal of indigenous politics ... Native communities will occupy a dependent and reactionary position relative to the state" (ibid, 59). As Alfred (ibid, 59) further adds "Acceptance of 'Aboriginal rights' in the context of state sovereignty represents the culmination of white society's efforts to assimilate indigenous peoples". I use quotation marks surrounding "sovereignty" here to highlight Alfred's contribution, and also, to indicate my intention of finding better ways of explaining the relationship that exists between the British and Haudenosaunee – perhaps by investigating the word *Tewatathawi,* which translates as, "we carry ourselves" (Cannon, forthcoming).

importantly, 140 years of governance – from 1784 to 1924 – when the Six Nations "administered all their internal and domestic concerns according to their own customs, and on the foundation of their own constitution" (ibid: 11). According to the Confederacy itself, it is – in short – unclear when the Six Nations lost its independence. As the Six Nations Chiefs once put it:

> The only process known to international law whereby an independent people may yield their sovereignty is either by defeat in war or voluntary abandonment of it formally evidenced. The Grand River people have never yielded their sovereignty by any formal abandonment of it, and they have never been conquered in war by any power on earth of which there is either record or tradition. *They are by right a sovereign and independent Nation or State.* They have never concluded any treaty with Canada, *nor have they ever agreed to accept the Dominion of Canada in place of Great Britain* as the party responsible under the British obligation to protect them (The Six Nations, 1924: 23, emphasis in original).

Accordingly, the Six Nations Confederacy does not see itself as having ceded "sovereignty", even if, and however often it – as Williams (1982: 202) has noted – found itself "dealing more and more with an Indian Department that was acting as a colonial overlord, [and] not an intermediary between sovereigns". As Williams (1982: 235) continues:

> The Six Nations are a dependency of Great Britain, *not by virtue of a subjugating act of the British, but by voluntary and sovereign act of the Six Nations in accepting the unconditional promise of the British Crown to protect the Six Nations*. That promise applies as against all enemies and all encroachments. The Six Nations remain a people politically sovereign and independent in their right as against Great Britain and her Dominion of Canada and the world outside the [sic] administer over their own domestic concerns, with the special right under the Covenant of the League of Nations to call the Government of Great Britain to account, through friendly members of the League, that the League may enforce respect for these treaty obligations [emphasis mine].

In Chapter Four, I will revisit how courts of justice have addressed the challenges posed by the Confederacy, especially the motivation behind the cases brought before them. For now, it is enough to note the lines of reasoning as put forth by the Crown with respect to the status of Six Nations independence. The Six Nations are regarded as having been "invited" to settle on the Grand River Tract under the British monarch's *protection* (see *Logan v. Styres* [1959] 20 D.L.R. (2d), at 422), and as such, are said to have surrendered their independence during those times. As Mr. Justice King of the Ontario High Court put the matter in 1959:

> In my opinion, those of the Six Nations Indians so settling on such lands, together with their posterity, by accepting the protection of the Crown then owed allegiance to the Crown and thus became subjects of the Crown (*Logan v. Styres* [1959] 20 D.L.R. (2d), at 422).

Thus, the belief that the Six Nations became subjects of the Crown through their acceptance of British protection in the new Dominion of Canada was upheld in 1959. This idea, as officially proposed by Justice King, is entirely consistent with the judgement of another court in the 1970s. As Justice Arnup put the matter in *Issac et al. v. Davey et al.* ([1974] 51 D.L.R. (3d)), the powers of Parliament to legislate over Indians in relation to lands reserved for them was granted under head 24 of s.91 of the *British North America Act.* In short, courts have made a series of judgements on the loss of Haudenosaunee independence at Grand River. Each of these judgements attests to differences in historical interpretation as relates to the early agreements made between the

British and Haudenosaunee, governance and history itself.[57] If anything, the Six Nations might be said today to be dealing with the ghost of Britain, and maybe even Brant himself – a man most notably interested in the British example.

British Allegiances, Religious Influence and Early Social Change at Six Nations.

Joseph Brant played a key role in settling the Haudenosaunee along the banks of the Grand River. He also acted as a significant negotiator with early British officials such as Haldimand and Simcoe. In doing so, Brant was a man of political intelligence and strong character. He was also educated. At the sponsorship of Sir William Johnson – Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the late eighteenth century – he attended Moor's Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut (see Stone, 1838). In bridging the worlds of British and Mohawk, he was fluent in several of the Haudenosaunee languages as well as English and – likely the result of his powers of persuasion – engaged the Grand River Haudenosaunee as faithful and valuable allies of the British.[58] Joseph Brant was also a devoted Anglican (Wallace, 1972: 202; also see Bonham, 1929; Stone, 1838), and a number of events mark his commitment to furthering Christian conversions among the

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[57] The precise meaning of treaties, covenants and other agreements made between the Haudenosaunee at Grand River and Britain requires further scholarly analysis. Further research is also required on both Haudenosaunee and British interpretations, cultural and ontological understandings of power and sovereignty as relates to these early agreements as well.

[58] For a detailed biography of Joseph Brant which far exceeds that of Stone (1838), see Isabel Thompson Kelsay's *Joseph Brant, 1743-1807, Man of Two Worlds* New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984.

Grand River Haudenosaunee.

In 1784, for example, Brant persuaded an agreeable Frederick Haldimand to arrange for the construction of a Church at Grand River. The Church of St. Paul (known today as Her Majesty's Royal Chapel of the Mohawks, Table F) was constructed the following year by Brant's friends, John Smith and John Thomas, complete with "a highly prized communion service presented to the Six Nations by Queen Anne" (Johnston, 1964: ixxx).

In 1787, Brant further "helped to complete a new edition of the Mohawk Prayer Book, which included the chief's own translation of the Gospel of St. Mark" (Wallace, 1972: 202; Johnston, 1994: 174). In 1791, he wrote the Reverend Samuel Kirkland – a former schoolmate and Presbyterian missionary among the Oneidas in the Mohawk Valley – anxious to accelerate the cultural "progress" of the people at Grand River in the promotion of greater "civilization" (Brant to the Rev. Samuel Kirkland, letter quoted in Johnston, 1964: 269-270). Six years later, Brant also wrote to Sir William Johnson noting his desire for a resident clergyman which would be "highly promotive of morality and the Christian Virtues among our people" (Brant to Johnson, 15 December 1797, letter quoted in Johnston, 1964: 238).

In short, Brant took numerous steps toward the installation of Christianity among the Grand River Haudenosaunee. With that in mind – and to return to an earlier point – it is not totally unreasonable to assume that Brant was indeed interested in the "ingenuity of, and examples set by, white merchants and farmers" at Grand River (Johnston, 1964:

xliii). As such, this may have been a motive in his issuing of rough land titles to non-Natives in the 1780s.

Beyond its precise history, Euro-Christian influence was not at all lost upon the Six Nations, many of the members of which had been professed Christians even before their migration to the Grand River (ibid, 1964: lxxix, 309). By 1827, The New England Company – a non-sectarian Protestant missionary organization – had entrenched itself in Upper Canada, assigning the Reverend Robert Luggar as the Grand River's first resident missionary (see ibid: lxxxv-lxxxvi, 256-258, also see Graham, 1997: 7, 15, 22-23, 42, 44-46). In 1831 – some twenty four years after Joseph Brant's death – the Reverend Abraham Nelles was also assigned as a resident missionary to the Mohawk Chapel (Johnston, 1964: 256-258). Together, these events fostered further conversions among the Grand River people to the Anglican Church – which as Sally Weaver (1994: 197) has suggested – became "the most powerful Christian denomination on the reserve, with a larger following than [that of] the Baptists and the Methodists combined".

In addition to furthering conversion efforts, the work of Robert Luggar is also significant in terms of early education movements at Grand River. "During the ten years in which he worked among the Indians...", as Johnston (1964: lxxxv-lxxxvi) notes,

> [H]e planned the construction of no fewer than four schools for the Mohawks and their confederates. According to the map which he compiled early in 1828 two schools were built directly east of Brant's Ford, the first serving the Oneidas and Cayugas and the second the Mohawks, later known as the Mohawk Institute.

The Mohawk Institute was formally established in 1829 (ibid: 257; also see Table G).[59] Though it was not the first school established for the Six Nations at Grand River, it was nonetheless a success among the missionaries, and was favourable among Indian policy makers of the time (see Miller, 1996: 73). In 1830, rooms were set up to teach boys carpentry, shoemaking, and mechanics (ibid.). The following year, The New England Company appointed a full-time principal, and in 1833, "residential facilities for ten boys and ten girls were provided" (ibid.).

By the late 1830s, the Mohawk Institute was functioning as a fully developed "residential school" (ibid.).[60] Significantly – and a consideration of which I will address shortly – boys received training in carpentry and other trades, and girls, instruction in sewing and general housekeeping (ibid, 1996: 73, also see Graham, 1997: 18-21). In short, Luggar's efforts at Grand River were effective, and were, according to one John Richards (commissioned to assess the province's land granting system in 1830) an

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[59] The Mohawk Institute remained fully operational as a Native residential school until 1970 marking a 141 year presence among the Six Nations at Grand River. For a scholarly and detailed analysis of "The Mush Hole" – a reference to the dietary staple of oatmeal which was served to children (including my Grandmother) at the Mohawk Institute – see Elizabeth Graham's *The Mush Hole: Life at Two Indian Residential Schools* Waterloo, Ontario: Heffle Publishing (1997).

[60] I place into quotation marks the word residential schools because it is necessary to learn more about these types of institutions as they existed across Canada, looking at their similarities (and differences), especially surrounding matters of denominational influence, focus, objectives, histories of exploitation, and so on. This kind of work might best include oral history, enabling the voices of Aboriginal people who attended these institutions. For scholarly analysis of residential schools, see Haig-Brown, 1988; Knockwood, 1992; and Miller, 1996.

obvious success (Spragge, quoted in Johnston, 1964: lxxvi). The commentary of Richards, however, stood in some contrast to the observations of other religious officials of the time.

The Reverend George Ryerson – brother to the noted methodist leader, Reverend Egerton Ryerson (Johnston, 1964: 250 at note 20) – for example, had made a "comment on the state of religion" among the Grand River Haudenosaunee in 1826. In a letter to Sir Peregrine Maitland – Lieutenant Governor of Ontario from 1818 to 1828 (ibid; 1964: 66 at note 41) – he suggested that "although the Indians were attentive enough in a missionary's presence they seemed incapable of comprehending the real meaning of Christianity" (ibid, 1964: lxxxvi). In doing so, he spoke of the difference between the name and religion of Christ (ibid, 1964: 251). He also spoke of differential patterns of Christian conversions at Six Nations Territory noting that both the Onondagas and Tuscaroras were "chiefly heathens" uninterested in "Christian instruction" (ibid,1964: 251).

His latter observations were reiterated by Reverend John West – an Anglican clergyman appointed in 1825 to survey the condition of the Indians at Grand River (ibid, 1964: 252 at note 22). In West's description of both religion and education among the Six Nations, he noted that the Mohawks, and Oneidas were professed Christians, while the Cayugas, Onondagas and Senecas were "heathens" (ibid, 1964: 253). Christian conversions were, thus, not of uniform consistency at Six Nations. To be sure, this was the result of the teachings of the Seneca prophet, *Skanyatariyo* (1735-1815), or Handsome

Lake, who had been said – with some concern among religious officials at Six Nations in the early 1800s – to have been kindling "heathenish superstition" as well as "modifying" and "emasculating Christian teachings" (ibid, 1964: lxxxii).[61]

Skanyatariyo, or Handsome Lake was born in 1735 at Burnt House, Seneca Nation, along the Alleghany River "a few miles below the NewYork-Pennsylvania line" (Deardorff, 1951: 81, Parker, 1912/1990: 9; also see North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 67). He was the half brother of *Gayentwageh,* or Cornplanter, the celebrated Seneca chief with whom he shared a common Dutch father by the name of John Abeel (Deardorff, 1951: 82; Johnston, 1964: 242 at note 11; Parker, 1912/1990: 9).

In 1800, *Skanyatariyo* is said to have suffered a prolonged illness due to alcohol, during which time he had a series of prophetic visions (Thomas, 1994: 23; Wallace, 1972: 239-240; North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 69-69). When *Skanyatariyo* finally awoke in the presence of his brother and nephew, he is said to have described his vision, written down at the time by the Quakers who resided at Burnt House, and passed on orally by the Haudenosaunee themselves (see Wallace, 1972: 241). He reported several revelations – later assumed to have been relayed to him through four messengers by *Shonkwaya'tihson*, or the Creator himself – and called upon the Haudenosaunee to return to ancient ancestral customs (Johnston, 1964: 242 at note 11).

His prophetic revelations also contained a series of moral exhortations believed to

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[61] Also see the letters of the Reverend Samuel Kirkland and Earl Thomas Douglas Selkirk as quoted in Johnston (1964: 242-243).

lead to a "good life". Moreover, he warned of the four greatest evils: *Ohneka* (Alcohol), *Yakotkon* (Witchcraft), *Ononwer* (Love Medicine), and *Yewiratontha* (Abortion) (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 73-74). Combined, Handsome Lake's prophetic visions formulated a complex "moral code" as it is commonly considered among academics (see Parker 1912/1990).[62] *Gaiwi'yo*[63], or "Good Message" – as it is known among the Haudenosaunee – became the basis of the "new religion", commonly referred to as the "Longhouse Religion" (Parker 1912/1990: 5), or less favourably, the "Longhouse Cults" (Johnston, 1964: 242 at note 11).

Handsome Lake died at Onondaga[64], a Haudenosaunee community near what is now called Nedrow, New York state, on August 10, 1815 (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984:101).[65] His *Karihwiyo,* or "Good Message", however, lived on.

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[62] It is important to note that there is no one single version of the Handsome Lake's *Gaiwi'yo,* or "Good Message" (Deardorff, 1951: 99), but the body of moral exhortations, "dicta, anecdotes, and laws" (Shimony, 1961/1994: 192) which make up this complex "Code" can be found – written and translated – in Arthur C. Parker, *The Code of Handsome Lake* (1912/1990), Chief Jacob Thomas with Terry Boyle *Teachings from the Longhouse* (1994: 21-124), and North American Indian Travelling College, *Traditional Teachings* (1984: 63-101).

[63] The word *Gaiwi'yo* is used by Deardorff (1951: 99) to refer to Handsome Lake's "Good Message". It is common to the Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca languages. Henceforth, I use the Mohawk word *Karihwiyo* which is Mohawk for "Good Message". I thank David Kanatawakhon for this instruction.

[64] That Handsome Lake died at Onondaga made this place even more important for the Haudenosaunee, especially considering its symbolic importance in terms of the "Great Tree of Peace" discussed in an earlier footnote (Porter, 1993: inner leaf).

[65] This stands incongruous to Deardorff (1951: 97) who notes Tonawanda – a Seneca community west of what is now called Basom, New York State – as the place of

According to Parker (1912/1990: 19), Handsome Lake – well before his death – taught one "Owen Blacksnake and his grandson John Johnson". Blacksnake then taught it to one "Henry Stevens", who in turn instructed "Edward Cornplanter", who recited the code as it was transcribed by the anthropologist Arthur C. Parker in 1903 (ibid.). Notably, there is sometimes said to have been a period of twenty five years – from 1815 until 1840 – that the code went unrecited (see Deardorff, 1951: 97; also see Shimony, 1961/1994: 192 at note 16).

Having said that, the diary of Earl Thomas Douglas Selkirk, who spoke of "a sect arising among the Heathen Iroquois", confirms that *Karihwiyo* reached the Grand River in Canada as early as 1803 (see esp. Selkirk diary excerpt, quoted in Johnston, 1964: 242-243). Since that time, the *Karihwiyo* has been passed through succeeding generations of Longhouse adherents at Six Nations through the great "Chiefs' Conventions" which, as Shimony noted in her *Conservatism Among the Iroquois at the Grand River Reserve* , serves a variety of purposes, including the recitation of a story which "shows respect to Handsome Lake and the Creator and also ... allows the people a chance to hear the sacred words" (ibid: 194-203).

The *Karihwiyo,* or "Good Message" is likely to have had a significant impact on an early Grand River Haudenosaunee. Its arrival was timely, in fact, in that it coincided

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Handsome Lake's death. Deardorff does, however, for her part, outline the history of Handsome Lake's undertakings from 1800 until 1815 (the time of his death), in her "The Religion of Handsome Lake: Its Origin and Development" (see esp. pgs. 93-97).

with changes in subsistence activities during the mid-eighteenth to early-nineteenth centuries, as well as early Euro-Christianity that was intent on fashioning productive members of an emerging agricultural economy. In order to appreciate the importance of *Karihwiyo* in this regard, it is necessary to revisit Grand River's transitional economy.

Prior to the fur trade, and their exodus to the Grand River, the division of labour among the Haudenosaunee may have resembled that of some horticultural societies: men were responsible for hunting and external political dealings "beyond the wood's edge"; women for the appointment of hereditary chiefs and the care of gardens. Even before their relocation to the banks of the Grand River, however, these traditional patterns were somewhat refashioned, the result of a changing economy.

Correspondence with Indian Affairs and other proceedings, for example, are replete with comments on "the extensive range of hunting we enjoyed before the war", and the end to an "abundance of skins to furnish [our] families with clothing" ("Proceedings of Six Nations at Onondaga, 9 November 1806", quoted in Johnston, 1964: 275). Brant, as mentioned, was surely aware of these and other economic transformations when – in making early land grants to white settlers – he suggested the desire to have them instruct, through example, the Haudenosaunee in the practices of husbandry and farming (also see "A Six Nations' Council at Fort George, October 8, 1803", quoted in Johnston, 1964: esp. 105). In short, and as Johnston (1964: xliii) has noted, the Haudenosaunee were well aware of economic change, and plausibly, the need to adapt to this impending transition along the banks of the Grand River in an early nineteenth

century. But this is a history that has yet to be written.

The teachings of Handsome Lake addressed the economic changes taking place among the Haudenosaunee during the early nineteenth century. Indeed, *Skanyatariyo* himself was aware of a transitional economy, and this is reflected in his contemplations on the utility of agriculture as it was practiced among his non-Native "brethren". As Handsome Lake is said to have expressed to the Haudenosaunee, in Parker's 1903 translation of *Karihwiyo*:

> Three things that our younger brethren (the white people) do are right to follow. Now the first, The White man works on a tract of cultivated ground and harvests food for his family. So if he should die they still have the ground for help. If any of your people have cultivated ground let them not be proud on that account. If one is proud there is sin within him but if there be no pride there is no sin. Now the Second thing. It is the way a white man builds a house. He builds one warm and fine appearing so if he dies the family has the house for help. Whoso among you does this does right, always providing there is no pride. If there is pride it is evil but if there is none it is well. Now the third. The White man keeps horses and cattle. Now there is no evil in this for they are a help to his family. So if he dies his family has the stock for help. Now all this is right if there is no pride. No evil will follow this practice if the animals are well fed, treated kindly and not overworked. Tell this to your people (Parker, 1912/1990: 38).

The *Karihwiyo,* as represented here by Parker, could be interpreted as having championed the practice of agriculture as it was practiced among non-Natives, or much more likely, the Quakers. It is widely acknowledged, for example, that the five Quaker "society of friends" – Joshua Sharples, John Pierce, Henry Simmons Jr., Halliday Jackson and Joel Swayne – who came to live among the Seneca in Handsome Lake's community of Burnt House, "urged Cornplanter of the necessity for teaching his people to farm with the plow, and to keep domestic animals (see Deardorff, 1951: 85, 94). It has also been

acknowledged that even "before Handsome Lake's advent as a prophet, the [Seneca] had agreed to see what the men could do with the plow" (ibid, 1951: 94). As such, it is reasonable to assume that the Burnt House Seneca were dealing with similar, though different, economic changes as were the Six Nations at Grand River, and that Handsome Lake's message simply embodied those changes.

Among the social structural changes that were most significant, as mentioned, were changes in the mode of subsistence, and perhaps most importantly, kinship organization. To be sure, kinship organization underwent significant restructuring during the mid-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Scholarly research into the transformation of kinship patterns at Six Nations through the early-nineteenth century is shamefully limited (but see Doxtator, 1996), but one might logically consider how some of the Haudenosaunee at Six Nations – possibly more commonly among the Christian converts – were adapting to plots of lands designated for individual families and their descendants (see "Proceedings of Six Nations Council at the Mohawk Village, 5 October 1829", and "Maitland to Lord Bathurst, 29 November 1821", quoted in Johnson, 1964: 294-295, 288-290).

It is possible, in other words, that some of the Haudenosaunee at early nineteenth century Grand River were becoming accustomed to a nuclear style family, what sociologists typically consider to be a type of family made up only of parents and their children (also see Weaver, 1994: 185). This stands in some contrast to a complex system of kinship organization made up of moieties, clans, lineages, and so on (see Landstreet,

2003). I am not suggesting that families made up only of parents and their children did not ever exist among the Haudenosaunee, but rather, that kinship organization was being transformed at nineteenth-century Grand River. As Doxtator (1996: 138-139) has documented:

> By 1800 the Rotinonhsyonni were no longer living in multi-family longhouses. The last of the longhouses among the Seneca, Cayuga and Onondaga had been destroyed in raids during the Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century. Throughout the nineteenth century, Rotinonhsyonni people occupied small individual cabins, scattered along a river or a waterfront or along township concessions [footnote] ... By the first quarter of the nineteenth century at Six Nations, the Rotinonhsyonni people replaced the string of loosely nucleated "nation" villages with even more scattered settlement pattern. The Mohawk village at Six Nations, an early center for Rotinonhsyonni and Euro-North American travels, was by 1839 largely depopulated with "half a dozen miserable huts scattered without any order ...". The Mohawk village was abandoned due to scarcity of firewood and the quality of the surrounding land for farms [footnote]. For most of the nineteenth century at Six Nations most people lived on scattered farms in small log cabins.

As Doxtator suggests, the family underwent significant transitions in ways that have been only marginally documented in the literature dealing with nineteenth century Grand River. This not only makes her work an invaluable contribution to the history of women's status and gender relations at Six Nations, it also makes it key to understanding social change where social structure, residence patterns, kinship organization, and the clan system are concerned.

Skanyatariyo, for his part, has been said to have been very much concerned with the "fragility" of the families as these had been emerging among the Haudenosaunee since the decline of the fur trade (Wallace, 1971). As Wallace (ibid.: 372) has noted, the

Karihwiyo contains several moral exhortations which were concerned with stabilizing the nuclear family, and "protecting the husband wife relationship against abrasive events" (also see Shoemaker, 1991: 329). As Wallace (ibid.) also maintained, *Skanyatariyo* advocated the sanctity of marriage, and he condemned the drunken father, the gossiping woman, the promiscuous husband, the unjust punishment of children, as well as quarrelling between husband and wife. According to Wallace (ibid.), the *Karihwiyo* also made a series of admonitions about the proper social and economic roles of women, and on his reading, suggested that:

> A woman should be a good housewife: generous, serving food to visitors and neighbour's children, never a petty thief, always helping the orphans of the community, and avoiding gossip. A man should "harvest food for his family", build a good house, and keep horses and cattle: he should not be boastful and vain of his appearance or strength; he should be respectful of his father.

Wallace's interpretation of *Karihwiyo* is interesting. In fact, I would like to suggest that it contains useful insights into the changes brought on by economic change where gender relations and changing views about men's and women's roles are concerned. Gender relations and kinship organization were likely to have been transformed throughout Handsome Lake's life on the basis of social and economic change, and his words – as represented by Wallace – might reflect those changes. In future research, it will be necessary to look at this question in greater detail.

Further research is also required to determine how the *Karihwiyo* was received and finally accepted at the Six Nations of Grand River Territory. It is reasonable to assume that not everyone at Grand River would have accepted the teachings of

Handsome Lake. As Parker (1912/1990: 13) himself noted:

> Handsome Lake lived to see his people divided into two factions, one that clung to the old order and one that followed him. After his death the older order gradually faded out of existence, either coming over to the New Religion or embracing Christianity.

The "old order" is never explained by Parker, though it may well have been composed of those who were uneasy about *Skanyatariyo's* Quaker connection. As Deardorff (1951: 81) has noted "The Good Message was born of a miscegenation of Quaker with old Seneca stock".[66] Handsome Lake, in other words, "propounded a doctrine taken largely from the existing body of Iroquoian religion, which he had reinterpreted and syncretized with the Christian, and particularly Quaker, teachings familiar to his community" (Shimony, 1961/1994: 192).[67] This "miscegenation of Quaker and Seneca" may not have sat well with some people who interpreted his prescriptions on the "new roles" of men and women as standing in cultural contrast to the responsibilities of men and women in an earlier economy (Chapter One, also see Deardorff, 1951: 94). Having said that, one thing is far more certain about the *Karihwiyo* itself: it was ultimately accepted among a non-

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[66] Parker (1912/1990: 13) maintains a similar line of reasoning to Deardorff; as he put it "It is said that he learned his ideas of morality from his nephew, Henry Obail (Abeal), who had been at school in Philadelphia. Henry, it is said, took him up in the mountains and explained the Christian bible to him, thus giving him the idea of devising *Karihwiyo.*

[67] The precise influence of Quakerism on *Skanyatariyo's* "Good Message", including the features that made it distinct from other Christian teachings is an area of research that requires further research (but see Lois Barton *A Quaker Promise Kept: Philadelphia Friend's Work with the Allegany Senecas, 1795 - 1960.* Oregon: Spencer Butte Press, 1990).

Christian aggregate of Haudenosaunee at Grand River, and is currently being practiced by modern day adherents.[68]

If there was initial scepticism of the "new religion" at Grand River, it was ultimately suspended among those who accepted the original prescriptions of Handsome Lake. This is most probably because, as Shimony has noted (1961/1994: 46), as well as Doxtator (1996: 254 & 276 at note 134), the "new religion" offered a complete "worship package" which – in the final analysis – left room for the incorporation of the matrilineal aspect of clans, the original ceremonies, and Confederacy autonomy (also see Weaver, 1994: 197).[69] As mentioned, Handsome Lake, in fact, called on the Haudenosaunee people to return to ancient Indian customs. In all likelihood, then, the acceptance of Handsome Lake's code facilitated an affirmation of those collective identities that were already resisting Euro-Christian influence at nineteenth century Grand River. In short, the acceptance of *Karihwiyo* was seen as enabling a degree of cultural continuity as relates to matrilineal kinship organization, the custom of women selecting hereditary chiefs, and

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[68] It is important to note that *Handsome Lake is revered as a prophet and not worshipped as a god.* As Parker (1912/1990: 13) has cited of Chief Cornplanter, an early adherent of the "new religion": "Ganiodaiio ... made no divine claims, he did not pose as infallible nor even truly virtuous. He merely proclaimed the Gai'wiio' and that is what we follow, not him. We do not worship him, we worship one great Creator. We honor and revere our prophet and leader, we revere the four messengers who watch over us – but the Creator alone do we worship."

[69] As Doxtator (ibid: 10) explains "Handsome Lake's code ... and Six Nations ... versions of Christianity all had one thing in common. They all constituted pragmatic solutions to the revolutionary ecological, spatial, extra-political, and economic changes of the nineteenth century".

women's role in political decision making (see Chapter One).

Wallace's theory of *Karihwiyo* is important where women's status and the transformation of gender relations at Grand River is concerned. The strength of Wallace's argument lies in the realization that *Skanyatariyo* – as a prophet – was not explicitly concerned with matrilineal descent or matrilocal residence patterns as these were believed to have been common among the Haudenosaunee prior to contact. To that end, the *Karihwiyo* – as a historic text – ought to be considered as a strong testimony to the changes taking place as relates to women's status among the Haudenosaunee during the early nineteenth century.

It is unlikely, however, that the *Karihwiyo* contributed blindly to the stabilization of nuclear style families through its moral admonitions about the proper productive roles of men and women in an emerging agricultural economy. It is also unlikely that the *Karihwiyo* buttressed a declining matrilineal and matrilocal social structure among the entire community at Grand River. In fact, I would suggest the complete opposite: the "new religion" never outwardly dismissed women's traditional status at all, and quite likely, it represented a place where a non-Christian aggregate at Grand River was able to maintain women's traditional status as given to them in the stories of creation and *Kayanerenhkowa* (see Doxtator, 1996; Chapter One).

Put differently, the "new religion" is of enormous significance to understanding the maintenance of women's traditional statuses at early nineteenth century Six Nations, as well as adaptation to Euro-Christian influence itself. In sum, one of the major

consequences of Handsome Lake's code is that it created a following of people who stood clearly apart from the Christian constituency at Grand River.

Very little has been written on the number of Christian and Longhouse adherents at Six Nations in the early nineteenth century. Doxtator (1996: 276 at note 134), however, notes that "[I]n the 1840s the Mohawks, Tuscaroras, Oneidas were reported to be "entirely Christians" while among the Senecas "not so many as half" were Christians and the Cayugas were not Christian at all." Weaver (1972: 16) also noted that: "By 1889, according to the information in the Indian Superintendents annual report, 63.98 per cent of the population or 3,384 was Christian, 20.21 per cent Longhouse, and 15.78 per cent of unknown affiliation".

For their part, the Christians at Six Nations had been undergoing a very real transition of their own during the early to mid-nineteenth century. Together with Longhouse adherents, they had endured the consolidation of the original Six Nations Territory into one continuous tract in 1841, and subsequently, settlement on a new "reservation" which consisted of 22 000 hectares in 1847 (see Weaver, 1994: 183; Johnston, 1994: 179). From 1830, they had also taken up farming and agricultural activities along the Grand River, and as early as 1842, were noted as being successful in their endeavours.[70] "They Depend almost entirely upon Agriculture for their

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[70] Doxtator (ibid: 125) suggests that the Mohawks were quite successful at agricultural pursuits, noting that "eighteenth century settlement innovations such as the Mohawk permanent village and the shift among all Rotinonhsyonni to smaller cabin-sized dwellings helped to direct nineteenth century responses to decrease in land bases".

subsistence...", as it was put in one report, "...and seldom resort to hunting and fishing for supply of food, although many of them indulge in these sports for various periods, extending from a fortnight to three Months, towards the close of the year" ("The Past and Present Condition of the Six Nations, 1842", quoted in Johnston, 1964: 308). As the same report continued:

> The improvement among the Christian Indians has been very perceptible. They frequently express the sense which they entertain of the benefits arising from their change, and their disgust at the Heathen Ceremonies in which they once delighted. Among the evidence of their desire for advancement is their attention to religious Instruction and divine Worship, and their eagerness to obtain admission for their Children into the boarding school of the New England Company at the Mohawk Village (ibid: 310).

The Mohawk Institute thus continued to play a significant role in the installation of Christianity among some of the Haudenosaunee at Six Nations during the mid-nineteenth century. As an institution, the school itself played a critical role in preparing the Christians to adapt to a new mode of production – including that of agriculture in the early 1800s – and in creating Haudenosaunee subjects who were loyal to both God and the British Crown. Of even greater significance to the Haudenosaunee as a Nation, the school played a role in transforming gender relations, as well as women's status particularly among the people whose population far exceeded that of Longhouse and other unknown affiliates at Six Nations (see supra note 19).

The New England Company, as discussed, was a non-sectarian Protestant missionary organization which, in its capacity as a religious institution, was very much intent on socializing the Haudenosaunee away from more traditional economic and

religious pursuits. As one official noted generally of the Six Nations in 1832:

> [M]any by steady progress in acquiring knowledge, and in managing their farms &c afford sufficient evidence of their capacity to be weaned from the dissolute habits of the most dissolute of all human beings, a half reclaimed savage. Too many, however, of these poor creatures still roam about, ignorant and idle, seldom indeed injuring others, save in a moment of infrenzied intoxication, but utterly useless. And unprofitable to the community and to themselves ... (see "Religion and Education in the Mohawk Village, 1832", quoted in Johnston, 1964: 259).

The endeavour toward earlier hunting and gathering pursuits was thus revealed by one religious official of the time as dissolute. It is simply assumed, in other words, that farming and other trades as well as Christian beliefs – as were being taught at the Mohawk Institute – were far superior to other modes of subsistence and spiritual convictions. Thus, the elimination of earlier economic and cultural activities as practiced by the Haudenosaunee was being actively promoted in favour of institutionalizing European cultural conformity at mid-nineteenth century Grand River. Historically, these Eurocentric, assimilationist efforts had a simultaneous impact on Haudenosaunee women that is far too often overlooked in the literature. I now turn to a closer examination of this matter.

The Schooling of Gender Relations

The Mohawk Institute, as discussed, was very much intent on providing students with skills that would make them either self-sufficient or at least employable as tradesmen or domestics (Graham, 1997: 18-21). As part of this endeavour, the school made some

fundamental distinctions – as mentioned – between masculine and feminine roles. School officials, in fact, presupposed that Six Nations men would learn agricultural and other skills; and women, domestic talents (ibid). Without a doubt, this was of crucial significance to transforming gender relations at Grand River. In having said that, it is also important to contemplate more closely the historic record.

It would be historically inaccurate to propose that the Haudenosaunee did not know a gendered division of labour prior to contact with the First Europeans. In pre-contact society, as discussed, women tended to gardens and other household duties while men hunted and dealt with affairs "beyond the wood's edge". Women also held significant social and political influence which derived from the matrilineal clan organization of their society (Chapter One). Even before the advent of the Mohawk Institute and their exodus to the Grand River, this division of labour was unlikely to have been transformed that radically by the fur trade. Though men would have been largely absent in their hunt for furs while women were tied more closely to their fields during this time (Richards, 1957/1990), the roles of men and women may have remained as complementary as they had always been. What is significant about the early to mid-nineteenth century, however, is that a more aggressive and directed pursuit by religious officials was being undertaken to align gender roles with those of Euro-Christian expectations.

At the Mohawk Institute, men were being instructed in various trades as well as the art of agriculture which had – prior to colonization – been the primary responsibility

of women. Women, alternately, were being instructed in domestic activities that – however unintended in consequence – would have in practice confined their economic participation exclusively to the domestic sphere. This stood in direct contrast to women's previous roles as both domestic and horticultural workers, even as those had survived the fur trade. Prior to colonization, women's roles may have involved, but were not limited to the domestic sphere. One of the key aspects of the Mohawk Institute's educational agenda, then, was that it encouraged the removal of women from their traditional economic roles and established men as agriculturalists, and also tradespeople, in their place.

The efforts of the Mohawk Institute were not at all lost upon the Six Nations. Among the numerous Christians, for example, we know that by the mid-nineteenth century some had come to rely exclusively on farming and agriculture for their subsistence needs (Weaver, 1994a: 186). In 1842, however, a distinction was drawn between large and small scale farming, with one report distinguishing between that of the Longhouse and Christian constituencies:

> The large farmers pursue exactly the same Mode of Agriculture as the Whites, except that they sow less seed, and are not so careful in preparing it ... They also grow peas in large quantities, with which, and Indian Corn, they fatten their Hogs – the small farmers grow little else than Indian Corn and Potatoes, in the cultivation of which they only use the Hoe – On the large farms, the field labour is performed by men, with the exception of the cultivation of Indian Corn, which, on large or small farms, is always performed by the Women. The young men of the Upper Tribes, who are Christians, and further Advanced in Civilization, engage more in farm labour, and are more industrious than the young Men of the Lower Tribes, who are mostly heathens ("The Past and Present Condition of the Six Nations, 1842", quoted in Johnston, 1964: 308).

Large scale farming was thus more common among the Christian constituency at mid-nineteenth century Grand River. This stood in contrast to those who maintained small scale subsistence horticulture, popular among *Karihwiyo* followers. Among the Christians – who constituted the largest population – these newly acquired habits of agriculture would have facilitated a significant change in the traditional roles of men and women. As it was also reported in 1842 – some nine years after the Mohawk Institute had become a residential school:

> [15] Boys are under instruction in the Several Trades of Wagon Maker, Blacksmith, Carpenter & Shoemaker. The Girls 12 in Number, are taught housekeeping, needlework, Spinning and Knitting. The adults evince much aptitude for mechanical Arts. Many of them, without instruction, are Blacksmiths, and Carpenters, capable of erecting and furnishing a frame house. Many, and particularly among the Women, are sufficiently good Tailors to be able to make their own clothes (ibid: 311).

On that account, it is reasonable to assume that the education of Six Nations children at the Mohawk Institute introduced a degree of confusion as relates to traditional sex roles. As noted, men and boys were busy exchanging their roles as hunters for the occupations of either Blacksmith, Wagon Maker, Carpenter or Farmer in the 1840s. Women and girls – consistent with Euro-Christian expectations which sought to confine them to the domestic sphere – were focusing their labour on the household and other housekeeping responsibilities to the exclusion of previous agricultural pursuits. In short, it is likely that sex roles started to resemble those of the Europeans among many of the Christians at Six Nations during the early to mid 1800s. But it is unlikely that the Mohawk Institute converted the entire Christian population into a nation of farmers who embraced rural

technology. It is also unlikely that the transition to an agricultural economy eradicated entirely the traditional roles of men and women. It is possible, in other words, that some men and women adapted to economic change in ways that mixed the old and the new where traditional principles and earlier custom is concerned.

As mentioned, those who did come to depend on agriculture (or engage in non-traditional trades) likely combined it in some way with previous modes of subsistence during the 1840s. In fact, this pattern of combining traditional subsistence activities with the practice of agriculture appears to have been common throughout many years at Six Nations. As one report noted in the 1800s:

> The Mohawks are improving rapidly, there are several so much agriculturalists as to raise three or four hundred bushels of Wheat in the Year, those who suppose that being farmers will debilitate them from being Hunters are mistaken. The most industrious at the plough, generally show themselves the most preserving at the chase, when in Winter they throw aside the hoe and take up the gun (see "Statement on the Haldimand Grant and the Six Nations", quoted in Johnston, 1964: 277-278).

Accordingly, the historic record does not suggest that the Six Nations were transformed completely into a nation of farmers during the nineteenth century. Instead, and on closer inspection, the people of Grand River supplemented their endeavours – farming in particular – with more traditional activities. It may have been that Christians – men in particular – had no choice but to engage in hunting and fishing for part of the year in lacking the necessary capital to make agriculture a profitable enterprise (see Weaver, 1994a: 186, also Doxtator, 1996: 136). Alternately, it is just as possible that some Christians mixed the old with new where gender roles are concerned. Perhaps there was

an effort to maintain men's roles as hunters despite ongoing attempts to socialize them into farming and trades that were congruent with a transitional economy.

With respect to women's status, there was a degree of cultural continuity in terms of economic roles despite efforts of the Mohawk Institute to transform them. Among the Christians at Grand River, for example, we can assume that some women enjoyed a great deal of cultural continuity as relates to their traditional roles in agriculture, especially among those individuals who took up farming in particular. As several religious officials observed of the Christian subsistence farmers at Grand River in 1842, and as previously mentioned, "On the large farms, the field labour is performed by men, with the exception of the cultivation of Indian Corn, which, on large or small farms, is always performed by the Women" ("The Past and Present Condition of the Six Nations, 1842", quoted in Johnston, 1964: 308, also Doxtator, 1996: 10, 35).

To be sure, the historic record does not suggest that the Grand River Christians were converted – at least initially – into a group whereby men farmed and women tended exclusively to domestic chores. Rather, and on closer inspection, the Christians seem to have been able to incorporate their traditional beliefs into more contemporary economic activities. Though further research is required, it is conceivable that some Christian women were, or at least believed themselves to be, following ancient custom in tending to corn in the 1840s. As Shimony (1961/1994: 154 (at note 12) & 155) has observed, the planting and harvesting of corn, beans and squash had always been the responsibility of women; indeed, these crops were understood to be "women's crops" in general (also see

Rothenberg, 1980: 77-78). Perhaps on that basis, some of the Christians considered the tending of corn and Christianity to be mutually compatible. This also requires further research.

That corn remained the responsibility of women is significant to understanding women's status as well as cultural continuity at mid-nineteenth century Six Nations. In my estimation, it is possible that some Christians decided deliberately on maintaining a more traditional division of labour despite the increasing confusion introduced by the Mohawk Institute in terms of gender roles. Perhaps there were efforts, in other words, to maintain women's involvement in agriculture despite ongoing attempts to socialize Christian women into housekeeping and other domestic trades that were congruent with a transitional economy. This is certainly suggested by Doxtator (ibid: 137) who observed that, at Six Nations, "women's agricultural crops cultivated in small "gardens" tended by a woman and her children persisted alongside the men's practice of European cash-crop agriculture".

Doxtator's argument is important because it reveals what may have been happening at Six Nations where the maintenance of women's traditional economic activities is concerned. It is further significant because these adaptations to socio-economic changes at Grand River reject a "passive victims" approach to history that overlooks people as rational actors (Etienne & Leacock, 1980: 20-22). This is an approach that has neglected issues of cultural continuity in favour of "declension arguments" that – as already discussed in my introduction – propose a complete decline in

women's social, economic and political status following European influence and colonization (see Shoemaker, 1991; Shoemaker, 1995: 9-10, and Rothenberg, 1980: 75-76).

To sum up, the impact of Euro-Christian influence was surely among many outside influences that are key to understanding the transformation of women's traditional status at Six Nations during the mid-nineteenth century. However, and as I have proposed, the traditional status of women may have changed more drastically among the Christians (in a host of complex ways that need to be better documented) than they did among Longhouse adherents (who may also have been witnessing change) in the early to mid-1800s. But as some Longhouse adherents sought actively to maintain women's traditional responsibilities in both social and political life through embracing the "good message", some of the Christians may have incorporated more extensive social reform efforts by the Mohawk Institute.

But it would be erroneous to assume that the Christians were entirely converted to a nation of farmers, tradesmen or domestics as a result of their Euro-Christian schooling – and the actual extent of these changes in history requires a more detailed investigation. It would also be incorrect to assume that Longhouse adherents avoided completely the impact of European influence as they accepted the "new religion" which was, as discussed, influenced heavily by the Quakers. What seems more likely is that patterns of acculturation were strikingly different at Grand River, and that social and cultural change was busy transforming the two distinctive constituencies in ways that have yet been

documented in the hidden history of Haudenosaunee women.

In my estimation, the impact of European influence was very different for Christian and Longhouse women. The former – and notwithstanding the potential to incorporate traditional beliefs into more contemporary economic activities – endured a more significant transformation in status as their work likely became more and more restricted to the domestic sphere. The latter maintained their esteemed statuses to a much greater extent by embracing a religion that incorporated the matrilineal aspect of clans, the original ceremonies, as well as Confederacy autonomy.

In looking beyond differences in patterns of acculturation as these relate to women, Euro-Christian influence indeed had its greatest impact on Haudenosaunee political organization. In the next Chapter, I will investigate this matter in greater detail, and I will argue that political change and the transformation of women's status are inseparably linked. For now, it is enough to note that Confederacy style or traditional governance – though it stayed very much intact at Six Nations throughout the nineteenth century – did not escape the broader social structural changes that were taking place. By the year 1890, as Weaver (1978: 530) has estimated, the Christians at Grand River had come to constitute eighty percent of the population. This was most significant because:

> Christians tended to have more education, [and] they were not bound by the directives of Handsome Lake, who feared, as did his conservative Longhouse followers, that a European education would undermine the traditional religion as well as the Iroquoian culture (Shimony, 1961/1994: xxxiii).

Accordingly, Euro-Christian influence as well as education came to secularize the Six

Nations Confederacy Council during the mid to late-nineteenth century (ibid). Combined, these influences changed the function of the Council, and must have had a serious impact on women's status since beliefs had been changed about the "traditional aspects of the appointment of hereditary chiefs" (ibid). Though these influences did not at all destroy traditional governance, they did have an overall weakening effect, for as Noon (1949: 13-14) has suggested:

> The loss of religious unity ... prevented universal acceptance of the symbolism of the Confederacy whereby the authority of the government and the powers of chiefly office were expressed. These symbols were derived from the pre-contact religious system and to Christian converts they were either meaningless or expressions of heretical beliefs. Therefore, it was inevitable that the League as an agency of social control lost much of its authoritative character.

The common meeting point for the Christian and Longhouse constituencies was thus the government of the Confederacy through the nineteenth century. In Chapter Four, I investigate the way in which this political assembly was irreversibly restructured due to various factors, including the religious influence and social changes outlined above.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the social changes brought about by religious influence at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory through the early to mid-nineteenth century. Based on my analysis and discussion, I have attempted to illustrate the kinds of continuity and change confronting women of both the Christian and Longhouse faiths at Grand River, as well as the emergence of two distinct religious constituencies which

characterized the nineteenth century community. In offering this as a new perspective, I have hoped to show the importance of religious and economic adaptations in understanding the transformation of women's traditional status and gender relations at Six Nations. I have introduced an area for further investigation, one that will provide greater discussion of the political changes that were occurring at Six Nations, and what these changes would have meant for women.

In terms of political organization, the traditional Confederacy style government continued to exist at Six Nations despite a decided lack of religious unity and differential patterns of acculturation throughout the nineteenth century. For reasons discussed, the Confederacy's ancient claim to governance under the *Kayanerenhkowa* or Great Law faced significant disavowal as more of the Chiefs – however important their clan and patriotic sentiment remained – came to embrace Christianity. This was a process which coincided with a transformation in women's status at Six Nations – even though this is often disregarded in the literature – as women went from playing significant political roles in the hereditary system, to having less official involvement or voice in issues of governance. It is to this, as well as larger issues of cultural preservation and social change through the 1800s and early 1900s that I now turn my attention.

Chapter Three
Politics, Governance and the Transformation of Women's Status at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, 1847-1924

This chapter is the second of two that is historical in focus. It is intended to document what has been written about Six Nations political history through the nineteenth to mid twentieth centuries in a way that places women's status at the forefront of analysis. In the first part of the chapter, I look at the issue of land encroachments from 1784 to 1847 and the declining significance of women (at least officially) where residency, citizenship and land tenure are concerned. I consider the work of Doxtator (1996) to suggest that differences in acculturation enabled a willingness culturally to experiment with – and indeed reconfigure – descent as it had always been traced through one's mother under the traditional matrilineal system. I will also discuss how religious disunity and differences in acculturation strained the Confederacy, led to the consolidation of two separate political constituencies, and generated a government-driven investigation of Grand River politics in 1924. The investigation itself led to a Parliamentary Order in Council and actions taken by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in October of 1924 to padlock the hereditary council house and impose an elected *Indian Act* system in its place (Table H). In documenting these events in Six Nations political history, I propose that *the decline of traditional governance and women's changing status cannot be understood as separate events in history.* I conclude this chapter by proposing that governance and colonial intrusion be understood as coincident in the politics and

history of the Grand River Reserve.

Land Disbursement, Administrative Change and the Status of Matrilineal Descent, 1784-1847

Under the Haldimand Proclamation, the people of the Six Nations were granted an original 570,000 acres of land in 1784 (see Johnston, 1964: 128). The land was partitioned into six blocks extending from Lake Erie, into what is now known as the Township of Moulton, northwest along the Grand River through the modern day townships of Canborough, Brant, Dumfries, Waterloo, Woolwich and Nichol (Table B). At this early date, the Six Nations did not only reside as they do today on a consolidated reserve in Tuscarora Township. Rather, and as Doxtator (1996: 220) has noted, "they set out national boundaries and within these, [each of the individual] nations determined the bounds of their clan lands".

Spatially, this meant that the Six Nations organized themselves into upper and lower "villages" – as mentioned in Chapter Two – with the "Upper" Mohawks, "Upper" Cayugas, Tuscaroras and Oneidas located further northwest along the Grand, and the "Lower" Mohawks, "Lower" Cayugas, Senecas and Onondagas along the southern-most part of the River (Table C). It also meant that – for a time – the clan system was the basis upon which land was distributed, and that each nation would have therefore likely organized themselves around women since they were key to this social institution (Doxtator, 1996: 220 & 221; Chapter One). In other words, and as Doxtator has

documented, "access to land was through one's membership in a clan within a national territory" (ibid, 221).

The original grant of over a half million acres did not remain in the possession of the Six Nations for the remainder of the eighteenth century. In fact, and as Johnston (1964: lv) says, some 350,000 acres of land were lost through the actual sale of lands between 1784 and 1798. As he documented:

> Of the some 570,000 acres that constituted the original Haldimand grant, approximately 350,000 were disposed of in the several conveyances that were formally sanctioned early in 1798 and parcelled out in six large but unequal blocks. Although Block 4, the northernmost, comprising a little over 28,000 acres was not sold at this time, "owing to some Circumstances which did not distinctly appear to the [Land] Board", no difficulty was experienced in finding purchasers for the remainder. Block 1 (94,035 acres) had been deeded as early as March, 1795, to Philip Stedman ... who for some years operated a ferry service at Fort Erie ... Block 2 (94,012 acres) to Richard Beasley, James Wilson, and Jean Baptiste Rousseau ... Block 3 (86,078 acres) was transferred to William Wallace and Blocks 5 (30,800 acres) and 6 (19,000 acres) were granted to William Jarvis and John Dochsteder respectively (ibid: lv).

The land at Six Nations was substantively reduced in the late eighteenth century. These developments were conducted by the late Joseph Brant himself (Weaver, 1972: 13), though it is unclear what his motives may have been for doing so. Some have speculated that Brant's motives were twofold. It had to do first with *the faith he had in the Grand River Haudenosaunee to prosper in the face of enormous social change*, and second, the importance that was attributed by Brant to the British example. As Johnston (ibid: liv) wrote:

> [W]ith respect to Brant, his eagerness to alienate so much reserve land may well have stemmed – as he never tired of asserting – from a highly realistic assessment

> of the Indians' dubious capacity for improving their huge domain on their own, and the need for exposing them, at the admitted risk of corrupting their ancient practices and sapping their cultural defences, to the vigour and enterprise of the better class of white immigrants. Brant had encouraged the first squatters to settle in the previous decade, doubtless [sic] realizing that wherever there was good land, the man best capable of exploiting it would ultimately come into possession of it; unfortunately, as events proved, the Six Nations failed to obtain their rightful dividends from the operation of this law in the Valley. Thus the actual sale of the tracts in 1798, while it solved one problem and heralded the organized settlement of much of the Indian country, also set the stage for new crises and difficulties in that region's affairs.

The settlement of Euro-Canadians along the Grand River through the early 1800s continued to have its impact on Haudenosaunee territory. Through the 1830s, at least four other major surrenders were made to accommodate the influx of non-Natives (Johnston, 1994: 178). Between 1830 and 1834, "the townships of North and South Cayuga, together with Dunn Township and the remainder of Camborough and Moulton townships ... were surrendered to Mennonites and to [other] settlers ..." (ibid). There were also additional land losses, though not all of them were transacted as authorized surrenders. Indeed, and as Johnston (ibid) notes, unauthorized squatting was not uncommon on Haudenosaunee lands.

The problem of squatting on Haudenosaunee lands was sometimes exacerbated by a scattering of Six Nations members who would conduct unauthorized dealings beyond the control of chiefs and other officials who were responsible for land disbursements (Doxtator, 1996: 225). The transactions that occurred formally generated a series of revenues for the entire band, including an $800,000 band fund in the mid 1800s (Weaver, 1994: 182). A portion of these funds was later invested by the government "without the

knowledge of any responsible spokespersons for the Confederacy" in the ill-fated "Grand River Navigation Company" (Johnston, 1994: 178).[71] But beyond these developments, no amount of money could restore the 350,000 acres lost through the actual sale of lands between 1784 and 1798 (ibid: lv). Indeed, by the year 1847, the original land base of the Grand River Iroquois had been reduced to a mere 55,000 acres (ibid), less than ten percent of the original land..

The reduction of the original Haldimand tract is significant when placed in demographic perspective. In 1785, the total population of the Six Nations was 1,843 members occupying 570,000 acres of land (see Doxtator, 1996: 131). By 1847, the population had increased slightly to approximately 2,200 members occupying 55,000 acres (ibid). By the end of the 1800s, there were a total number of 4,000 Six Nations members occupying 44,000 acres (ibid, 249). In short, squatters, settlers and leasees were all encroaching on the Grand River Haudenosaunee through the nineteenth century. This left the Confederacy with little other choice than to approach the Government of Canada for solutions to the threat of further land encroachments. Doxtator (ibid: 225) traced the historical details preceding this decision, and suggested that:

[T]he Euro-Canadian settlement had increased rapidly during the 1830s and 1840s

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[71] The Grand River Navigation Company (GRNC) was an initiative intended to make the transportation route between the Welland Canal and the City of Brantford more navigable before the development of a railway system. A history of the ill-fated GRNC, including a discussion of the (mis)management of Six Nations funds at the hands of the Canadian government, can be found in Bruce Emerson Hill's *The Grand River Navigation Company* (1994).

> ... Scattered clusters of the Upper Nations and the Lower Nations each became surrounded by Euro-Canadian settlers who wanted to expand and take up more of the Six Nations land. Some tenant farmers stopped paying their rents and wanted to own the farms that they had occupied and worked for five to ten years or more. Other tenants sold their leased property to other settlers at higher prices.[72] Some settlers squatted on the land assuming that if they cleared and built buildings that they would not be forced to give up their improvements. By 1841 the Six Nations fearful that all of their land would be lost to settlers, requested that the British government remove all Euro-Canadians from Six Nations lands.

The time between 1830 and 1840 was clearly one of historical significance for the Grand River Haudenosaunee. One dimension of this time period is clear: the hereditary chiefs, or *royaner,*[73] were forced to consult with the Dominion government on the issue of land encroachments. They were unsuccessful, however, in having non-Native settlers removed from their territories. As Johnston (1994: 179) observes,

> [T]he government of Upper Canada passed an order-in-council, 27 November 1840, which recommended that the whole of the remaining Six Nations lands, apart from a compact bloc reserved for their exclusive benefit and free from white encroachment, be surrendered to the Crown. The lands outside the compact bloc would be evaluated and put on the market, with the proceeds earmarked for the Indians' betterment.

Accordingly, the focus of government was to have the Six Nations surrender most of their remaining lands from November of 1840. Samuel Peter Jarvis, the superintendent of

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[72] In suggesting that "tenant farmers stopped paying their rent" and "other tenants sold their leased property" Doxtator is drawing attention to one of the most fundamental colonial injustices that took place at Six Nations through the early nineteenth century, notably, the taking of lands by Euro-Canadians who acted in complete defiance of the law (ibid: 225-227).

[73] *Royaner* is the word that is used to describe hereditary chiefs among the Haudenosaunee (see Doxtator, 1996: Chapter Three).

Indian Affairs, was a strong advocate of this scheme (ibid). At least some of the hereditary council seemed also to have favoured the idea as well, for as of January 18th 1841, the council elected to surrender all remaining lands to the Crown (ibid; also see Weaver, 1994: 183). Some six years later, in 1847, the Six Nations adopted a consolidated reserve territory in the Township of Tuscarora where they continue to reside today. By that time, and as Doxtator (1996: 219) notes, a total of 55,000 acres was left of the original Haldimand land grant.[74]

The move to a consolidated reserve resulted in a number of social and political changes for the Grand River Haudenosaunee. As Doxtator (ibid: 228) has suggested, it placed pressure on the Six Nations to conform to European standards. An example of this conformity was the adoption of individual land allotments; a practice the Haudenosaunee at Grand River – with the exception of the Mohawks and others who were more agreeable to experimenting with the idea as I will discuss shortly – had refused since 1829 (ibid: 227-228 & 264 at notes 31 & 32). Individual land allotments stood in direct contrast to the system of national clan territories which, as discussed, had preceded their move to a consolidated reserve. But the decision to adopt individual land allotments was quite likely strategic, for as Doxtator has put it:

> Some accommodation of European ideas of land use and ownership seemed pragmatic to ensure the cooperation of the external colonial government to protect the land reserve and to counter the government's arguments that Six Nations land

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[74] The reserve at Tuscarora township was further reduced to 44,000 acres by the year 1867 (ibid)

> was undeveloped "waste" land. Throughout the crisis of the 1840s in which the Six Nations complained that squatters and tenants had occupied their lands, the colonial government remained unsympathetic claiming that unoccupied Six Nations lands were a "nuisance" to the development of the district, that the Six Nations had only themselves to blame for having made the leases in the first place (ibid: 228).

The adoption of individual land allotments was thus a matter of pragmatic politics at nineteenth century Grand River. Put simply, a choice was made to have the land appear "occupied" in the eyes of the European settlers. This is an important observation for Doxtator to have made because it points toward the fundamental differences that existed between Europeans and Haudenosaunee where conceptions of land were concerned at nineteenth century Grand River.

The concept of *Terra Nullius* seems useful to elucidate the point that I am making here. *Terra Nullius,* Latin for "empty" or "unoccupied" lands, has been said to have played an enormous role in the history of colonization. As Razack (2002: 3 & 12) has argued, the concept of *terra nullius* also played a role in the reproduction of racial hierarchies.[75] Inhabitants of what is now called Canada were viewed as uncivilized people if they did not attempt to "develop" the land (ibid). Transformed into legal principles, the laws of the British carried the potential of declaring lands as simply available and unused if they were occupied by Indigenous peoples. These and other influences seem indisputably to have impacted on the Grand River Haudenosaunee

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[75] Also see pages 28 & 48 of J. Edward Chamberlin's *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories: Finding Common Ground* Alfred A Knopf, 2003.

through the mid to late-nineteenth century.

Further research is required to determine both Haudenosaunee and Euro-Canadian interpretations, especially where the basic cultural assumptions concerning leasing agreements, land dealings and other agreements are concerned through the 1800s (Williams, 1982, esp. Chapter Nine). Research is also required to find out more about racism and the way this may have fuelled the agreements and treaties. But it is also required that we look to the history of patriarchy, and how parts of this history show us how inseparable both racism and sexism are in the history of Grand River Territory. The factors that led some *royaner* to implement a system of land disbursement based on "akatonni" or the "father's line" from the mid 1800s (Doxtator, 1996) may hold the key to understanding these developments. It is to a discussion of this decision that I now turn.

Implementing Bilineal[76] Systems of Descent-Reckoning, 1847-1857

Based on historic literature, women took meaningful preeminence among the Haudenosaunee, especially prior to the First Europeans. One's *Ohwatsire* or the "mother's side", in other words – and as discussed in Chapter One – was the basis of Haudenosaunee social, political and kinship structure as well as residency patterns. Having said that, a person's akatonni or "father's side" was not simply dismissed or unrecognized by an historic Haudenosaunee. As Doxtator (ibid: 71-72) clarifies:

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[76] I use the word bilineal to refer to the recognition of kin connections through both parents (Stone, 2000: 14 & 307)

> Economically an individual' s well being depended on both one's agadoni[77] and owachira, father's and mother's relatives. The Rotinonhsyonni determined clan membership through the female line, but the clans of fathers or father's clan agadoni (kinsmen) also provided important access to resources within and beyond the clearing [...] A child was born with certain obligations and privileges not only with respect to his/her mother's clan and clan matrilineage but to his/her father's clan and clan matrilineage as well. Rituals acknowledged one's father's clan as well as those of one's mother.

Tracing one's relatives through the father's side was not entirely foreign to the Haudenosaunee. People were connected to their father's relatives in significant and complex ways, even though Haudenosaunee kinship systems institutionalized women's status in ways I have described. But there is reason to believe that the father's side may have started to eclipse that of the women's side at Grand River – at least for state and administrative purposes – starting in 1847. As I will discuss, it may also have had something to do with Council agreeing "to designate 100 acres to each male head of family in the community" in that same year (ibid: 227).

Doxtator suggests that there were at least two reasons for the emphasis that came to be placed on paternity. Perhaps the tracing of descent through the father's side was an inevitable outcome to differential patterns of acculturation which I discussed in Chapter Two. If the upper nations were influenced by outside ideas – including Christianity and the practice of agriculture – then it follows that some of the upper nation chiefs were more willing than their traditional counterparts to experiment with and reconfigure the

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[77] Doxtator's use of agadoni to describes the father's side, or paternal kin is different from my own, but the meaning is the same.

customary matrilineal system. Indeed, and as Doxtator (ibid: 227-228) notes, the Six Nations Mohawks had already experimented with the idea of individual land allotments at Canajoharie – in what is now known as New York State – before they migrated to the Grand River in 1784 (also see *Simcoe to Dorchester Correspondence,* quoted in Johnston, 1964: 75-76). Maybe the council had decided it was agreeable to turn attention toward the father's side as it may have represented – in a way – the extension of earlier developments.

But in more practical and pragmatic ways, the decision to implement this system of land allotments must also have been influenced by the threat of non-Native land encroachments. Put simply, the hereditary chiefs at nineteenth century Grand River needed some way to preclude non-Native men from gaining further access to Haudenosaunee lands. Perhaps the concern was over Haudenosaunee women marrying non-Native men, which would have automatically entitled them (and any children thereof) to a stake in the community and any lands which could then be leased, sold or surrendered against the council's wishes as well as the community's overall prosperity. Thus, the decision to implement the father's side of kinship organization worked in the interest of preserving Six Nations lands. To support this reading of history, I acknowledge my debt to the work of Doxtator (1996: 248) who puts it succinctly:

> The Six Nations council regulations that members be related by birth or marriage to a Six Nations man meant that outside men would be excluded from owning and possibly trying to sell land from the reserve. The Six Nations had experienced early losses of reserve lands given to Euro-Canadian husbands. These men

> invariably appealed to the British colonial government to be able to exercise their property rights under British law.

For non-Native men to have gained membership, as well as an entitlement to land was a disturbing but very real possibility at nineteenth century Grand River. I concur with Doxtator that an emphasis on the father's side acted in a way to intercept this problem. The system itself effectively blocked non-Native men from owning land or from appealing to a colonial government that had become increasingly hostile to Haudenosaunee concerns.

Despite emphasis being placed on the bilineal system for administrative purposes, the importance of a matrilineal system – though fundamentally disrupted – could not have been entirely dismantled or even discarded at Six Nations. In speaking of thsi "hidden history" Doxtator suggests that the matrilineal system continued well into the late 1840s (ibid: 245), for in speaking of the year 1847, she explains:

> [T]he Six Nations royaner council passed membership rules that excluded all but the descendants of Six Nations men and their spouses from lists compiled by civil clan chiefs and overseen by the royaner. The council used these patrilineal lists to determine membership for annuity and land holding. An "unofficial", informal, "mother's side" community membership system persisted alongside these administrative lists. The informal matrilineal system did not, however, threaten either the holding of land by members or member's annuity share. One's matrilineal affiliations permitted someone only to live on the reserve with their relatives but not to partake of annuity or to hold land themselves (ibid).

For Doxtator, emphasis on the father's side was utilized by the Six Nations council in 1847 for official purposes. As she observes, the system enabled the transfer of annuity payments to members; revenues which the Council had acquired from land sales, leases,

and the government through various fiduciary obligations. This system also functioned – and perhaps pragmatically so – to determine land disbursements. Most probably, it was a pragmatic solution to impending European ideas which had irreversible, however unintended, consequences for Grand River Haudenosaunee.

Exploring Hidden Histories: The Decline of Women's Entitlements?

It is likely that the Dominion government of what is now called Canada had everything to do with the emerging emphasis that was being placed on the father's side among the Six Nations. At the same time, I am not suggesting that the government outwardly lobbied the Haudenosaunee to adopt the bilineal system, or even that it was forced upon the people. In all likelihood, government officials simply *accommodated* the decision to follow the father's side at Six Nations as a matter of course – *and most likely because it resembled their own system of registering land holdings in the name of men* (ibid: 252). The state may have assumed the system as either "common sense", or as a matter of course, and the council acquiesced for their own pragmatic reasons. Perhaps the hereditary council at Grand River believed that the "mother's side" could carry on as it had always done alongside the father's side that was now being used for "official" government purposes. I will document and identify for further study the extent of cultural continuity that exists today in Chapter Five.

For members of the Six Nations, a matrilineal system appears to have been able to

withstand early colonial change and demographic intrusion into the mid-nineteenth century. But the system itself did not escape the impact of more pragmatic decisions to eliminate ongoing land encroachments. Rather, it was on this basis that the Six Nations had to start restricting members of its community – however close the relationship – in 1847. It may have also shaped the decisions of council into later years. As Doxtator (ibid: 244) notes:

> During the nineteenth century the Six Nations shifted their membership from a very open system that incorporated anyone who came to live at the settlement to a highly restrictive system in which the council sought to exclude both outside men and women and children who had non-member fathers.

Over time, I suggest that Six Nations hereditary chiefs continued to restrict their membership. The policy was in response to the threat of further land loss at the hands of European men, and represents an early form of boundary maintenance. Indeed, from 1847 to 1869, the council of hereditary chiefs increased their restrictions over membership which stood in stark cultural contrast to the matrilineal social structures of the past (see Noon, 1949). It follows that some people's understandings of women's esteemed status, the matrilineal system, as well its cultural importance, would have been inevitably reconfigured and transformed as these "official" accommodations were made. The degree of social change brought about by these accommodations can only be estimated, but I am suggesting that this will require the attention of historians concerned with the history of gender relations. For now, it is enough to speculate about how the matrilineal system may have been reconfigured at nineteenth century Grand River.

The hereditary council refused to allow men from the non-Native community – or from other reserves – to reside with women on the consolidated reserve as early as March 23rd, 1847 (Weaver, 1974: 65). On that date, a resolution was passed in council which read:

> (Resolved) That any women of the Six Nations who may from this date cohabit or inter-marry with any white or black men shall also lose all the benefits of and to be derived from the presents and funds of the Six Nations Indians and be excluded from all their privileges (Six Nations Band Council Minutes, 23 March 1847, quoted in Weaver, 1974: 51).

Council's decision to preclude men from marrying into the Six Nations community was motivated by a growing fear about land entitlements. I am suggesting, in fact, that the matter of land was the driving force behind resolutions like this in council. The resolution itself may have been important in preventing further land encroachments onto Six Nations territory during the later 1800s. But the practice of following the father's side would have transformed the status of women who had always been central to so many aspects of social organization, including: the matrilineal clan system, the bestowing of membership and residency rights, as well as land tenure.

From 1847 henceforth, women's relationship to the land changed at Six Nations. So too did the ability to bestow "rights" to the land on to others – at least officially. The transition toward enforcing the resolution, however, seems to have occurred more sporadically.[78] I will explore this "hidden history" in further detail in Chapter Five.

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[78] See Doxtator (1996): pages 247, 273 (at note111), & 274 (at note 112).

In short, the council passed a resolution which may have had the effect of restricting who could be part of the community to men, but the matrilineal system did not meet its demise. This is testimony to the resiliency of Haudenosaunee culture, as well as the matrilineal system that Annemarie Shimony (1961/1994) as well as Doxtator (1996) have left for a generation of younger Haudenosaunee scholars such as myself to consider. I will offer my thoughts on this aspect of cultural continuity in Chapter Five. For now, it is important to support the argument that I am proposing in greater detail.

Maintaining the Matrilineal System: A Nineteenth Century Challenge

That the hereditary council took steps to restrict women's entitlement to the land, as well as the ability to bestow these "rights" on to others at mid-nineteenth century Grand River is a very significant moment in Six Nations political history. Invariably, it would have struck at the "unofficial" system of tracing descent through one's mother as was consistent with ancient Haudenosaunee custom. The overall impact of these restrictive policies – which some Haudenosaunee would have chosen to make – would have been hostile to the kinship structure that had been so important to a pre-contact Haudenosaunee. At least officially, determining membership under these new criterion would have re-organized people spatially, allowing the possibility for indifference to develop about matrilineal kinship organization, and I would argue, Haudenosaunee women who married non-Native men. It would also have affected the generations of

Haudenosaunee women (female and male) following 1847.

Under a more matrilineal system of kinship organization, the children of Haudenosaunee women became members of the community with a share in the land and resources on the basis of clan affiliation. These entitlements were passed from one's *ohwatsire,* or mother (Doxtator, 1996: 69). From 1847, however, the importance of children's matrilineal affiliation was diminished by an overriding concern with limited land and resources (Weaver, 1974: 52). Before that, the female (and male) children of Haudenosaunee women would have been part of the Grand River community regardless of confirming her or his *akatonni,* or paternal kin (Doxtator, 1996: 69).

The hereditary council's primary concern was with preventing non-Natives (it seems men at first) from residing on a smaller, consolidated reserve of 55,000 acres. To be sure, the regard for matrilineal affiliations persisted at Six Nations – but apart from my own research, its duration has not been documented in the literature. Nor have matters of continuity and change been addressed in the literature, even though Weaver (ibid) has proposed that the hereditary council turned a blind eye to the children and spouses of Haudenosaunee women through intermarriage.

But if Weaver is correct in assuming that matrilineal kinship organization may have persisted at Grand River, the opposite – notwithstanding a series of complexities – appears also to have taken place: the hereditary council – at various points in history and in the interest of preserving its land and resources – prevented or removed the children of

mixed marriages from the band lists (ibid). These would have been children who were "illegitimate" in a newly emerging discourse of patriarchy (ibid, also O'Brien, 1981).[79]

From 1847, I suggest that the emphasis that was being placed on paternity brought about a series of significant changes at Six Nations. As the father's side became the "official" basis of determining access to land, resources and membership, it would have disenfranchised the women who had, historically, channelled all inheritances through the female line. Indeed, as Doxtator (1996: 247) notes:

> At Six Nations the council used the patrilineal band lists to determine who would receive land and annuities while tolerating an "unofficial" matrilineal "mother's side" membership system that allowed those affiliated with Six Nations women to live on the reserve, but not to participate in owning land or sharing in annuity from previous land surrenders.

In effect, the emphasis that came to be placed on paternity influenced the inheritance of land and annuities at Six Nations through the mid-nineteenth century. Moreover, it would also have lent support to the concept of "(il)legitimate children" – an idea that had been extraneous to the pre-contact Haudenosaunee.[80]

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[79] Though further research is required, there is little to suggest that the more conservative nations who had adhered to the teachings of Handsome Lake would have embraced the notion of "illegitimacy". Indeed, "illegitimacy" can only exist in a distinctly patriarchal (ie. European) society. Indeed, and even as late as 1880, the minutes of Six Nations council document the Longhouse community of the Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas requesting that the Council repeal its decision to exclude "illegitimates" from the band list (See Weaver, 1970a: 19).

[80] Though further research is required, I have never heard of a word in any of the Haudenosaunee languages that suggests "illegitimacy". This suggests that the idea developed from European patriarchy and did not exist among the pre-contact Iroquois. The *Kayanerenhkowa*, for example, contained elaborate provisions for clan adoptions and

In the nineteenth century, "illegitimacy" has come to mean, in other words, "outside of the group", an exclusive concept which, as I will discuss in Chapter Four, was extended by the *Indian Act.* It also came to mean "without a father" – a concept which would have been of only incidental importance to a social structure that placed emphasis on the "mother's side" prior to European contact. Combined, the policies that would have been important to prevent over-crowding, as well as the increasing demand on resources at nineteenth century Grand River stood at complete odds with women's traditional status and ancient custom. It represents a pivotal yet much under-studied moment in Six Nations history. I suggest that this is because researchers have been blind to issues of patriarchy in the literature on colonial injustice.

The decision to implement "the father's side" may well be one of the most important events in the history of gender relations at Grand River. In fact, it may embody the historical moment when some of the Six Nations Haudenosaunee, *though decidedly not all*, assumed a quintessentially European system as their own. This system necessarily reflected the legal and social apparatus of a people who had already grown accustomed to patriarchy as a method of ensuring that only men could bequeath wealth to

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admissions to the League (see North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 53-55). Even the word *Tehonatonkohton*, or "they who have alienated themselves" (Tehanetorens, 1993: 7), for example, refers to those who *voluntarily* submit to the law of a foreign people – it does not refer to a child who is unable to identify either his *ohwatsire* (mother's side) or his *akatonni* (father's side) (ibid; also see Johnston, 1986: 9). To be sure, this idea is of contemporary relevance to Haudenosaunee children who have been adopted by non-Native parents and are unaware of their biological "roots".

their children (Engels, 1884/1968: 76, O'Brien, 1981: 54).[81] In my estimation, these patriarchal understandings were likely assumed by some of the more acculturated nations (especially the Mohawks) at nineteenth century Grand River though further research on these groups – what Weaver and others describe as "the Christians" in particular – is required.

As an official "policy", the emphasis that was being placed on the father's side where determining land disbursements and allotments would have proven detrimental to good relations between Haudenosaunee people. The council would have had to decide on issues as important as who could live where at Six Nations. Over time, perhaps this became a rather "ordinary way of doing things" as I will discuss of Six Nations in Chapter Five. Paternity also became entrenched formally by an Indian department that was intent on "registering" land tenure and detailing the lines of descent traced through men.

The emergence of "band membership lists" was assumed by the dominion government as early as 1857 in accordance with *An Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in the Province, and to Amend the Laws Respecting Indians* (Jamieson, 1986: 116-117). This policy initiated a more accurate record-keeping of the population by government whose goal after all was to reduce and then to assimilate the Indian (ibid: 113; also see Tobias, 1983). Though I will discuss the *Indian Act* and

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[81] As Engels has noted, wealth was bequeathed (among early Europeans especially) by declaring that wives were the sole and exclusive property of their husbands and that, subsequently, a man's children were those whom his wife bore.

other Indian policy in Chapter Four, I note for now that official record keeping would have worked to further entrench, and make official, a more bilineal system at Grand River.

From 1857, paternity would also have served as the basis for all record keeping and official dealings with the colonial government; including administrative budget allocations. As such, the importance of the father's side came to shape the lives of every Six Nations person in real material ways, and thereby marginalizing those intent on preserving matrilineal kinship organization. I suggest the ability to reside with one's mother, and her kin, would have become less favourable from the mid-nineteenth century onward.

As Weaver (1974: 52) has described, "as decades passed and Ottawa became more determined to keep accurate records of band membership, local partiality [or the council's judgement] came to play a more minor role in admissions to the band lists". In short, the tendency for council to overlook the descendants of women who resided informally at Six Nations was less common into the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The importance of paternity – an otherwise pragmatic solution to non-Haudenosaunee land encroachments during the early 1800s – quite likely became a formalized, if not an institutionalized way of doing things.

To sum up, the emphasis placed on the father's side at Grand River was a logical response to ongoing land encroachments made by early Europeans on nations whose

original territories were under constant threat of reduction. In this section, I have represented the work of Doxtator in considerable detail to help explain how these changes stood to impact on women's status as well as matrilineal kinship organization. I have intended to suggest that the emphasis placed on the father's side represents a major event in the history of gender relations at Six Nations. But it is important to understand that this example of social change did not occur in isolation from other developments. I now turn attention toward changes in the structure and procedures of traditional governance. These changes also enabled the transformation of women's status. In fact, the history of governance and colonial intrusion cannot be understood apart from the coincident history of patriarchal injustice and women's changing status (Cannon, 1995: 122-123).

Political Change at Six Nations, 1844-1861

As the anthropologist and Six Nations historian Sally Weaver (1984: 169) once noted, it was the Mohawks who had always held a preeminent position in early Grand River politics. This preeminence, she suggested, followed on the heels of Joseph Brant, who had secured land at Grand River for "the Mohawk Nation, and such other of the Six Nations Indians" through the Haldimand land grant (ibid, also see *Haldimand's Proclamation of October 25, 1784,* quoted in Johnston, 1964: 50-51). It was also the result of Mohawks being the most populous of the Haudenosaunee nations through the nineteenth century. Moreover, the Mohawk chiefs had maintained strong leadership and a

rapport with Indian agents and other government officials following Brant's death in 1807 (ibid).[82] The ability of the Mohawks to influence decisions both within and outside of Six Nations politics, however, did not occur despotically through the nineteenth century. Mohawk *royaner* would have had a responsibility to represent their matrilineal clan affiliations. They were also part of a larger Confederacy council that characterized political organization and the management of internal affairs during the 1800s.

Congruent with the Peacemaker's original teachings, the Confederacy Council at Grand River was composed of fifty hereditary chiefs, each representing his mother's clan: fourteen from the Onondaga nation, eight from the Seneca nation, nine from the Mohawks, nine from the Oneidas and ten from the Cayugas (Weaver, 1984: 169). As discussed in Chapter One, women were responsible for nominating hereditary chiefs as clan mothers and heads of matrilineages. In addition to the fifty principal hereditary chiefs, the Council also included assistant chiefs "who were equally active in council affairs", pine tree or self-made chiefs[83], members from dependent nations (including

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[82] In a much earlier work, Weaver (1972: 17) commented that Brant's relationship with the British was somewhat unusual. As she put it: "The political position of Brant [and] his status as a war chief with the attendant power should ideally, in accordance with tradition, have terminated with the end of hostilities. Brant maintained his power after the [American] revolution, however, largely by means of his influence with British authorities, and also because the continued threat of war with France and then with the United States prompted the [British] Crown to carefully nurture its alliance with the Iroquois".

[83] Pine Tree Chiefs are self made chiefs who were usually appointed because of their outstanding leadership abilities. The story of Pine Tree Chiefs dates back to the *Kayanerenhkowa* or Great Law where it is said that: "If a man of the Hotinonshonni

Tuscarora and Delaware), as well as war chiefs from the War of 1812 (ibid; Weaver, 1994: 190). When assembled, the Confederacy conducted their affairs in the Mohawk language – which had become the official language of Council. As Doxtator (1996: 237) further notes: "[M]ost of the Mohawk *royaner* could speak English [and] had the additional advantage of being able to discuss issues directly with the Canadian government".

As early as 1844, council meetings also took place in the presence of David Thorburn, who acted as an "Indian superintendent" until 1862. As Weaver (1994: 184) notes, David Thorburn was appointed by the Dominion government's "Indian Department". His job was "to manage the resettlement [and to] represent the authority of the government to the Six Nations" (ibid).[84] Furthermore, Thorburn "enforced government legislation and acted as the major communication link between the community and the Indian Department" (ibid).

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assists or shows a special ability in the affairs of the Nation, and he proves himself wise and honest the Sachems of the Hotinonshonni may elect him to sit among them. When he sits in Council he will be known as a Pine Tree. Should he do anything against the Constitution no one has the right to dispose him from his seat, but everyone will be deaf to his words. Should he step down from his seat no one has the right to stop him, and he will not have the authority to appoint a successor to replace him. Should a Pine Tree die or resign there will be no successor to him (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 45).

[84] For scholarly analysis of the role, function and impact of Indian agents or "Superintendents"on Aboriginal peoples in Canada, see Vic Satzewich and Linda Mahood, "Indian Agents and the Residential School System in Canada, 1946-1970" *Historical Studies in Education*, vol. 7, no 1, 1995: 45-69. I wish to thank Vic Satzewich for drawing this to my attention.

Thorburn was also responsible for assisting with, and overseeing, matters of the Grand River hereditary council. To the extent that the Confederacy Council had acted autonomously in their political affairs prior to, and even following relocation to the Grand River in 1785, his presence – however well intentioned – represented a further intrusion on Haudenosaunee independence. Put differently, the Confederacy Council of the mid 1800s acted under the auspices of an overseer however much the influence of clan mothers was maintained through their ability to install hereditary chiefs. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this was a system of "indirect rule" (Weaver, 1994: 181), maintained by the Dominion government through the *Indian Act* and later "Indian" policy when the Minister of the Indian Department was given the power to veto any and all council-based decisions.

The impact of the Indian superintendent (David Thorburn) at Six Nations must be placed into historical perspective. While it is true that Thorburn's installation disrupted the inner workings of traditional government during the mid-nineteenth century, it is also true that the Confederacy council had been dealing with outside encroachments on their political autonomy from 1785. Thorburn's presence was not, thus, the first encroachment of a Dominion presence on the Confederacy council. This is an important observation because it recognizes that a lengthy and complex process of colonial adaptation was sure to have preceded Thorburn's appointment.

Indeed, the presence of an Indian superintendent at Six Nations – the influence of

whom I will consider in a moment – was an additional source of intrusion and change during the mid-nineteenth century. Of even greater significance, especially as this relates to internal political change, was the lack of religious unity, differences in acculturation and the transformation of traditional economies. These were factors that would have worked to make unanimity and consensus – the basis upon which traditional Haudenosaunee political procedure was originally premised – difficult to maintain at Grand River. Let us consider the issues I am identifying a little more closely.

In terms of political history, the Confederacy Council did not escape the broader based social and religious changes that were impacting on the Six Nations population at Grand River during the early 1800s. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Mohawks and Oneidas had largely embraced Christianity by the year 1860 as well as the various trades and agricultural pursuits being offered by the New England Company's Mohawk Institute. The Six Nations reserve therefore became characterized by religious dissimilarity – 20 percent Longhouse and 80 percent Christian – a pattern that has remained until the present day (ibid). Notably, this had an influence on political organization through the 1800s, for as Weaver (ibid: 171) suggests:

> Being more acculturated than the lower tribes, [the Christian nations] were willing to promote and accept reforms in many areas of the community including the council. Throughout the nineteenth century, but with certain notable exceptions, the Mohawks persistently defended the continuity of the Confederacy at Grand River, but unlike the lower tribes (Onondaga, Lower Cayuga and Seneca), they did not believe the Longhouse religious tradition was a necessary precondition for maintaining the Confederacy council.

The way in which Euro-Christian influence and religious disunity came to secularize the Six Nations Confederacy Council during the mid to late-nineteenth century cannot be underestimated. Throughout many years, the Christian converts had become less committed to traditional principles resulting in the separation of what were otherwise "interlocking institutions" in pre-colonial society; namely, religion and government (see Rioux, 1952: 94). The effects of this increasing secularization meant a number of things. Most notably, it worked to transform the meaning of chieftainship among those who had converted to Christianity.

Prior to and even after Euro-Christian influence, chiefs who had been nominated by clan mothers of chiefly lineages underwent an elaborate condolence ceremony (see Wallace, 1946/1997: 50; North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 42). This ceremony, according to William Fenton (1998: 135), was originally intended to mourn dead chiefs and raise their successors into office. As such, its function is twofold: it is intended to "condole" or lift up the minds [of] the mourners who have suffered the death of a chief (and relative) on the one hand, and to mark the installation of a new chief (ibid) on the other. The condolence ceremony itself is said to have originated with the founding of the Confederacy, and has always been a part of Haudenosaunee political culture (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 24-27).

Condolence ceremonies were (and are still today) held at their nations' "Longhouse" – a reference to the actual log cabin buildings that accommodate individuals

who follow the *Karihwiyo* or "Good Message" of Handsome Lake. Here the chiefs receive the sacred symbol of deer horns which, after being placed on their heads, symbolizes their title as chiefs. Beyond these formalities, however, this ceremony has also provided spiritual direction dating back to the establishment of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy around 1450.

Among other things, the Condolence Ceremony connected the role of Chief with the role of spiritual advisor; it encouraged chiefs to think always about the seven generations yet to be born, and placed the *Kayanerenhkowa* or Great Law of Peace at the forefront of Chiefly interests (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 42). In other words, the condolence ceremony was (and is) as much about governance as it was (and is) about traditional Haudenosaunee spirituality. It is most likely inevitable, however, that some of the Christian chiefs may have come to regard these ceremonies differently from their more traditional counterparts. As Shimony (1961/1994: xxxiii) once described:

> [M]any of the chiefs in hereditary positions who had converted to Christianity [and who had] permitted themselves to be installed by a Condolence Ceremony at the Longhouse did so without religious conviction but as formality to fulfill the form and trappings of chieftainship.

Shimony's observation is one that requires further investigation. In fact, I am intent on proposing the need for further research in order to assess the extent of syncretism which took place between the Christian and Longhouse religions. In a contemporary context, this will involve looking at the way in which Christianity has melded with traditional

beliefs to create a separate though not at all binary or dichotomous spirituality. Most likely, some of the Grand River Haudenosaunee melded aspects of Christianity (including Baptist, Catholic, United, Methodist and Anglican) with traditional or Longhouse beliefs in ways that are important though significantly understudied.[85] Yet in calling for this research, I am not suggesting that the distinction between Christian and Longhouse was immaterial or of little consequence at nineteenth century Grand River. Indeed, Shimony's assessment of Grand River political history is supported by the actions of Christian chiefs during the mid to late 1800s. Throughout this time, some of the Mohawk chiefs were "willing to promote and accept reforms in many areas of community life including the council" (Weaver, 1984: 171).

It would be an historical inaccuracy to suggest that the Mohawk chiefs did not support the continuity of the Confederacy at nineteenth century Grand River (ibid). It would also be inaccurate to suggest that the Christian chiefs did not share in common with others an understanding of Haudenosaunee autonomy and independence. Rather, and as Sally Weaver once noted, "they did not believe the Longhouse religious tradition was a necessary precondition for maintaining the Confederacy council" (ibid). In material

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[85] One of my earliest recollections of Christianity is based on attending the Cainsville United Church on Sundays with my Grandparents (Freeman Farmer and Olive Hill) in Brantford. Later, my grandparents would turn to other spiritual leanings as practiced in the Anglican and Baptist churchs. It has been only recently that I have realized how these choices reflect a kind of "multi-denominationality" among some Haudenosaunee people. I would like to acknowledge Cree elder, Rev. Stan Cuthand, for discussing this issue with me.

terms, this meant that the Mohawk chiefs were more readily open to considering procedural changes such as majority voting, administrative councils, separate committees, and various administrative officers (see Weaver, 1970a: vii; Weaver, 1984, esp.171-173; Doxtator, 1996: 237). Each of these changes was in the supposed interest of speeding up the council's decision-making and implementation process (Doxtator, 1996: 237). None of these suggested reforms sat well, however, with the more conservative or traditional chiefs. Though far from static or immune from outside influence, their beliefs were that all decision-making ought to follow that of lengthy debate, and eventually, council consensus.

Prior to contact and Euro-Christian influence, the basis of *governance* embodied unanimous decision-making. As such, no distinction need necessarily have been drawn between the self and Haudenosaunee, chief and community, or in more recent rights oriented language, individual and collective. Put differently, none of these distinctions need necessarily have been understood as dichotomous. At the very least, governing oneself would have been understood as an *extension* of governing a Confederacy of nations since, by the word peace, the Great Peacemaker meant the well being of a community or nation that is enabled by an individual's physical, spiritual and emotional well-being (see Mohawk, 1989: esp. 222-223; also see Turpel, 1989/1990 for context).[86]

In less desirable circumstances, however, governing oneself meant lengthy debate

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[86] I would like to acknowledge Dr. Peter S. Li for prompting me to develop these ideas in March, 2003.

and discussion in reaching both "one mind" and "one voice" (Mohawk, 1989: 223-224). This does not mean that the process of debate and consensus occurred haphazardly. As Robert Porter – a member of the Seneca Nation and Associate Professor of Law at the University of Kansas – has described the process:

> In order to facilitate consensus, the Longhouse, the location at which Confederate Council meetings were held, was structured so that all debate took place "across the fire". Discussion on a particular subject would be carried through three separate and elaborate stages until consensus was reached. As might be expected, there was often disagreement that impeded the discussions. Depending upon the stage at which the discussion broke down, the matter would be referred back to the point at which the process ceased. If, however, it was not possible to achieve unanimity, the matter was laid aside until a later time. Unreasonableness in this process was not tolerated and any "sachem" so acting would have "influences ... brought to bear on him which he could not well resist" (1998: 817-818).

Porter outlines the protocol for reaching unanimity in a way that draws attention to three separate stages in reaching consensus. Paul A.W. Wallace[87] (1946/1997:61) was among the first to document in writing the nature of these three stages. As he put it:

> First, each national delegation discussed the proposition and came to a conclusion so that it might speak with one voice. Second, the national unit compared its conclusions with that of its "brother" (the Mohawk with the Seneca, the Oneida with the Cayuga), in order that each side of the fire might speak with one voice. Then the Mohawks, as representing the Elder Nations, handed the joint decision of Mohawks and Senecas across the fire to the Oneidas, who received it on behalf of

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[87] Paul A.W. Wallace was the Dean of Theology at the University of Toronto's Victoria College through the early twentieth century. Wallace was critical of the colonial mentality of English speaking Canadians in Toronto through the 1920s, and he was intent on introducing people to the "spiritual consciousness" and "genius" of the Great Peacemaker. As such, Wallace wrote his *The White Roots of Peace* in 1946 which documented the story of the Peacemaker and the establishment of the *Kayanerenhkowa* or Great Law of Peace. Wallace was a friend to the Grand River Haudenosaunee (Smith, 1997: 6-23).

> the Younger Nations. If the Younger Nations agreed, the matter was handed back across the fire to the Mohawks who announced the agreement to the Onondagas, and the presiding officer, who inherited the title of "Atotárho", declared the matter settled. If, however, at any stage in this procedure a stubborn disagreement was encountered, the matter was returned for further study to the brotherhoods or to the national units, depending on the point in the line at which the break had occurred. If in the end no agreement could be found, the Mohawks announced this fact to the Onondagas, and they, through the voice of Atotárho, rendered a decision.

Though words like "national unit", "brother" and "presiding officer" ought to be read as an English translation of the process of Haudenosaunee governance (see Chapter Two), Wallace's transcription reveals the "best practices" of traditional decision making (also see North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 33-34). These "best practices" were likely the basis upon which Longhouse adherents came to voice their opposition to colonial change; in particular Confederacy reform such as ad hoc committees, voting and so on.

In the eyes of the colonizer, and indeed some of the more acculturated chiefs, the procedure for reaching consensus appears to have inspired criticism; especially as this related to the potential for lengthy debates in council (see Weaver, 1984: 175-176; 205). Combined, both of these positions led to a degree of tension, for as Weaver (1984: 175) explained of the nineteenth century council:

> [Many] issues brought into the open the basic differences in values and philosophies on culture change between the upper and lower tribes, [and] they were extremely sensitive and difficult matters for the chiefs to handle. In trying to reach some agreement, procedural problems predictably arose in the council. A single issue, such as the agricultural hall, would be debated for months at a time, often producing a series of conflicting decisions and heated discourse in which

each side occasionally ridiculed the other.

Differences in acculturation led to divergent positions on the political matters of council at mid-nineteenth century Grand River. That the internal workings of the council had been undergoing major structural change was of no small coincidence in the formation of these positions. Indeed, I concur with Weaver that the process through which the council adapted institutionally to the changes brought about by colonialism enabled the formation, and ultimately, the consolidation of at least two different political constituencies: "conservative" (Longhouse) and "reform" (Christian).

In historical perspective, the formation of two different political constituencies took place as soon as the council started to deal with issues such as land encroachment, land allotments, education, schools, agriculture and so on. These issues stood to overwhelm a council that was already dealing with religious differences while trying to adapt to a colonial-based agenda of items. They also stood to complicate a council that was already grappling with religious differences and that had been based, traditionally, on lengthy debate and decision making by consensus.

Yet these difficulties did not lead the Dominion government to intervene and oppose the structure of Confederacy government which had endured several impasses. Indeed, the Confederacy government remained intact at Six Nations until 1924, as I will discuss in upcoming pages. Nor did it prevent the full force of colonial history from dividing individuals including some of the Confederacy chiefs. As I will discuss in the

next section, a faction of Mohawk "warriors" – *adult men who had received a Euro-Canadian education but were not part of the Mohawk royaner matrilineages* – sought to reform the Confederacy council in 1861, 1873, 1894, and 1906 respectively (Doxtator, 1996: 239). Each of these issues requires further discussion.

The Consolidation of Political Constituencies, 1861-1923

In 1862, Jasper Tough Gilikson became the second Indian superintendent at Six Nations Territory (Weaver, 1994: 202). Gilikson was far more determined than his predecessor, David Thorburn, to intervene in the affairs of the Confederacy council. As early as six months into his new role, Gilikison promoted a series of innovations; including census-taking, a land registry system, as well as "the founding of an agricultural society; the improvement of roads; the building of a new council house; [and] the establishment of a village in the centre of the reserve" (ibid: 203).

Gilikison had also promoted the adoption of "separate sub-committees" of council in 1862 (Doxtator, 1996: 242). In addition, he attempted – unsuccessfully – to persuade the council to establish an "executive committee" that could meet independently from the entire council (ibid). The more conservative nations frequently opposed these innovations. Indeed, members of the Onondaga nation would occasionally petition the Dominion government with their objections to the decisions that took place in council (Weaver, 1984: 175-176, also see Doxtator, 1996: note 91 at page 271). A deputation

was also sent to Ottawa to lodge a complaint about Gilikison following one of his attempts to intervene in the administration of council (Doxtator, 1996: 242). But Gilikison's innovations were not at all opposed by all Six Nations members.

Among members of the more acculturated nations, including some of the Mohawk and Oneida chiefs, Gilikison's innovations were more favourably received. This was especially true among a group of young Mohawk "warriors" that had formed at Six Nations in 1861. Under the auspices of one Issac Powless – an Anglican Mohawk who had received a Euro-Canadian education – this group distributed a petition on the reserve which promoted the establishment of an elected system of government (Weaver, 1970a: 4-5; 1984: 171-172). This allowed some of the more acculturated members of Six Nations to express their preference for Confederacy reform even before Gilikison's arrival. As Weaver (ibid: 172) notes:

> [T]he reformers argued for an elected form of reserve government in which the council would be directly responsible to the electorate, and for educational qualifications for councillors which would better equip them to protect the property and rights of the Six Nations against white incursions.

The petition that called for an elected system of government at Six Nations is an important event in history. As a reform based movement, it may have emerged from a political context where Jasper Gilikison had situated himself strategically within the reserve-based politics of the day. I suggest that it is of no small coincidence that Gilikison promoted Confederacy reform at Six Nations in 1862. Perhaps he recognized it as an auspicious time to advocate an elected system of government without having such

actions appear – at least outwardly – as a unilateral imposition of the Dominion government (see Shimony, 1961/1994: 91).[88] This is not only significant to the student of Six Nations political history, but also Indigenous historians in general. In short, it suggests that colonial imposition takes place in mutually-strategic and complex ways (compare Wolf, 1982: 239-246; and Singh, 2000: 1-11).

The call to Confederacy reform is also significant because it reveals the extent to which differences in acculturation had come to re-shape reserve based politics during the mid-nineteenth century. To be sure, the "warriors" had come to regard their education as the credentialed basis upon which chiefs and other Confederacy officials ought to occupy their positions in office. They had also come to place emphasis on majority voting as the formal means through which Confederacy chiefs and other officials ought to establish and assume their role in politics and governance. This stood in direct contrast to the more traditional system of appointment by clan mothers, and reflected the types of political change and acculturation that was taking place at Six Nations.

Indeed, Weaver has suggested that the more acculturated nations were growing increasingly accustomed to the procedure of voting in both church groups and agricultural societies during the mid to late nineteenth century (Weaver, 1984: 176). As Weaver also

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[88] In later years, Gilikison would become more aggressive in his push toward an elected form of government. As Weaver (1984: 176) notes the Chiefs would sometimes deliberate matters in council even after a decision was sent to Ottawa. "These situations, which were increasingly common in the early 1880s", she says, "Often prompted the Superintendent to threaten the chiefs with the prospect of an elected system if they did not proceed more quickly with council business" (ibid).

notes: "The upper tribal chiefs, anxious to tend their farms and businesses, wanted the 'tedious' deliberations shortened and council affairs to run in a more efficient fashion" (ibid; also see Doxtator, 1996: 238). Indeed, some of the chiefs of the upper nations (Mohawk and Oneida) advocated the "streamlining" of council procedures in the interest of gaining control over lengthy debates in council (see Weaver, op cit.)

Lengthy debates are said to have characterized the council of 1862 (Weaver, 1970a). Put simply, the object of reaching consensus on any number of political issues was difficult, particularly as each of these issues was an embodiment of the everyday, material and social structural changes brought about by colonialism. Achieving a final decision was also complicated by the composition of the council. As Weaver has noted, the council was composed of:

> [70] individual chiefs interacting, representing various tribes [sic], various religious persuasions, various occupational backgrounds, various degrees of educational competence, [and] various degrees of competence in [the languages] involved in deliberations (with Mohawk being paramount)...(1970a: 19).

In sum, lengthy debates were common and represented one of the bases upon which the movement toward an elective form of local government was based. At the same time, it is important to consider what other factors contributed to the consolidation of a "reformist" constituency at Six Nations. I will now discuss this matter.

Endeavours toward council reform were not uncommon at mid to late nineteenth century Grand River. Many of them grew out of strains within council in the years 1873,

1894, and 1906.[89] In each case, as discussed, these strains were motivated by the internal composition of a council that had undergone significant structural changes through the early to mid nineteenth century. These strains were further intensified by various kinds of culture change brought about by Euro-Canadian settlers and early colonial policy. This is particularly true of the year 1873 where some older strains in council produced two very different political positions.

To date, and as mentioned, the literature on Six Nations history has suggested two possibilities where political beliefs are concerned: "conservative" (Longhouse) and "reform" (Christian). For the sake of clarity, I utilize this rather dichotomous distinction as a means of describing the various strains that took place in council during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the same time, I propose that further research is required to determine the actual complexity of political discourse and opinion at Grand River from 1860 onward. I will return to this matter in significant detail in Chapter Five.

The 1870s are significant when trying to understand the divisions created within the Six Nations council. But as Weaver (1970a: 5) describes, divisions were created some eight years prior to 1873 when – in 1865 – some of the council chiefs succeeded in instituting compulsory timber licensing for reserve members. Compulsory timber

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[89] It is not possible, in the space available, to elaborate on the many details of Six Nations political history; particularly as this relates to strains within council or movements toward an elected form of local government, but further research would be useful to Grand River political history. For an excellent investigation of these issues, see especially Weaver (1970a; 1970b).

licensing sat well among some of the more "reformist" minded individuals; in particular, those chiefs who later supported *portions* of the 1869 "Indian Act".[90] Others opposed the timber regulations – including "Canada's" official prohibition of timber sales from the reserve in 1873 – because they wanted to continue on with the cutting of timber in financially difficult times (Weaver, 1984: 173; 1970a: 5). This was a particularly disruptive matter in council which resulted in some of the more conservative Longhouse chiefs requesting "a separate part of the reserve for their own where government regulations would presumably not apply" (ibid: 173). For some of the more "reformist" minded chiefs, parts of the 1869 "Indian Act" were acceptable even though they remained "wary about legislative infringements on their authority" (ibid). Such characterized the diversity of council in 1873. These differences would continue well into the later nineteenth century.

In 1894, for example, a group of Six Nations men -- also educated at the Mohawk Institute and not a part of the royaner matrilineages -- organized to promote an elected council system under section 75 of the 1886 *Indian Act* (Weaver, 1994: 239)[91]. Known at

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[90] In some of the literature, particularly the work of Sally Weaver, it is suggested that 1869 marks the year of the very first *Indian Act.* In historical fact, the very first piece of consolidated legislation entitled the *Indian Act* did not culminate until the year 1876 (see Venne, 1981). The 1869 legislation was actually entitled *An Act for the gradual enfranchisement of Indians, the better management of Indian affairs, and to extend the provisions of the Act 31st Victoria* (Venne, 1981). The use of quotation marks around Indian Act in this case is intended to recognize the actual legislative history.

[91] Section 75 of the 1886 *Indian Act* [R.S.C. 1886, c.43.] reads: "Whenever the Governor in Council deems advisable, for the good government of a band, to introduce

Six Nations as the "Progressive Warriors", this group "wanted a council progressive in outlook, accountable to the people through elections, and recruited on the principle of personal achievement rather than hereditary privilege" (Weaver, 1994: 238). In many ways, this group symbolized the extent to which differences in acculturation had come to create and subsequently consolidate two very different political constituencies at Grand River. As such, the Warriors themselves were able to acquire 212 signatures on a petition that was presented to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs requesting the introduction of a system of elected chiefs in the spring of 1894.[92] This petition, however, was unsuccessful in securing an elected form of local government. Some twelve years later, in 1907, another petition circulated at Six Nations.

The 1907 petition contained 300 signatures – slightly more than a quarter of the Six Nations population (Doxtator, 1996: 240).[93] Most of the signatures supported earlier attempts by the "warriors" except this time, and as Weaver notes, those who had signed referred to themselves collectively as "the Dehorners", a reference to the act of taking

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the system of election of chiefs or headmen, he may provide that the chiefs or headmen of any band of Indians shall be elected, as hereinafter provided, at such time and place as the superintendent general directs; and they shall, in such case, be elected for a term of three years" (*Indian Act* [R.S.C. 1886, c.43] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 141).

[92] A transcription of this petition, reproduced in its entirety (without signatures), can be found in Weaver (1970a: 23). Weaver also cites the appropriate Public Archives of Canada series (ibid: 36 at note 63).

[93] A transcription of this petition, reproduced in its entirety (without signatures), can be found in Weaver (1970b: 11-12, also see "Note", pp. 12). Weaver also cites the appropriate Public Archives of Canada series (ibid: 25 at note 13).

back the horns which traditional chiefs wore atop their heads (Weaver, 1970b: 11-12 & 20). The Dehorners were also supported by some Six Nations members and chiefs to institute an elected system of local government (ibid)[94] The undertakings of the Indian Rights Association, however, were denounced officially by the hereditary council in 1909. In February of that year, the council "again asked for a copy of the 1907 petition, and stated their wish to declare the Dehorners an 'unlawful assembly'" (ibid: 20). Furthermore, the council asked for the names of the supporters of the elective system so that their "lawless ringleaders" could be prosecuted (ibid: 20).

At nineteenth century Six Nations, the hereditary council risked rebuttal from one of two parties: the Canadian government, and those who were calling for Confederacy reform. I will discuss the reaction of the Canadian government shortly, but for now it is also important to emphasize that the majority of chiefs -- along with other concerned traditionalists – were outwardly opposed to reform or "rights-based" movements (Weaver, 1970b). As mentioned, the hereditary council sought to declare the reformers an "unlawful assembly" in 1907; but this had not been the only opposition to an elective system. Indeed, some of the more traditional Longhouse adherents at Six Nations --

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[94] Notably, the "Progressive Warriors" came to reorganize by the year 1907 under the title of the "Indians Rights Association" (Weaver, 1994: 243). The use of "rights" by "reformists" may possibly reflect an adherence to European philosophies of liberalism, and its associated rights discourse. Though further research is required, I suggest that there exists no translation for the word "rights" in any of the Haudenosaunee languages. The use of rights by such a "reformist" group, then, may reflect an avenue of political acculturation that requires further examination.

whose presence is much more than a mere political constituency still today -- defended the custom of traditional governance in accordance with ancient Haudenosaunee principles.

From 1875, the Confederacy had protested the imposition of the *Indian Act.* In January of that year, the chiefs acted in the absence of a quorum in council to send a petition to Ottawa protesting the imposition of the laws (Weaver, 1984: 174). Their actions are testimony to Haudenosaunee resistance against state hegemony. The petition, signed by a majority of Onondaga chiefs "informed the government that the chiefs were badly divided over the 1869 law, claiming that the division could have been avoided if the proper deliberative procedures were used in council" (ibid). Seth Newhouse was among the chiefs to sign the petition, a Pine Tree chief who spent many years trying to ensure the continuity of Grand River Haudenosaunee political tradition (ibid; also Doxtator, 1996: 238). Newhouse (1885) had worked passionately to document the story of the Peacemaker and the coming the *Kayanerenhkowa* or Great Law.[95] His contribution is very much grounded in Haudenosaunee political philosophy, and must be understood in its historic context. As Weaver (1984: 181) states of this:

> As a reaction to political conditions, Newhouse's work was an obvious attempt to justify the continuance of the Confederacy to senior government officials and local reformers. He did this by recording and rationalizing its procedures in a

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[95] In 1885, Seth Newhouse authored a 300 page manuscript on this matter. I will soon be in possession of his "Cosmonogy of Dekanawida's Government of the Iroquois Confederacy" [PAC MG19F26 1885] and intend fully to provide an analysis and further commentary and response to the work of Weaver (1984).

> systematic fashion, much like the articles of bylaws which the progressive farmers were promoting at the same time to the council. *Newhouse's ultimate aim was to demonstrate that the Confederacy was a time honoured and workable system of government, as ordered and rational as those the reformers were proposing.* Implicit in his work was the argument that if the traditional rules were reestablished there would be no need for the voting and committee procedures which the progressive Mohawks were promoting. As a reaction to political unrest, Newhouse's manuscript was a conservative statement reflecting an unmistakable preference for retaining Iroquois traditions rather than adopting Euro-Canadian models for local government [emphasis mine].

In effect, Newhouse (1885) worked tirelessly through the late nineteenth century to document – in writing – the ancient political customs of the Grand River Haudenosaunee. His words were among the first to be written on the matter of Haudenosaunee politics. These words did not constitute, however, the only type of conservative protest coming from Grand River.

Some four years before the "Progressive Warriors" circulated their second petition for an elective system in 1907, for example, the majority of hereditary chiefs were disturbed by a government which had – once again – introduced Indian legislation through an Order-in-Council (ibid). The chiefs were further opposed to the unilateral powers invested in the Canadian government, and they outwardly reminded the government of their early nation-to-nation relationship. In this regard, the minutes of council for April 25, 1890 are worthy of quoting at length:

> The Council unanemously [sic] decided to ask the Government of Canada to exempt the Six Nation Indians of Grand River from the operation of the Indian Advancement Act as we have good reason to be proud of the ancient Rules and Regulations which has been handed down to us by our forefathers from the fact that we believe we have made more improvements in the way of Civilization,

> Education and Christianity, under the management of our hereditary chiefs than any other Indian Band or tribe in the Dominion of Canada that are under the elective system... [W]e are holding and occupying a tract of land in common under certain patent signed by Sir Frederick Haldimand and sealed with the great seal of Great Britain on the 25th day of October A.D. 1784 under that patent we are assured (on account of our attachment to the British Crown) to enjoy the land and our posterity with undisturbed possession forever. Hence we claim that in the appointment of our Chiefs should be entirely independent from any Indian Act and the appointment of Officers in our Council as well – (Minutes of Six Nations Council, 25 April 1890, quoted in Weaver, 1970a: 22-23).

The minutes of the 1890 council are important. First, they attest to a strong traditional presence at late nineteenth century Six Nations. They show how the belief in Haudenosaunee autonomy and independence remained part of the collective Six Nations identity even as late as 1890. Second, these minutes are testimony to the types of colonial tactics being used to "improve" the ways of the Haudenosaunee where "Civilization, Education and Christianity" were concerned. This was at the expense of the Haudenosaunee autonomy as original allies of the British. Third, and more significantly, these minutes suggest – even despite the disparity of political opinion – that the council was able to secure (when necessary) some shared understandings about history as late as 1890. It seems that even despite their sometimes radical differences, the majority at Six Nations agreed on matters of history, state relations and – most notably – "self determination". As Weaver has noted of these politics:

> The real issue between the hereditary defenders and the elective council proponents lay in which form of government could most satisfactorily achieve these ends. Both groups wanted considerable local self-determination, but the chiefs chose to associate this desire for self-determination with the hereditary form of government which had been historically an independent tribal government, and

> the elective group chose to associate possible self determination with a "municipal" form of local government, a model from the whiteman's administrative structure" (1970a: viii).

On that account, the majority at Six Nations including the Grand River Confederacy council did not necessarily lose sight of its early relationship with the British despite the existence of various political constituencies. Put differently, the council maintained historic memory of its independence and autonomy originating from the Haldimand land grant even though the Dehorners had outwardly opposed the hereditary style of government and had worked to reconfigure its organization through three separate reserve-based petitions.

With respect to the Dehorner petitions, each of them was addressed with swift and decisive action by the Confederacy council. Before attempts to "outlaw" the Dehorners in 1907, for example, a deputation of chiefs arrived in Ottawa "asking that any communication from the people of the Six Nations pass through council before being forwarded to Ottawa – the obvious target being the Dehorners' correspondence" (Weaver, 1970b: 21). The government responded favourably to this deputation, enabling chiefs to read all correspondence between the Secretary and Superintendent of the Indian Department (ibid). They refused, however, to let the chiefs "outlaw" the Dehorners (ibid). In May of 1909, it is suggested that this led the council to dismiss two royaner, Nelles Montour and Joseph Green, who had supported the "elective council proposals" (ibid: 22). I will return to the significance of these dismissals later in the chapter. For

now, it is enough to note that the Canadian government decided against elective reform for many years; indeed, even following another Dehorner petition in 1910 (ibid: 23).[96]

The End of an Era, 1910-1924

Neither the Indian Superintendent nor the Canadian government were intent, at least initially, on terminating the Confederacy Council at early twentieth century Grand River. As Doxtator (1996: 241-242) suggests, it was only after 1923 that the Canadian government considered the establishment of an elected system (also see Weaver, 1994: 247-248). In fact, from 1894 through to the early twentieth century the Canadian government was not in favour of an order in council to implement an elected *Indian Act* system at Six Nations. Six Nations was an exception of sorts since the new Dominion government had expressed its intention to replace all traditional forms of Aboriginal government with the elected system in colonial Canada (ibid).

This plan was at odds with what actually happened at Six Nations. At Grand River, the government restated its established position that "either a vote of the majority

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[96] Weaver notes that the preamble to the 1910 petition bore the same wording as that of 1907. The Dehorners appear also to have outwardly stated their opposition to the appointment of chiefs by clan mothers with Nelles Montour – a Dehorner chief -- quoted in an Ottawa newspaper as "disparaging a rule by women in a democratic age" (see Ottawa Free Press, 1 April, 1910, quoted in Weaver, 1970b: 23). Though it is difficult to determine the actual extent of these kinds of politics held by some of the chiefs, Monture's opposition to the "rule of women" is testimony to the subtle, albeit understudied way in which reform-based efforts showed an inseparable hostility to women's once esteemed status and influence.

[i.e. Six Nations population], or proven charges of corruption must constitute an acceptable basis for change" (Weaver, 1970b: 19). Why did the Canadian government remain so averse to elected reform through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? There are two explanations.

First, as mentioned, the Canadian government may have felt it genuinely unnecessary to intervene in reserve-based politics in the absence of corruption or a clear "majority" vote. In this regard, the Canadian government may have been content in supporting the traditional Confederacy government, or perhaps assumed – in typical Eurocentric fashion and a further disavowal of early nation-to-nation agreements – that the Six Nations were "unprepared" for elective reform until the mid 1920s. This theory gains credibility from the literature on nineteenth century Six Nations political history. Doxtator (1996: 242), for example, has stated that:

> The Indian Department had provided themselves with the option of "ordering" an elected council for any Native community in their 1869 Indian Act, yet despite the series of petitions continuing until the end of the century from several hundred band members asking for an elected council, the government continued to support the Confederacy council until they thought that the council was "out of control". It had long been Indian Affairs policy to respect the wishes of the Six Nations council "unless they in some way clash with the provisions of the Indian Act."[97]

On this reading, the government decided against council reform based on their ability to maintain political amenability at Six Nations. Put differently, the Government of Canada

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[97] In drawing this conclusion in relation to the *Indian Act*, Doxtator makes reference to Government correspondence found in PAC RG 10 vol. 2284 file 57169-1b pt.3.

saw little need to interfere with Grand River politics so long as they could maintain their jurisdiction and supremacy through state-imposed legislation and reserve-based fragmentation (also see Doxtator, 1996: 241). Throughout the nineteenth century, this style of state hegemony was facilitated through the emergence and subsequent consolidation of political constituencies.

The history of religious influence, acculturation, and reform based movements cannot be underestimated. Indeed, the nature of these divisions may have formed the basis upon which the government avoided council reform. Put simply, and as a second (albeit related) explanation for their ongoing inattention, the Dominion government may have been content in allowing the differences created by religious disunity and differences in acculturation to play themselves out. Doxtator (1996: 241) puts this succinctly in noting that:

> The Indian Department was content to try and use the Confederacy council as a means of implementing its own acculturation agenda because of two main characteristics of the council: the historical and symbolic importance of the royaner council within the community and the willingness of some of the Christian educated Mohawk royaner to adopt at least selected Euro-Canadian political forms such as committees, minutes and administrative positions.

On that account, the maintenance of the Confederacy council through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may have worked in the interest of furthering the assimilationist goals of the Canadian state. Of course, neither of these explanations provides us with any clear indication about the dramatic events of 1924. In October of that year, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police – acting on a Parliamentary Order in Council – padlocked the

hereditary council house (Table H) and imposed an elected *Indian Act* council system in its place. Thus, it is important to question what may have led the Canadian government to impose an elected *Indian Act* council at Six Nations. It is to this issue, a government inquiry into Six Nations affairs, and the status of Six Nations women that I now turn my attention.

Confederacy Protest and the International Community,1919-1924

The early 1920s were characterized by further protest at Grand River Territory. As Weaver once put it: "one more petition (from the Six Nations men in European combat arena, 1919)[98], and one more final investigation of Col. Andrew T. Thompson (1923), were to remain necessary before the elective system would be instituted" (1970b: 24). Weaver also suggests that "the impetus for change" took place *originally* among "the Six Nations people themselves" (ibid). In this regard, I believe that Weaver underestimates another stage in a chronology of events – in particular, the presence of the Haudenosaunee before the international community. Doxtator (1996: 241-242) and Williams (1982) have both suggested that this presence brought international embarrassment to the Canadian government, though neither of them has elaborated this theory in my view.

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[98] The reference here is to the brave veterans of Grand River who happened to be Haudenosaunee and served as allies in Canada's World War One. Veterans Park is located at Ohsweken, Ontario (or "the village" as it is sometimes called) and is intended to commemorate the Haudenosaunee who participated in these and other Wars (Table I).

On closer inspection, one can trace a chronology of events at Six Nations which suggests that the Government of Canada did play a subtle, albeit very active role in the implementation of the elected system at Grand River. In order to recount that history, it is of great importance to consider the sojourns of the Cayuga chief *Deskaheh*, or Levi General, to London, England in 1921 (see Akwesasne Notes, 1981; Williams,1982: Chpt. Nine). In 1921, *Deskaheh* demanded that the hereditary system, original wampum and other nation-to-nation agreements between the Haudenosaunee and early British be protected and "guaranteed under King George III" (Akwesasne Notes, 1981:19).

England refused to intervene in "Canadian domestic problems", and Levi General and others spent two more years preparing to present this case to the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland (see esp. Williams, 1982: 236-243; Weaver, 1994: 247-248, Akwesasne Notes, 1981: 18-35, also see Chapter Three). This would not prevent the Government of Canada, however, from calling an inquiry into the affairs of the Grand River Haudenosaunee. Indeed, a report was commissioned by Duncan Campbell Scott on March 20, 1923[99] to investigate the political situation at the Six Nations under the assignment of Andrew T. Thompson (see *Issac et al. v. Davey et al.* (1974) 51 D.L.R. (3d): 175).

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[99] See page 11 of the *Report of Andrew T. Thompson, Commissioner to Investigate and Enquire into the Affairs of the Six Nations Indians, 1923 (Ottawa, 1924)* Unpublished Sessional Papers 3rd Session of the 14th Parliament, 28 February 1924 - 19 July 1924, No. 308, RG 14, D2, Volume 123" (University of Toronto Reference Archives).

Thompson himself was not unknown to the Six Nations community. In fact, Thompson had commanded a regiment from Six Nations during the First World War (Weaver, 1994: 246 & 248). In this regard, he was in rather close association to First World War veterans; many of whom had petitioned for an elected council at Six Nations on their immediate return from combat (ibid). This was not overlooked by the people of Six Nations as Thompson's relationship to veterans "cast doubt on his impartiality and on the government's motives" (ibid).

For his part, *Deskaheh* reached the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland in September of 1923 (Akwesasne Notes, 1981: 19). In his presentation before the League, he spoke of Haudenosaunee political tradition, autonomy and governance at Grand River (ibid). His presence before the League remained on the minds of Canadian politicians for some time to come. In 1923, for example, Col. C.F. Morgan, the Indian Superintendent at Brantford in 1923, had recommended that the entire Six Nations council be deposed before "rebellious activities got completely out of hand" (see Doxtator, 1996: 242). Later, in June of 1924, the good chief *Deskaheh* became the subject of a contemplative exchange in Parliament. The debate between the Honourable Charles Stewart (then Minister of the Interior and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs) and the Honourable Charles Meighen (Leader of the Conservative Opposition) is worthy of quotation at length:

Mr. Meighen: Have the Indians got a status in the league (of nations) yet?

Mr. Stewart (Argenteuil): Not that I have heard.

Mr. Meighen: Who is over there,— this man Long?

Mr. Stewart: No, Deskahet [sic].

Mr. Meighen: That is worse.

Mr. Stewart: He is known generally throughout the country around Brantford and he was in London when last I heard of him. Unfortunately this man has created a considerable impression, particularly upon the representatives of the smaller nations. It is amazing, nevertheless it is a fact that he did have some influence and has given trouble. He is now in England stirring up all the discontent he possibly can ....

Mr. Meighan: We are inclined to smile here at the Indian situation in relation to the League of Nations, but at one time during the sessions of the assembly of the league it did not appear to be a laughing matter. The representatives of the Indians arrived at Geneva by way of London. They first made their appeal in London and went further to the League of Nations; through the Netherlands they made an attempt to become members of the League. While in Geneva the Canadian representatives, I would not say experienced difficulty, but at any rate were of the opinion that Canada might be placed in a false position before the league inasmuch as the Indian representatives with their legal adviser from across the line had stirred up considerable enthusiasm in their case in the city of Geneva. As the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Stewart, has pointed out the smaller nations seem to show great interest in the Indians' claim. They made the claim that they were neither British subjects nor Canadians, they declared that they were allies of Great Britain, their status having been recognized under an old treaty made many years ago. And when it was pointed out that they had served with the Canadian troops as Canadians overseas their reply was that they had done nothing of the kind but had gone overseas as allies of Great Britain, fighting side by side with other allies, who were Canadians. In short, they claimed the status of a nation and asked to be admitted to the league on that basis. There is an organization in Geneva for the protection of the Indians, and meetings were held nightly there protesting against the alleged treatment of these Indians by Canada. A deputation was sent from this association to wait upon the ex- Minister of Justice (Sir Lomer Goulin) and myself, asking why we had treated the Indians in such a manner. The Canadian delegation was at first inclined to be sceptical of the seriousness of the matter, but it soon appeared that the representatives of the Indians were really in earnest. In

> reply we directed them to send the Indians and their legal representative to us so that we might discuss the matter together. They never came, but at a meeting of the league the representatives from Persia were very insistent on a motion being made to have the whole question of the treatment of the Indians by the Dominion of Canada discussed in the Assembly. Application was made to Sir Eric Drummond, who I believe was secretary to the Assembly, and the matter was referred to the president and a certain board the name of which I cannot recall at the moment. It was decided that the Indians had no claim to a status in the league and their case was not brought up in any way before the Assembly. For two or three days it seemed as though the Canadian representatives might be called upon in the Assembly of the League of Nations to defend the treatment of the Indians by the Dominion of Canada. When this attempt failed the representatives of the Indians remained in Geneva, and I am not sure that they are not there now. They remained there, for a time disseminating propaganda, and I believe they went to Paris for a while and then on to London. The latest information I have is that at the next meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations another attempt will be made by the Indians to be recognized as a nation in the League.
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> Mr Meighan: I am afraid I find my enthusiasm for the League of Nations actually waning. If it is spending its time on humbug of that sort it seems to me it might soon be time for us to consider whether we will vote the money Canada supplies (Canada, 1924: 3318).

As this debate in Parliament suggests, *Deskaheh*'s assertion of Haudenosaunee independence before the League of Nations concerned the Canadian state, especially since the Cayuga chief was thought to possess a degree of influence. His presentation also threatened to tarnish Canada's international reputation for its treatment of Indigenous peoples in general; an issue in which Canadian representatives were being called upon to address. As such, I concur with Williams (1982) and Doxtator (1996) that the state elected to investigate the activities of the Six Nations, and furthermore, impose an elective system only when it was unable to intercept the Confederacy's protest in an

international forum.

The decision to intervene at Six Nations arose from activities that asserted Haudenosaunee autonomy, all of which ran contrary to sovereign state interests. If it had not been for these activities, the Canadian government probably would have had little interest in intervening in Six Nations politics or reserve-based factionalism. Faced in 1924 with a challenge to its jurisdiction and supremacy as maintained through state-imposed legislation, the government became interested in these matters. They were also interested in knowing more about the inner workings of the Confederacy council. These issues would be investigated by Andrew T. Thompson in his inquiry as commissioned on March 20, 1923. Apart from my own, I know of no other research that has considered this report in any scholarly detail. It is to an analysis of this report that I now turn.

Women's Status, Governance and The Report of Colonel Andrew T. Thompson

In his report, Thompson[100] endeavoured to describe the "current affairs of the Six Nations Indians" based on the testimonies of several informants (1924: 12).[101] Included

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[100] I am referring here and henceforth to the *Report of Andrew T. Thompson, Commissioner to Investigate and Enquire into the Affairs of the Six Nations Indians, 1923 (Ottawa, 1924).* The Report itself is reproduced in its entirety in Unpublished Sessional Papers, 3rd Session of the 14th Parliament, 28 February 1924 - 19 July 1924, No. 308, RG 14, D2, Volume 123" (University of Toronto Reference Archives).

[101] Though Thompson does not mention the precise number of testimonies he gathered, we can assume that they would not likely have included those of the "Lower Nation" chiefs who would have boycotted any investigation into the matter of an elected government (also see Williams, 1982: 245).

are his observations on the status of education, health, morality, elections [sic] of chiefs, powers assumed by council, and so on.[102] Throughout the report, Thompson sheds enormous insight into the Six Nations' ability to preserve cultural practices at Grand River, particularly in his descriptions of the "current" status of women. Apart from my own, I am unaware of any other literature that has given this kind of "reading" of the Thompson report.

It would be inaccurate to suggest that Thompson addresses, explicitly, the status of women at Six Nations. At the same time, he is unable – and would remain as such today – to speak of Confederacy affairs without speaking of women specifically. In this regard, Thompson recounts the testimony of "informants" who had suggested that the traditional nomination of chiefs had undergone procedural changes. Based on these testimonies, he proposes that the procedure for nominating chiefs had been changed due to the "weaknesses" of both oral tradition – and memory – in maintaining ancient custom. As he explains at length:

> In their form of Government the Six Nations have no written constitution. Their procedure rests upon long established custom, but as the knowledge of this [...] has been transmitted by word of mouth only from generation to generation, it is impossible to ascertain the facts within exactness. That the right to chieftainship is confined to a few families, and is hereditary in principle, all are agreed, and further that the nomination of the chief is a prerogative of the women of the family concerned. At this point, however, the evidence of the witnesses varied somewhat. Some maintained that the right of nominations belongs to all women

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[102] Though Thompson talks of the "elections of chiefs" in his report, he makes very clear that elections per se are not a part of Confederacy procedure. As he notes "The Council of Chiefs is composed of men not "elected", but appointed" (ibid: 39).

> of the family, with a final say, in case of disagreement, in the oldest woman thereof. Others maintained that the oldest woman alone has the right to nominate. The difference is not of very much importance, for after all the oldest woman of the family has the say, whether with or without consultation with the other women ... It follows that a comparatively small number of old women have the selection of those who are entrusted with the transaction of the business of the Six Nations Indians, while the vast majority of the people have nothing whatever to say in the choice of their public servants (ibid: 38-39).

Thompson's words are revealing to the historian of women's status and political organization. Inherent within them is a Eurocentric bias that leads him to suggest that "the choice of public servants" through elections ought to constitute the yardstick for measuring political accountability as well as legitimacy. All of this occurs at the expense of investigating women's traditional statuses and the history or "rights" of the Six Nations – two very critical omissions (see Williams, 1982: 245). In fact, Thompson does not address – and possibly the result of his own cultural bias, misinterpretation or political misgivings – the apparent confusion held by "informants" where women's role in chiefly nominations was concerned. All he suggests is that people were unable to tell him about the women responsible for nominating chiefs – representing an opportunity of sorts for him and his political comrades back in Ottawa to dispose with the hereditary government.

Beyond these aspects of his report, Thompson does suggest that women held the right to nominate Confederacy chiefs as late as 1924. His report is therefore testimony to the degree of cultural continuity that existed at 1920s Grand River. That women held the ongoing ability to nominate chiefs – even though the extent of historical transformation is left unspecified – is a very significant dimension of the report itself. In effect, the

Thompson report establishes that some of the traditions of the Confederacy had survived – as of 1924 – for a total of 139 years since their settlement along the banks of the Grand River.

In relation to women's status, Thompson elaborates the degree of cultural change surrounding the traditional nomination of chiefs. In illustrating this change, he alludes to a number of limitations thought to be being placed on women's "choice". As he describes at some length:

> In a preceding part of my report, under the heading "Election of Chiefs" will be found a description of the manner in which Six Nations Indians are made chiefs. There can be no doubt that the ancient usage of this people was on nomination by the women of certain families, in which the right to chieftainship was hereditary. There is abundant evidence to show that while the letter of this institution has been observed, its spirit is now constantly broken. The Council undoubtedly brings pressure to bear upon the woman about to nominate a chief, with the result that the party nominated is in reality their choice, and not the free and unfettered choice of the woman herself (ibid: 45).

In this quotation, Thompson suggests that the "spirit" of Haudenosaunee custom was "constantly broken" over time, and that men had come to exert a degree of influence over women's decisions. His reading of political history is worthy of further research, however, it is also limited by an important conceptual problem: Thompson describes a very static and unchanging notion of culture which he then in turn uses as a standard for evaluating Haudenosaunee political legitimacy. The criteria he uses to evaluate the Confederacy in the twentieth century do not explain the actual "spirit" of Haudenosaunee custom, nor do they address the complexities of cultural adaptation and colonialism. He

also detaches himself from describing the interdependence of both men and women as this relates to traditional political organization. Thompson overlooks the fact that Haudenosaunee custom would never have obstructed men from having some kind of influence over women's nominations in one important way: men were part of the community in which clan mothers would observe a young potential chief interacting with others before she made her appointment (Chapter One). Women also had husbands and brothers.

Thompson's report also tends to assume that men and women traditionally occupied entirely detached spheres when it came to procedures of governance. Though further research is required, his assessment stands in some contrast to the exchange of socio-political beliefs between the sexes, and that little or no exchange could possibly have existed between the socio-political roles and responsibilities of both men and women. To be sure, these core principles – which formed the basis of political culture and protocol – could have survived into the early twentieth century although none of this is discussed by Thompson (compare Alfred, 1995: 188).

Accordingly, it is worth noting that men would likely have possessed some degree of influence as relates to the installation of chiefs, and that women's choice was never as "unfettered" as Thompson proposes. It is also worth noting that the procedure for nominating chiefs, as discussed in Chapter One, always involved a period of "grooming" whereby women paid close attention to a chiefly candidate's behaviour, character, and

interactions with others. In this regard, and as previously mentioned, it is reasonable to assume that women were sensitive to, and indeed formulated their decisions for nominating chiefs – at least in part – based on the way that young men were perceived by other men in both the nation and clan. All of this went unaddressed in the Thompson report.

Thompson was not only concerned with elaborating the procedures for nominating and installing chiefs at twentieth century Grand River. In fact, he also discusses the procedure for dismissing chiefs from council which, as discussed in Chapter One, was a responsibility of clan mothers. The report itself sheds insight – albeit Thompson's interpretation – on the procedure for dismissing chiefs in the 1920s. As he describes:

> The Council appears ... to have usurped authority as to dismissal. On this point very positive evidence was tendered by an Indian who was himself a Chief, who has been so for a period of some forty five years, and who appeared to be exceptionally well posted in the customs and traditions of his people. In answer to the question, "How is a chief dismissed from Council?", he replied as follows: "If the chiefs desire his dismissal they so advise the woman who has nominated him. She then admonishes him, and he remains a chief. If, however, this occurs three times, he is ejected, and the woman nominates a new chief. This was the old system, but *the chiefs have usurped this right of the woman to a large extent, and have been known to dismiss a chief from the Council without consulting the woman who nominated him.* They have exercised their power in a tyrannical way to get rid of those opposing the view of the majority. The majority did not favour Indians participating in the Great War. Chief J.S. Johnson announced that he was going overseas to fight, and was dismissed in consequence. Chief Thomas John actually did go, and he, too, was dismissed. In my opinion, the present action of the Council is a usurpation, and quite contrary to the ancient custom of our people" [emphasis added] (ibid: 45-46).

In this testimony, an unnamed chief suggests that men – from within the Confederacy –

had started to "usurp" the power of women in the twentieth century proceedings of council. His testimony is important to the historian of women's status, because it suggests that some chiefs may have come to disregard women's influence as relates to the dismissal of traditional chiefs. This requires further investigation. At the same time, this testimony – which was included at Thompson's discretion – must be read as embodying the political factionalism which had been taking place at Six Nations during the early twentieth century. On closer inspection, the "dismissals" to which his informant makes reference appear to have taken place in 1909 when – under unusual circumstances and as already discussed – two royaner chiefs (Nelles Montour and Joseph Green) lost their seats in council after supporting "elective council proposals" (Weaver, 1970b: 22). In this regard, it is unfortunate that the background of Thompson's informant – and this is true of all of his informants – remains unclear. *It is possible, in other words, that many of his informants supported an elected system of government and saw claims to despotism, Thompson's authority, and his report in general, as a means of securing the political change they had wanted.* It is also important to look more closely at what is known of the traditional procedure for removing chiefs.

On my understanding of the *Kayanerenhkowa*, or the Constitution of the [original] Five Nations, there is reason to suggest that men always played a part in the removal of chiefs from office, and that this did not necessarily reflect a "usurpation". As recently as 1984, for example, an assembly of Six Nations chiefs, elders and faithkeepers described –

albeit in writing – the process for removing Confederacy chiefs, and noted that "When the Sachems are in error by not acting in the best interests of the Hotinonshonni, then the men or women or both together shall bring the matter up at open council" (North American Indian Travelling College, 1984: 41). Moreover, they describe the process for removing traditional chiefs as follows:

> Should any Sachem of the Hotinonshonni try to establish an independent authority other than that of the Kaianerekowa (Great Law) he shall firstly, be warned by his women relatives. If he does not heed the warning, a second warning will be given by his warrior relatives. Should he disregard this, a third and final warning will be given by the Sachems of the Nation to which he belongs and if he still refuses; the Head Warrior shall dismiss him and another shall be chosen by the women relatives of the deposed Sachem (ibid).

Accordingly, the removal of chiefs was not only restricted to women. As is suggested, men and women could both discuss the ways of an erring chief, following which, a "warrior relative" (ibid) could be selected from among the men as part of the procedure for "dehorning" Confederacy chiefs. It is also worth noting that a chief could be dismissed for "establishing an independent authority other than that of the Great Law". In this regard, it is possible that support for an elective council may have been regarded unfavourably during the early twentieth century constituting in turn a legitimate grounds for dismissal.

By way of conclusion, the Thompson report is important in considering the history of the Six Nations Confederacy. Indeed, it is commonly regarded as a document that led ultimately to the installation of an elected council at Six Nations (Weaver, 1994: 248),

though the extent to which Thompson was actually cognizant of these events in uncertain. The report itself, however, seems very much committed to de-legitimizing the historic hereditary council.

To be more specific, Thompson himself makes an appeal for an elected form of governance in his report, and there is reason to believe that this was motivated – at least in part – by his opposition to the Cayuga chief *Deskaheh*, or Levi General. As mentioned, *Deskaheh* had made a trip to London, England in 1921 – two years year prior to Thompson's report. He spent two more years through to 1923 preparing to present his case at the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, requesting in both cases that the spirit of early wampum and nation-to-nation agreements made between Haudenosaunee and the British Crown be honoured. At various points throughout his report, Thompson also outwardly denounces *Deskaheh*'s efforts, referring to them as a "separatist campaign for independence" and couching his opposition in a supposed "misuse" of funds (ibid: 44-45). As he stated generally of *Deskaheh*'s "campaign":

> The separatist party, if I may so describe it, is exceptionally strong in the Council of Chiefs, in fact [it] is completely dominant there. Its members maintain, and it is a logical sequence from the position assumed, that not being British subjects they are not bound by Canadian law, and that, in consequence, the Indian Act does not apply to the Six Nations.

Thompson's words are testimony to both Haudenosaunee resistance as well as state hegemony at twentieth century Grand River. Had early nation-to-nation agreements made between the Haudenosaunee and British ever been respected, it was not the case

after 1924. In fact, the history preceding the Six Nations' move to the Grand River Valley, as well as the unbroken assertion of autonomy and independence is nowhere identified in the Thompson report. Rather, Confederacy efforts to have the early nation-to-nation agreements enforced were now being regarded as "separatists campaigns". It is within this context that Thompson bases his objection to the Confederacy council, and submitted to the Canadian government the following statement:

> I am convinced that those advocating a change in the system of government have fully established their contention, and that an elective system should be inaugurated at the earliest possible date [...] I am fully convinced that the present Council has undoubtedly been guilty of a serious usurpation of power, with regard to the Government of Canada on the one hand, and the people of the Six Nations Indians on the other, and that for a considerable time, they have been acting very much as a law unto themselves (ibid: 41 & 46).

Thompson's words are interesting. In political terms, they summon the Canadian government to impose an elective system of government at Six Nations based on an apparent usurpation of power from the Six Nations people and the Canadian government. In making this assertion, there is very little concern paid to early nation-to-nation agreements, including the Haldimand Land Grant, Two Row Wampum and Covenant Chain, where the Haudenosaunee had first asserted their distinct forms of political organization (Chapter Two). Thompson also refuses to acknowledge that only a minority of the Grand River population favoured political reform in past petitions. His words overlook a history of encroachments whereby Grand River Haudenosaunee are thought commonly to have relinquished their sovereignty and become subjects of the British

Crown. Thompson was, quite simply, unconcerned with the history of the Six Nations or British-Haudenosaunee allegiances in his report.

The significance of the Thompson report cannot be underestimated. Indeed, the government agreed with Thompson's final judgement, and a mere two days later, on September 17th, 1924, an order in council was passed and a system of elective chiefs and council was officially recommended. On October 14th, the hereditary council was dissolved by Government decree and the council office (Table H) was padlocked shut by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. An election was called for October 21, 1924. These events punctuate the political history of the Six Nations reserve and remain in the memory of the Haudenosaunee even today. I will return to this issue in Chapter Five.

Rethinking Grand River Political History: A Call to Multi-Dimensional Consciousness

Andrew T. Thompson left his mark on the Six Nations reserve. In issuing his final report, he took for granted that an elective system was best for the Grand River Haudenosaunee. Thompson also made recommendations that were Eurocentric, in that they assumed the cultural superiority of the democratic method over that of Haudenosaunee consensus; and racist, in that they required the diverse Haudenosaunee nations to start acting in accordance with the *Indian Act* and identifying exclusively as "Indians" for state-based administrative purposes. Far less frequently, however, are his recommendations – as well as the decision by government to institute an elected system

on the Grand River Haudenosaunee – acknowledged as being patriarchal. This is a startling omission from the literature on Six Nations political history. In the remainder of the chapter I turn attention to this matter.

Even before the decision to impose an elected council on the Six Nations, Thompson assumed Haudenosaunee women out of the political process. Though often missing from the literature, Thompson indeed recommended that women not play a part in the election procedures of the newly reformed council, and the Government of Canada ultimately agreed. "The franchise shall be given to all male Indians of the Band, twenty one years of age or over" (ibid: 41), suggested Thompson in 1924, adding further that "The consensus of opinion was that for the time being the franchise should not be extended to women, and since education is not yet very much advanced on the Reserve, in this I concur (ibid)."[103] In effect, and henceforth from 1924, women were not to play a role in governing the Six Nations community. This stood in stark contrast to the part that women had played in traditional political organization.

The impact of Thompson's recommendations, and the decision to impose an elected system on the Six Nations in 1924 was significant. For women in particular, the impact would have been different depending on one's spiritual (or religious) and political leanings. On the one hand, and especially among the more conservative Longhouse

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[103] The connection between education and women's exclusion remains undefined in Thompson's report. It is unclear, in other words, why women were excluded from political reform based on Thompson's observation of education.

adherents, women maintained their influence over kinship and political organization. As heads of matrilineages, they remained in possession of all titles to chieftainship; bestowing clan membership onto children, and also, appointing hereditary chiefs to the Confederacy council.[104]

On the other hand, and this is true for all women at Six Nations, an elected system of local government removed them – at least legally – from a procedural role and voice in the political process. On the 14th of October, 1924, the elected council became the only form of government recognized by the Canadian state. Put differently, the clan system – the very basis of women's esteemed status as well as the Confederacy government – ceased to function officially as the foundational basis of Six Nations governance. These are important events in Six Nations political history that need to be elaborated in the telling of Six Nations political history.

The history of women's status prior to and indeed following colonial imposition is fundamental to Grand River political history. Unfortunately, the literature has neglected

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[104] It is widely acknowledged that the hereditary chiefs continued to meet at Six Nations during the early twentieth century, and that they meet even today (Chapter Five). As Weaver (1994: 251) summarizes: "Following the 1924 change-over in local government, the Confederacy chiefs continued to hold meetings in the Onondaga Longhouse and to raise up new chiefs in the condolence ceremony. Joined at times by the Mohawk workers, a faction of Christian hereditary council supporters, they worked for the reinstatement of the hereditary council. As the years passed, however, some of the Lower Cayuga Longhouse members came to support the elected council, maintaining that religion and politics were separate fields of activity. Without governing functions, the hereditary council had gradually become more like a theocracy, reinforcing the values of the Longhouse culture and becoming more tightly integrated with the Longhouse religion". Also see Chapter Five of this dissertation.

an analysis of patriarchy and the way it was institutionalized at Grand River in this regard. Apart from my own, I am unaware of any other work that has attempted to engage critically with Thompson's evaluation and observations about women's status. Based on the analysis I have provided, however, it is reasonable to assume that women went from having the authority to nominate and remove chiefs from the hereditary council which governed the Six Nations, to being unable to participate, at least officially, in the governance of their very own community.

The literature that has investigated the events of 1924, as well as the history of reform-based movements, tends to focus on the events of 1924 as an event which marks colonial intrusion and injustice. As such, even the most well-intentioned writers have failed to connect political change with the transformation of women's status. Consider the events of 1924 as recounted by Ronald Wright in his book *Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes*. As he describes the injustices created by the events of 1924 at Six Nations:

> The Canadian government ... had been working [for years] ... to overthrow the assembly that dared to challenge it. On October 7, 1924, armed police burst into the Ohsweken Council House and read a decree dissolving the Six Nations parliament. They broke open a chest and seized documents going back to the time of Joseph Brant, many of them germane to [a] sovereignty case. More police raided the wampum keepers' homes, taking the sacred belts, the Iroquois equivalents of flag, mace, and Magna Carta. The invaders announced elections for a new council, to be chaired by [an] employee of Indian Affairs. [The Canadian Government] feared that the condoled chiefs might stand to win, but to [their] relief they and almost everyone else boycotted the entire process. From a population of about 4,500 only twenty-seven people voted: "Christian democrats" who elected themselves. But the sachems did not give up. They have sat ever

> since as a government exiled in its own country, holding their meetings at the Grand River Onondaga Longhouse. In 1959 they staged a countercoup and took back their council building. Again the Mounties ousted them ... For the majority at Grand River the sachems remain the true government, the only one with the authority conferred centuries ago by the divine Peacemaker. The alien democracy has never taken root: in a most recent vote for the "democratic" council, a mere 6 percent of the electorate took part (1992: 324-325).

Wright provides important details about the events of 1924. He does well at representing the events which led to the installation of an elected band council at Six Nations. But it would be inaccurate to say that Wright is able, or even interested in examining the complexity of events that preceded and follow from the events of early twentieth century Grand River.

Wright does not discuss differences in acculturation, reform based initiatives, or women's traditional status at Six Nations. How did these factors impact on Grand River political history? This is not necessarily a reflection of his scholarship, though it is important to compare Wright's assessment with a statement given by the Haudenosaunee in 1983 to a Standing Committee on Indian Self-Government. As some members of the Confederacy explained at that time:

> Since the inception of the various *Indian Acts*, including the Indian Advancement Act of 1884, the *Indian Act* and the band council system has divided our people ... In introducing the elective band council system, the Canadian government saw itself as more democratic than traditional governments and ignored the role of the people and the clans, the women and the chiefs, in Haudenosaunee society. *The Haudenosaunee had serious problems with the Indian "advancement" sections and the elective band council system [because] they did not allow for the participation of women (they could not be on the band council, or vote)* ... In each of the Haudenosaunee communities ... there were strong objections to even the possibility of the imposition of the Indian "advancement" provisions. The very

> concept of the Dominion government of Canada making laws that would govern the Haudenosaunee was most unacceptable to the Confederacy [emphasis mine] (Canada, 1983: 31A: 12).

In this statement, some members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy voiced opposition to the elected system that officially replaced the traditional government at Six Nations at the expense and exclusion of women.[105] As an appeal to justice, the Confederacy did not distinguish – as is so often the case in appeals to collective Aboriginal justice – between issues of governance and women's changing status (Cannon, 1995). Instead, they proposed a more multi-dimensional understanding of historical events that places injustices toward women or sex discrimination at the forefront of political concern. In my estimation, this approach ought to inform the history of events surrounding 1924, as well as that of reform-based movements through much of the nineteenth century. This requires further discussion.

The history that has been written on reform-based movements does not always consider its impact on women's influence, responsibility, or status even though that influence seems unmistakable. Consider, for example, a poem written by the "ardent Dehorner", Nelson Moses, as published originally in the Caledonia, Ontario based newspaper *The Haldimand Banner*, and reprinted – without further analysis or interpretation – in Sally Weaver's *Medicine and Politics among the Grand River*

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[105] Further research is required to assess the differences between Haudeonsaunee men, including attitudes to women's social and political roles in contemporary Haudenosaunee communities.

Iroquois (1972). The poem is testimony to the subtle, albeit understudied, way in which reform-based efforts implied also a hostility toward women's status and influence. As Moses (quoted in Weaver, 1972: 26) expressed of his opposition to the hereditary chiefs in 1908:

> Ye rusty chiefs all born that way
> Your grannies say, you must obey
> Altho' they think you know so much
> Don't fool yourselves your but a bautch [sic] [...]
> The rusty chiefs, no judgement have
> Who sit they there on whose behalf?
> For granny's choice and granny's pride
> Rules a nation, "unsatisfied" [...]

Moses may not have necessarily intended to invoke opposition to women's influence and status in this poem. Indeed, it is impossible to attribute such a motive to his words. Yet in opposing the Confederacy chiefs and council, Moses was not able – as this poem suggests – to express a degree of simultaneous opposition toward the "grannies" appointing chiefs. Put simply, there are patriarchal connotations that are at once a part – and inseparable from – his opposition to the hereditary council at early twentieth century Grand River.

The point that I am making can no longer go unnoticed by historians of political organization, women's status and gender relations at Six Nations. It is important to consider, in other words, the way that women's esteemed status and influence may have been transformed through reform-based efforts to depose the hereditary chiefs. To what extent was the opposition to hereditary governance inseparable from emerging patriarchal

beliefs about women? This question is difficult to answer though I have provided various suggestions and analyses. In order to answer this question, it is also important to contemplate one of the wampum I discussed in Chapter Two – notably The Circle Covenant Wampum.

As discussed, the Circle Covenant Wampum marks the foundation of the Confederacy around 1192 by the Great Peacemaker. The fifty strands of wampum extending inward symbolize the hands of Confederacy chiefs, "bound together so firmly that, if a tree should fall upon the circle it could not shake or break it" (Johnston, 1986: 9, Table E). "Inside of the circle", writes Darlene Johnston, "the clans, laws, ceremonies, ways, and traditions of the Confederacy are protected" (Johnston, 1986: 9, Table E). In effect, the Circle Covenant represents the strength of the Confederacy, and in many ways, it also embodies the present and future generations of Haudenosaunee.

On closer inspection, there is also reason to believe that the Circle Covenant protects and embodies the roles and responsibilities of women as clan mothers and heads of matrilineages. *This is because in the absence of women, there could be no nomination of chiefs, no hands extending inward, and certainly no identity on the inside of the circle.* To that extent, the Circle Covenant Wampum provides some important insight for understanding political change as inseparable from the transformation of women's esteemed status at nineteenth century Grand River. This requires only brief explanation.

From 1861 until 1924 (and likely still later), reform movements sought to secure

an elected form of local government at Six Nations. As discussed, the reformers sought to secure a form of government that was responsible to an electorate, along with "councillors" who were "in possession of greater educational qualifications" to replace the hereditary chiefs (Weaver, 1984: 172). As such, the reformers – along with those hereditary chiefs who had been influenced by them – parted ways with political tradition over a rather lengthy period of time. In the terms set out by the Circle Covenant Wampum, this meant that the reformers, and furthermore, the chiefs who had favoured the laws and procedures of a foreign style of government, came to stand outside of the circle during that time.

Put differently, the reformers and chiefs broke with the more traditional laws, ceremonies, ways, and traditions of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Among these traditions were political procedures that placed women – as heads of matrilineages responsible for the appointment of Confederacy chiefs – in esteemed positions of influence. The decision to favour political reform at Six Nations involved, thus, the simultaneous disavowal of women's esteemed status and influence. On my analysis, the Circle Covenant Wampum provides a context for understanding the transformation of women's status that inevitably formed part of reform-minded developments.

The disavowal of women's traditional and esteemed statuses was not limited to reform-based movements at Six Nations. By choosing ultimately to implement the elected *Indian Act* system in 1924, the Government of Canada also dismissed the laws

and traditions of the Haudenosaunee. This was in clear violation of early nation-to-nation agreements, as well as the ancient customs of the Haudenosaunee. It was simultaneously a violation of traditions which respected the historic roles and responsibilities of women. Putting an end to the Confederacy government, in other words, meant the erosion of women's status and a further institutionalization of patriarchal relations at Grand River. The status provisions of the *Indian Act* only contributed to the erosion of more harmonious gender and community relations. In Chapter Four, I provide some context to this suggestion by investigating the statutory subjugation of Haudenosaunee women through the twentieth century.

Conclusion

The preceding historical discussion permits at least two major analytical conclusions about Grand River political history. First, and most obviously, that differences in acculturation as well as religious dissimilarities constituted a major factor impacting women's status during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As discussed, differences in acculturation led some of the less conservative or traditional chiefs to support a rather pragmatic decision to structure land allotments based on the father's side which was to the eventual detriment of matrilineal kinship organization – but one source of women's esteem and influence – in the late 1840s.

This was a major event in the history of women's status and gender relations at

Six Nations. Of similar magnitude was the evolution of two distinct political constituencies who were frequently divided over traditional political convention and the procedures of government. And while there is reason to believe that these reform-minded individuals constituted only a minority at Grand River, their impact on Haudenosaunee women, as well as the future of politics at Six Nations, cannot be underestimated. Indeed, the ensuing conflicts of interest between "reformers" and "conservatives" continues to manifest itself even in the contemporary political landscape. In Chapter Five of this dissertation, I will address the complexity and historic context of contemporary Grand River politics.

A second and more central conclusion of this chapter is that the Government of Canada worked to produce colonial and patriarchal injustices that combined to produce distinct forms of subjugation for Haudenosaunee women at twentieth century Grand River. The decision to introduce an elected *Indian Act* council, for example, assumed that the democratic method of electing political officials could provide a solution for reserve-based factionalism and "separatist campaigns", and more importantly, that Haudenosaunee women ought to be prevented legally from exercising a procedural role and voice in the official political process.

It is important to consider the extent to which reformers had come to regard women's status differently or perhaps even inferior to that of men at twentieth century Grand River. Were reformers intent on establishing an elected system of governance at

the expense of women's once official participation in the political process? Perhaps the reformers did not believe that women ought as a matter of principle to be excluded from political organization? Perhaps they considered this as the price that had to be paid because of the structure of Canadian law?

To be sure, there are no easy answers to these questions, and further research will be required to determine what happened to women's status following the events of 1924 at Six Nations. The same is true for the positions that women held in terms of matrilineal kinship structures. Chapter Five will shed further insight into the maintenance of these structures. For now, it important to establish that some people at Six Nations believe that women's traditional roles have been maintained or preserved at Six Nations.

One thing is for certain: Eurocentrism, racism and patriarchy worked together historically to define and structure the decisions of the Canadian state in the early twentieth century. To be sure, these multifaceted and systemic forces served also to re-shape reserve-based politics leading reform-minded individuals and even some chiefs to break with political procedures which had historically placed women in esteemed positions of influence. In the next chapter, I explore how men were furnished with increasing power, and how women endured further subjugation at the hands of the Canadian state through the *Indian Act*; a piece of legislation which had already commenced with its impact on the Six Nations Haudenosaunee.

Chapter Four
Exploring Hidden Complexities: Bill C-31 (An Act to Amend the *Indian Act*), Haudenosaunee Women and the Legislative History of Sex Discrimination

This chapter is the first of two that are focused on the impact of colonialism. I am concerned here with legislative change at contemporary – or twenty-first century – Grand River. My aim is also to document the historical development of the *Indian Act*, especially as this relates to the discrimination directed at Haudenosaunee women. In the first part of the chapter, I look at the racist and sexist practices of early missionaries and traders from early contact. Their early ideologies are similar to those that preceded Indian policy-making endeavours, and later, the very first *Indian Act* (1876).

The *Indian Act* is the piece of legislation that concerns itself with all aspects of the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Frideres, 2001). As Henry, Tator, Mattis and Rees (1998: 130) describe:

> The Indian Act ... is the legislation that has intruded on the lives and cultures of status Indians more than any other law. Though amended repeatedly, the act's fundamental provisions have scarcely changed. They give the state powers that range from defining how one is born or naturalized into "Indian" status to administering the estate of an Aboriginal person after death ... the act [sic] gave Parliament control over Indian political structures, landholding patterns, and resource and economic development. It covered almost every important aspect of the daily lives of Aboriginal peoples on reserve. The overall effect was to subject Aboriginal people to the almost unfettered rule of federal bureaucrats. The act [sic] imposed non-Aboriginal forms on traditional governance, landholding practices, and cultural practices.

The *Indian Act* has transformed the lives Aboriginal peoples. It has also created something known as Indian status – a legal designation that refers to the Aboriginal

peoples who are registered in an "Indian Register" as administered by the Department of Indian and Northern Development on behalf of the state (ibid). Indian status can affect – and has affected – who is entitled to rights, culture, residency, and a share in the assets of the band, health benefits and welfare (see Sanders, 1975).

The *Indian Act* has imposed a great deal of social and political change on the lives of people who are both status Indians *and* Haudenosaunee. Legal provisions hold the potential to divide the people of the Six Nations. As I will discuss shortly, Haudenosaunee women (as well as all other Aboriginal women in Canada) were singled out by the state historically, and were required to relinquish legal status when they married non-Indians. The effect of this legislation was to create, and to institutionalize, a hierarchical system of relations based on gender, status and rights. It also upheld the importance that is attributed to paternity – as I will discuss – where kinship organization and descent reckoning are concerned.

Haudenosaunee women were made unequal to Haudenosaunee men through the *Indian Act*. To pretend that Indian status is inconsequential or trivial to the Haudenosaunee is to therefore undermine the importance of legal distinctions, and the way that these are able to affect the everyday social and material relations between Haudenosaunee men and women (see Lawrence, 2003).

Indian status cannot help but to create divisions between Haudenosaunee people. For those who retained status and who remained on reserves, status provisions had the

effect of creating and legitimizing convictions that women who "married out" represented a threat to the Grand River community. It could transform social relations so that Haudenosaunee women and children could be seen as outsiders. This chapter is an attempt to consider – and indeed introduce for further inquiry – the extent to which these provisions have impacted on women (as well as their male and female descendants) at Six Nations in ways that have not been documented. I will detail various sections of the *Indian Act* as they have developed over history, especially the enfranchisement and Indian status sections in this chapter. I am also intent on describing the types of competing interests and historic divisions that were imposed upon the Grand River Haudenosaunee as a result of *Bill C-31: An Act to the Amend the Indian Act* (1985).

I conclude this chapter by proposing that sex discrimination and racism – what I will endeavour to define as "racist patriarchy" (Cannon, 1995) – have worked together historically to both define and divide some Haudenosaunee people. The impact of statutory discrimination on the Six Nations requires further analysis and investigation. I offer some preliminary thoughts about its impact on Grand River Territory in Chapter Five.

Setting the Context: Portraits of Early Patriarchy

Even prior to Confederation and the emergence of the first statute entitled the *Indian Act* in 1876, the colonial enterprise in Canada had enforced a system of

Eurocentric policies, beliefs and value systems upon Indigenous peoples. The earliest missionaries, for example, were determined to civilize the Indigenous populations by indoctrinating a Christian ethos and patriarchal family structure.[106] One of the often quoted passages relating to the patriarchal views of the missionaries is that of the Jesuit, Paul Le Jeune. Speaking of the egalitarian relations he observed among the Montagnais-Naskapi Nations of what is now called Eastern Canada, he noted:

> The women have great power here. A man may promise you something, and if he does not keep his promise, he thinks he is sufficiently excused when he tells you that his wife did not wish him to do it. I told him then that he was the master, and that in France women do not rule their husbands (quoted in Brodribb, 1984: 88).

Paul Le Jeune had no problem expressing his patriarchal views. The fur trade would later perpetuate a similar set of Eurocentric mores, for as one author has put it, they "struck at the heart of Indigenous cultures, their values of sharing and cooperation, and their corresponding lack of any concept of private property" (Bear Nicholas, 1994: 230).

The fur trade also reaffirmed understandings about gender which were first introduced through missionary efforts. As Sylvia Van Kirk (1980: 88) has put it, "despite her important contributions and influence in certain areas, the Indian woman in fur trade society was at the mercy of a social structure devised primarily to meet the needs of

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[106] For scholarly analysis of the missionary project, particularly among the Montagnais-Naskapi Nations of what is now called Eastern Canada, see Eleanor Leacock (1980: 25-42), Karen Anderson (1985: 48-62) and Somer Brodribb (1984: 85-103).

European males."[107] In short, the relentless pursuit toward empire and nationhood meant that the original inhabitants of this country – now called Canada – were recurrently subject to campaigns of sociocultural disintegration.

Clearly, there is no ethical foundation for such "common sense" domination, but we can explain such claims to superiority as grounded in the ethos of the historical period.[108] Informed by notions of supremacy and ideologies of racial inferiority, the early Europeans saw Indigenous peoples (indeed all non-Europeans) as subordinate and underdeveloped entities (Miles, 1989; also see Said, 1978). The attitudes of missionaries and traders carried over into early nineteenth century political discourse. Consider the words of Sir Hector Langevin, an early imperialist who declared that:

> Indians were not in the same position as white men. As a rule they had no education, and they were like children to a very great extent. They, therefore, required a great deal more protection than white men (quoted in Miller, 1989: 191).

Such sentiments were not always so subtly expressed. Stating clearly the paternalistic intentions that were the thrust behind most administrative dealings, Alexander Morris (who had been placed in charge of making treaties with Aboriginal peoples of the Plains) once pronounced:

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[107] For further historical discussion of the role of Native women during the fur trade in Northwestern Canada, see Sylvia Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties* (1980). Also see Bourgault (1983) for a discussion of sexism and racism in the fur trade.

[108] I borrow the term "common sense domination" from Himani Bannerji (1987) who draws attention to the way racism and patriarchy "disappear from the social surface" and become ordinary ways of doing things of which we rarely have consciousness.

> Let us have Christianity and civilization to leaven the masses of heathenism and paganism among the Indian Tribes; let us have a wise and paternal government faithfully carrying out the provisions of our treaties ... They are wards of Canada, let us do our duty by them... (quoted in Frideres, 1983: 2).

These and countless other sentiments translated into a set of policy objectives. Foremost was the implementation of the reserve system in Upper Canada during the 1830s which, as Tobias (1983: 41) notes, represented the keystone to all later policy. The surface motivation for the introduction of the reserve system was to enforce, as Frideres has put it, "British-agricultural-Christian patterns of behaviour upon Native communities" (1983: 22; also see Jamieson, 1986: 115). But such initiatives, at a deeper level, reveal the common sense racist – and sexist – ideologies of the colonizers. In short, the reserve system was intended to civilize the Indians (Tobias, 1983: 41). Seen as an inferior race of people susceptible to nomadism, corruption, laziness and vice, Indians were in need of spiritual direction and the assistance of the newcomers. Salvation, needless to say, rested under the auspices of a superior race of Europeans.

The agricultural policy of the reserve system was also one of the first policies to make invidious distinctions between male and female Indians based on the distribution of tasks. Of course, the sexual division of labour had already been changed in patriarchal ways in residential schools (Chapter Two). At these institutions, I have noted – as Ng (1993: 54) has before me – that "men were [being] taught farming skills such as how to clear land and hold a plow, [and] women, under the tutelage of the missionaries' wives and daughters were [being] taught 'civilized' domestic skills".

Early policy would have in other words complemented the efforts of the Mohawk Institute. Apart from my own, I know of no other work that has even contemplated the extent to which the sexual division of labour transformed gender relations among the Haudenosaunee, who had been – I have argued – egalitarian and respectful of women's status prior to contact (Chapter One). These policies also affected the often autonomous and complementary role of Haudenosaunee women within the Grand River community. But more aggressive pursuits toward assimilation and the re-construction of gender relations did not occur until the mid-nineteenth century. In 1850, for example, Haudenosaunee people became Indians, a legal classification that did not distinguish between the linguistic and cultural differences between them, or the multiplicity of Aboriginal populations that existed across Canada at the time.[109]

Haudenosaunee people in Canada became Indians so that the state could delimit the occupation of Indian lands in Upper Canada to Indians alone.[110] Tobias (1983) has suggested that the motive here was to protect Indians from outside land encroachments, an issue that had been of great concern at Six Nations (Chapter Three). But protection could not have been the only motive or objective of early policy since further legislation

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[109] The Act that was responsible for creating Indian status was called "An Act for the protection of the Indians in Upper Canada from imposition, and the property occupied or enjoyed by them from trespass and injury" (quoted in Jamieson, 1978: 25-6).

[110] Sociologists of race and ethnicity usually refer to these sorts of social processes – whereby an otherwise heterogenous, linguistically distinct, and diverse population of people is singled out for different (and often unequal) treatment – as processes of racialization (Li, 1990: 7; Miles, 1989: 73-77).

was introduced in 1857 to help "encourage the gradual civilization of the Indian Tribes".

In 1857, the focus was on something called enfranchisement. The purpose here was to assimilate the Indians of Canada. The premise of the legislation was simple: upon meeting certain criteria, Haudenosaunee men who were literate, free of debt and of good moral character could (along with their "dependents") give up legal *Indian Act* status and become legal persons. That is, they could be accorded all the rights and privileges of every ordinary, civilized Euro-Canadian (Tobias, 1983: 42).

The title and premise of the 1857 legislation reveals its racist underpinnings: one could not be an ordinary legal citizen without giving up their Indian status. Furthermore, it was only in becoming non-Indian that one could attain legal person-hood. This is how racial categories were established and institutionalized in Canada, and among the Haudenosaunee. What remains unclear is how the people of Grand River were affected by enfranchisement policy.

How many people at Grand River relinquished Indian status and why? Finding the answer to that question will be important, but so too will thinking about two other dimensions of the statute of 1857. The first is the way that it would have introduced to the Haudenosaunee living at Grand River the idea of owning property. As non-Indians, people could acquire and own property just like all other legal persons if they were enfranchised. The second involves the inherent presumptions about the kinship structure of communities in 1857. As Jamieson (1986: 117) notes of these presumptions: "only

males could be enfranchised, and dependents were enfranchised [along] with the males".

The implicit principle behind this legislation, and subsequent enfranchisement law, was to impose further notions about the importance of paternity.[111] In effect, this legislation held the potential to reorganize kinship structures that were both matrilocal and matrilineal prior to contact. It behoves the historian of women's status and gender relations at Six Nations to find out more about the impact of these common sense ideological notions about race and gender which were later reaffirmed through Indian policy.

Two years after Confederation, for example, legislation regarding the governance of Indians was introduced. This was the first of subsequent provisions that was ultimately responsible for the loss of power among the hereditary chiefs at Grand River (Chapter Three). Under this policy, only "elected" band councils were empowered to make by-laws

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[111] Enfranchisement was re-established in three subsequent pieces of legislation. In 1918, an amended section 6(122A(1)) enabled Indian men (along with their wives and children) to become voluntarily enfranchised if they lived away from their communities (*Indian Act* [S.C. 1918, c.26, s.6] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 220; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1991). In 1951, enfranchisement was made possible for: a) individuals meeting the variety of criteria set out in sections 12 and 108 (this included the involuntary enfranchisement of women marrying non-Indians); and b) entire bands who so desired upon approval of the Minister of Indian Affairs (sec. 111(1)) (*Indian Act* [S.C., 1951, c.29] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 319, 348 & 349; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1991: 15-17). And finally in 1956, the children of women born prior to her marriage to a non-Indian could be involuntarily enfranchised (*Indian Act* [S.C., 1956, c.40, s.26] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 398; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1991: 19). The very concept of enfranchisement was not abolished in Canada until June, 28 1985 with the passing of section 6(1)(d) of *An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (*Indian Act* [R.S., 1985, c.15]; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1991: 24).

and, upon approval of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to deal with all other minor concerns.[112]

An elective system of governance remained a choice for First Nations in Canada until an amendment in 1895. After this time, the government delegated itself the authority to depose both chiefs and councillors of bands not following the elective system of governance (Tobias, 1983: 46-7; *Indian Act* [S.C. 1895, c.35, s.3] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 141). Six Nations Territory is unique in this regard, since it was not until 1924 that an elected system (or band council government) replaced the hereditary system (Chapter Three). The hereditary government existed for 50 years and in relative autonomy until 1924 at Grand River. The extent to which the memory of hereditary government has stayed intact from 1924 - 2000 will be revisited in Chapter Five. For now, it is important to acknowledge that the *Indian Act* imposed an elected system of governance upon the Haudenosaunee.

From 1924, the band council was also delegated further authority and came to

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[112] After 1857, elected style Indian Act governments were only delegated further authority over community matters. These matters included the power to make by-laws on certain subjects (such as health, decorum, trespass, roads and bridges, religious denomination of teachers (only Protestant or Catholic), "illegitimacy" of children [under section 12(1)(a), 1956]), as well as to amend certain by-laws. The authority vested in band councils, not including amendments, was evidenced in 1884 (under section 10); 1886 (under section 10), 1906 (under section 194) and 1927 (under section 185) (see *Indian Act* [S.C. 1884, c.28]; [R.S.C. 1886, c.44]; [R.S.C.1906, c.81]; [R.S.C. 1927, c.98] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 104-5; 169-71; 239-41, & 310-11).

perpetuate, and be subject to, a politics of dependency.[113] Very little is known about this history, though it will be necessary to learn more about early councils, elected chiefs and councillors. What effect did the power to decide on who should obtain loans, receive housing, retain membership, collect band annuities or treaty moneys, and so on have on the Six Nations? The answer to that question will involve a closer look at Six Nations political history, but I offer some of my own thoughts in Chapter Five.

To be sure, the band council system has more harshly affected Haudenosaunee women. Consider that widowed and divorced women who "married out" at Six Nations may have experienced injustices at the hands of band councils when they attempted to move back to their reserves (see Silman, 1987: 93-118; Jamieson, 1978: 72-4). Others may have experienced economic dependency on their fathers (and husbands) in order to secure band loans (Native Economic Development Advisory Board of Canada, 1985: 1-5 & 24-25). In short, some Haudenosaunee women may have experienced state-inspired discrimination at the hands of the band council government. This too requires further analysis.

The band council system excluded Haudenosaunee women from an official voice

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[113] The politics of dependency which has come to define the First Nations socio-economic reality over the years is best understood as existing on two levels. On one level, individual band members have come to rely on band councils for economic subsidies and land resources. On another level, individual bands have struggled to control limited and scarce resources which derive from the state. The manner in which individual and elected band councils have been subject to a politics of dependency is the focus of Adrian Tanner's *The Politics of Indianness* (1983). Also see Satzewich & Wotherspoon (1993: 244-261) and Kellough (1980).

in political matters dealing with their communities. From 1924 to 1951, as I will discuss in a moment, only men had the right to vote in band elections and participate in political affairs at Six Nations. The extent to which community level patriarchy was institutionalized – or resisted – at Six Nations during these years has not yet been thoroughly documented. Again, further data-gathering and analysis is required.

But during that time period, the exclusion of women from political matters must surely have been destructive since we can confirm that male-dominated, elected governments were clearly favoured by the Canadian state from 1924 onward. Although women gained the franchise in 1951, it is difficult to assess what happened between this time and 2002 when Six Nations elected its first female chief – Roberta Jamieson[114] – to the band council.

Indian policy was sure to have impacted on, and brought about the reorganization

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[114] Roberta Jamieson is a Mohawk from the Six Nations Territory. She was elected band council chief in December 2001. She is the first woman to ever hold that position. She is a member of the Order of Canada, and the first Aboriginal woman in Canada to earn a law degree. From 1989 to1999, Chief Jamieson spent an unprecedented ten years as Ombudsman [sic] for the Province of Ontario. During her tenure, she became the founding President of the Canadian Ombudsman [sic] Association; a Member of the Board of Directors and Vice President of the International Ombudsman [sic] Institute; and a Founding Board Member of the Centre for Research in Women's Health – a University of Toronto and Women's College Hospital partner. In 2001, Chief Jamieson received the Indigenous Peoples Council Award (I.P.C.) from the Indigenous Bar Association, their highest award given. She is a member of the Advisory Board of CHCH Television in Hamilton, Ontario, and is Co-Chair of the President's Committee on Indigenous Studies at McMaster University. In 2003, Chief Jamieson was one of three national candidates running for chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). She was unsuccessful in being elected to this post (see www.robertajamieson.com).

of the once matrilocal and matrilineal kinship structures of the Grand River Haudenosaunee. These changes were precipitated by common sense ideological notions about race and gender that were only hereafter reaffirmed through policy developments. Even if we look toward a short legislative history, the chronology reveals how racism and sexism worked together to structure a distinct kind of discrimination for Native women and their descendants. It is to a more detailed history of this issue that I know turn.

The *Indian Act:* Canada's Legacy of Racist Patriarchy[115]

In 1869, the legislation respecting the governance of Indians could only have perpetuated some of the gender hierarchies that were already underway at Six Nations. The legislation helped to facilitate sex discrimination in two senses.

First, this policy stipulated that band councils be elected by the male members of Indian communities thereby excluding Indian women (at least in an official sense) from a voice in elections or newly devised governing procedures. At Six Nations, of course, women continued to hold enormous political influence which included the ability to appoint (and depose) traditional chiefs until 1924.

Having said that, Haudenosaunee women could not be involved in band council politics in 1924 and – and for those who cared to be involved – could not regain an

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[115] "Racist Patriarchy" is a term I developed to refer to the simultaneity – and inseparability – of racism and sexism through colonization (Cannon, 1995; or as quoted in Hamilton, 2005: 100-102).

official involvement in the band elections or the governing of Grand River Territory until gaining the franchise under Bill C-79 in May of 1951 (Jamieson, 1986: 122). The Six Nations therefore spent 27 years – from 1924 until 1951 – following this system of governance

To what extent did some of the Grand River Haudenosaunee lose the memory of traditional government and gender egalitarianism during this time? The answer to this question requires that we learn more about Haudenosaunee women as they have been hidden from the history of governance and politics at Six Nations. One thing is for certain: the Grand River Haudenosaunee lost the legal and structural means with which to realize a component of traditional statuses in 1924.

Section 6 of the 1869 policy has also been of detriment to women at Grand River Territory. This section stipulated that Haudenosaunee women – now classified as a group of Indians for state administrative purposes – who married non-Indian men lost status, along with their children, as defined under the Act. This same loss of status did not apply to Haudenosaunee men or their children.

The sexist connotations of section 6 are clear. As Jamieson (1986: 118) has asserted "the statute of 1869, especially section 6 ... embodied the principle that, like other women, Indian women should be subject to their husbands. In law their children were to be his alone." In sum, this legislation advocated patriarchal principles that were now being further established at Six Nations.

It was through the law that some Haudenosaunee men retained their entitlement to Indian status along with an ability to bestow it regardless of whom they married. Under Eurocentric law, women and children were to belong to men alone. The legal and structural means through which to uphold women's once esteemed status and matrilineal kinship structures were legally outlawed from 1869 onward. The Grand River Haudenosaunee were being more aggressively re-socialized into a type of kinship organization that the state had assumed superior to traditional systems. Section 6 would be affirmed in the policy developments of 1876.

In 1876, the Federal government passed the very first legislation entitled the *Indian Act*. Like preceding legislation, it imposed patriarchal definitions of Indian by emphasizing descent through the male line. Section 6 of the 1869 legislation became section 3(c) of the *Indian Act* and stipulated that, upon marrying a non-Indian man, Indian women and their children would "cease to be an Indian in any respect within the meaning of this *Act*." (*Indian Act* [S.C. 1876, c.18 (39 Vict.)], reprinted in Venne, 1981: 24).[116]

Consistent with previous legislation, this section did not apply to Haudenosaunee men. In fact, men retained legal status upon marrying non-Indian woman under the

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[116] As section 3(c) read: "Provided that any Indian woman marrying any other than an Indian or non-treaty Indian shall cease to be an Indian in any respect within the meaning of this Act, except that she shall be entitled to share equally with the members of the band to which she formerly belonged, in the annual or semi-annual distribution of their annuities, interest moneys and rents; but this income may be commuted to her at any time at ten years purchase with the consent of the band" (*Indian Act* [S.C. 1876, c.18 (39 Vict.)] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 25).

Indian Act. Their wives also became Indians in accordance with section 3 of the statute.[117]

Major changes to the *Indian Act such* as those that divided Haudenosaunee men and women were common following 1876. Of special significance was the *Federal Franchise Act* of 1885 which extended the right to vote in federal elections to all "Indian" men, but not women (Jamieson, 1986: 119-20). Of equal significance was section 26(2) of the 1927 *Indian Act* which stipulated that "the Superintendent-General shall be the sole and final judge as to the moral character of the widow of any intestate [lacking of will] Indian"(*Indian Act* [R.S.C. 1927, c.98] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 252 & Jamieson, 1986: 120).

Section 26(2) held the potential of having serious implications for Haudenosaunee women, for it "required that an Indian widow had to be of good moral character in order to receive an inheritance"(Jamieson, 1986: 120). Such an assessment was left the sole responsibility of paternalistic superintendents of Indian Affairs. Section 26(2) held potential to disinherit Haudenosaunee women completely. A similar disinheritance, directed toward all Haudenosaunee women who "married out", was passed in 1951.

Until 1951, as Jamieson (1986: 122) notes, women retained the right to continue collecting annuities and band moneys (if she did not choose to accept a lump sum

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[117] As section 3 read: "The term Indian means First. Any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band; Secondly. Any child of such person; Thirdly. Any woman who is or was lawfully married to such person" (*Indian Act* [S.C. 1876, c.18 (39 Vict.)] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 24).

"commutation") when she married a non-Indian. In other words, until this time a Haudenosaunee woman "would continue to be on the band list and to enjoy some band benefits ... [even] though she was no longer an Indian under the *Indian Act*" (Jamieson, 1986: 122). But under section 15(1)(a) of the 1951 *Act*, this possibility was abolished.

In 1951, an "out-marrying" woman was now entitled to a final "one per capita share of the capital and revenue moneys held by His Majesty on behalf of the band..." (*Indian Act* [S.C. 1951, c.29], sec 15(1)(a), reprinted in Venne, 1981: 320). Effectively, Haudenosaunee women – upon being legislated into outsider statuses – would now lose band rights, as well as status under the *Indian Act*. This was a most serious infringement upon women because having band membership at Grand River carried entitlement to certain rights and privileges not automatically guaranteed from having *Indian Act* status.

Section 15(1)(a) of the 1951 *Indian Act* required that a Haudenosaunee woman be disfranchised and disinherited from the Six Nations reserve when she married a non-Indian. This is an excellent example of the way in which patriarchal relations and practices were made an imperative of the band council at Grand River through the *Indian Act*. The consequences for inter-communal relationships have been truly profound. Resentment is still today – as I will acknowledge in Chapter Five – displaced from the *Indian Act* and its provisions, and onto other Haudenosaunee people.

A 1956 amendment to section 12(2) of the *Indian Act* was also devastating for the Grand River Haudenosaunee. This amendment allowed the status of Haudenosaunee

children to be challenged by individual members of the band. If it was decided that the father of a child was not an Indian, then that child would not be entitled to statutory registration or band membership.[118]

From 1956, Haudenosaunee women's status meant nothing in and of itself since only men could bestow legitimacy. By establishing legitimacy of descent only through the male line, patriarchal definitions of Indian-ness were introduced to the Grand River Haudenosaunee. They were now able to – at their discretion of course – assume entitlements based on paternity that had never existed before at Grand River. Haudenosaunee people were now able to participate in the patriarchal oppression of their own people.

To sum up, the federal government passed the first legislation entitled the *Indian Act* in 1876. Like preceding legislation, this Act imposed patriarchal definitions of Indian by emphasizing descent through the male line. Men were able to retain their legal status upon marrying a non-Native woman under the *Indian Act*. The women they married, in fact, became Indians in accordance with section 3 of the *Indian Act*.

Section 3(c) and 3 became section 12(1)(b) and section 11(1)(f), respectively, in a

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[118] As the amendment itself read: "The addition to a Band List of the name of an illegitimate child...may be protested at any time within twelve months after the addition, and if upon the protest it is decided that the father of the child was not an Indian, the child is not entitled to be registered ..." (*Indian Act* [S.C. 1956, c.40, sec. 3(2)] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 360).

revised 1951 legislation.[119] Sections 12(1)(b) and 11(1)(f) were only deleted as recently as June 28, 1985 under *Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (1985). *Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act*, was given royal assent in Canadian Parliament on June 28, 1985 with the avowed purpose of ending years of blatant sex discrimination directed toward First Nations women. The amendments were made retroactive to April 17, 1985 in order to bring the *Act* into congruence with section 15 of *the Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.[120]

Amendments to the *Indian Act* in 1985 followed a long history of struggle by Indigenous women across Canada, including: the Lavell-Bedard case(s) of the 1970s (Bedard herself being from Six Nations); the extensive lobbying efforts by a group of Maliseet women from the Tobique nation (see Silman, 1987); and the near condemnation

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[119] Section 12(1)(b) of the 1951 Act read: "The following persons are not entitled to be registered, namely ... (b) a woman who is married to a person who is not an Indian" (*Indian Act* [S.C. 1951, c.29] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 319). Section 11(1)(f) of the 1951 Act read: "11 (1) Subject to section 12, a person is entitled to be registered if that person...(f) is the wife or widow of a person who is entitled to be registered by virtue of paragraph (a), (b), (c), (d) or (e)" (*Indian Act* [S.C. 1951, c.29] reprinted in Venne, 1981: 318-9).

[120] The implementation of *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982 clearly influenced the introduction and implementation of *An Act to Amend the Indian Act* in 1985. After 1982, for example, section 12 1(b) (if left intact) would have violated section 15(1) of the Charter which reads: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental and physical disability."

of Canada's human rights reputation in Lovelace v. Canada.[121]

Bill C-31 omitted the infamous section 12 1(b) of the prior 1951 *Act*; increased autonomy over determining band membership; and enlarged the by-law making powers of band council governments. Whether *Bill C-31* was successful in terminating gender discrimination directed toward Haudenosaunee women, however, is disputable.

As I will discuss in greater detail in a moment, those who register as status Indians under the *Indian Act* now do so under one of seven different sections. Although each subsection confers a different type of legal status, the major difference lies between sections 6(1) and 6(2). It is the children of women who "married out" prior to 1985 that fall under the section 6(2) category of registration. Children of men who "married out" prior to 1985 are registered under section 6(1).

It is, therefore, the descendants of women – but not men – who face ongoing discrimination under section 6(2) because they are unable to pass along Indian status like those that are registered under section 6(1).[122] As Kirkness (1987/88: 415) has noted:

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[121] In December 1977, Sandra Lovelace filed a complaint with the United Nations under article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The ruling of the United Nations was in favour of Lovelace and held that Canada was in violation of Article 27 of the International Covenant which Canada, as a nation, had signed into. Yet the United Nations did not hold that Canada had contradicted the International treaty because of sex discrimination in the operation of section 12(1)(b), but rather, in keeping Lovelace from her own cultural community. For discussion, see Borrows (1994: 11); Weaver (1994a).

[122] I would like to acknowledge that I am of the generation of women's descendants to which Kirkness is making reference.

"discrimination against women has not been removed from the *Indian Act*: it has merely been partially suspended for two generations".[123]

Haudenosaunee women, and their children, are now faced with ongoing legal discrimination due to the "half-descent rule" or "second generation cut-off clause", the requirement that unmarried Haudenosaunee women state the paternity of their children, and the legitimation of community level patriarchy through a residency by-law that allows for the eviction of non-band members from Six Nations Territory.

In Chapter Five, I consider the Six Nations residency by-law in closer detail. For now, it is important to acknowledge the devastation created by Indian status provisions at Six Nations, and to contemplate more closely, residual forms of sex discrimination under *Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (1985). It is also important to acknowledge that the 1985 amendments did nothing to eradicate the asymmetrical power relations as already established through status distinctions at Grand River. For Haudenosaunee women, as Holmes (1987:16) has noted, "A new law does not erase years of alienation from their families and communities, deep seated feelings of rejection and inadequacy, and the struggle to raise their children in a foreign environment". In short, *Bill C-31*

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[123] Hierarchies of Indian status as created by Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act has also attracted the attention of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. As they noted of the matter in 1987: Sections 6(1) and 6(2), together with band membership criteria, perpetuate the unequal treatment of Indian men and Indian women by giving fewer rights to the grandchildren of women who married out (quoted in Holmes, 1987: 16).

deleted blatant gender discrimination from the text of the old *Indian Act*, but recast forms of sex discrimination along with substantive forms of sexual inequality have been sustained by both the amendments, and through political inaction.

A Closer Look at Residual Sex Discrimination in the *Indian Act* (1985)

(A) Hierarchies of Indian Status

Section 12(1)(b) of the old *Indian Act* was replaced with two new sections (and sub-sections) under *Bill C-31* – sections 6(1)(a-f) and section 6(2) (Table J). Those who register for status, as mentioned, now do so under one of seven different sections of the *Indian Act*. Although each subsection confers a different type of legal status, the major difference lies between sections 6(1) and 6(2) (Native Women's Association of Canada, 1986).

A person is entitled to register under section 6(1) of the Indian Act if *both parents* are status Indians, or entitled to registration under either sections 6(1) or 6(2) (ibid). Children who have only one Indian parent registered under section 6(1) are to be registered under section 6(2) of the Act.

Children having only one Indian parent registered under section 6(2) are not entitled to registration. Thus, a parent registered under section 6(2) cannot pass on status unless the other parent is also a registered Indian. It is the male and female children of women who married out prior to 1985 that fall under the section 6(2) category.

Children of men who married out prior to 1985 – and this is where the ongoing discrimination lies – are registered under section 6(1). *It is, in other words, the male and female descendants of women – but not men – who are currently facing discrimination because they are unable to pass along Indian Act status.*[124]

Discrimination has not been completely remedied. Under the *Indian Act* (1985), human rights violations are sanctioned, and it is therefore a critical issue – not just in terms of Six Nations political history, but in Canadian society as well.

Through sections 6(1) and 6(2) of the *Indian Act*, Canada could be in potential violation of section 15 and possibly section 28 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* which guarantees equal benefit and protection of the law without discrimination based on sex.

Sections 6(1) and 6(2) have perpetuated the unequal treatment of Indian men and women by giving fewer rights to the (grand)children of women (but not men) who "married out" (Holmes, 1987: 39).

Charter challenges brought forward by Haudenosaunee women who lost (and later acquired) status under the *Indian Act* – as well as their male and female descendants – are highly conceivable (Native Women's Association of Canada, 1992: 10).

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[124] I would like to acknowledge that I am a registered Indian under section 6(2) of the *Indian Act* (1985).

(B) Unstated Paternity

In order to register a Haudenosaunee child under the *Indian Act* (1985) in Canada, an application for registration must be made to the Department of Indian and Northern Development (DIAND). If the parents are married, it must be certified that both parents are status Indians, and they both provide the necessary signatures. If parents are unmarried, the father of the child must sign a form declaring paternity in order to authorize registration.

If a woman chooses not to name a father, or if the father is unable to provide the necessary documentation or does not want to take responsibility for the child, the child is registered today as having only one Indian parent. High rates of unstated paternity have caused many Haudenosaunee children to be registered incorrectly under section 6(2) of the *Indian Act* – or not at all.

That women's status as both Haudenosaunee and registered Indians carries no weight in and of itself, and that women must declare the name of the father of their children in order to prove that he is a status Indian reveals a system which further negates the importance once placed upon matrilineal descent at Grand River and in other Haudenosaunee communities. The current requirements maintain gender imbalances established during early colonial times.

The emphasis placed on paternity has taken place over an extended period of time. It dates back to 1850 when enfranchisement law provided that the children of Indian

males be enfranchised along with them. Later, in 1956 the *Indian Act* provided that individual members of a band could dispute the paternity and, hence, Indian-ness of children. Very little is understood about the impact this had on the Grand River Haudenosaunee.

Status provisions which uphold the importance of paternity simply reflect a legal and social system which tried to ensure that only men could bequeath wealth onto their own children (Engels, 1884/1968, O'Brien, 1981: 54). In effect, the *Indian Act* [R.S.C., 1985, c.1-5] demonstrates an ethos rooted in capitalist notions of private property. As Frederick Engels wrote, the way that wealth was bequeathed was to declare that wives were the sole and exclusive property of their husbands and that, subsequently, a man's children were those whom his wife bore.[125]

These patriarchal understandings were written into early versions of the *Indian Act* and are clearly transposed into *Bill C-31.* In this regard, status provisions which exclude single women bring the Haudenosaunee into further congruence with patriarchal notions about property and its redistribution. Capitalist and patriarchal relations have intersected to exclude Haudenosaunee women.

(C) Legitimizing Patriarchy Through Band Membership Codes

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[125] It is important to recognize that women always know who their children are. Where men are concerned, the relationship to children is established legally (O'Brien, 1981).

Under section 10 of *An Act to Amend the Indian Act*, band governments were given the autonomy to determine band membership.[126] Prior to 1985, *Indian Act* status automatically meant band membership, unless you were a Haudenosaunee woman who had married a non-Indian man.

Bill C-31 gave bands the opportunity to develop band membership codes and to thereby determine whom they considered to be a member of Six Nations Territory. As a band member, an individual enjoys certain rights and privileges not automatically conferred through registered *Indian Act* status. This includes the right to live on reserve, vote in band elections, own property [such as land], and be eligible for community level services such as health, welfare and education (Holmes, 1987: 18).

Band membership codes had to meet certain minimal requirements. The codes had to be developed prior to *June 28, 1987*; equality between the sexes had to be maintained; codes had to be consistent with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and a majority of electors had to give consent to the decisions regarding membership (Native Women's Association of Canada, 1986: 23; Indian and Northern Affairs, 1986: 25; Manyfingers, 1986).

Band membership codes passed prior to a *deadline of June 28th, 1987* were also

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[126] Section 10(1) of Bill C-31 read: "A band may assume control of its own membership if it establishes membership rules for itself in writing in accordance with this section and if a majority of the electors of the band gives consent to the band's control of its own membership." (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1986: 9)

restricted to the extent that they had to respect the *already acquired rights* of existing band members. It was this provision that allowed continued sex discrimination against Haudenosaunee women despite code provisions being subject to the *Charter*.

Definitions of who would constitute the initial population within band membership codes was legislatively ordained through *Indian Act* specifications. Under sections 9(2) and 11(1)(a) of the *Indian Act*, the Six Nations could not discriminate against those registrants who had *already acquired a right* to band membership (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1986: 9).[127] These registrants included the children of Haudenosaunee men – but not women – who had married out. Unlike their sisters, these men had never lost the ability to transmit either band membership or status on to Haudenosaunee children.

In short, the stipulations for band membership codes did not prohibit the possibility of excluding the first generation descendants of Haudenosaunee women who had "married out". Having never *acquired a right* to band membership, and gaining only "provisional" membership under section 6(2)[128] of the *Indian Act* [R.S.C., 1985, c.1-5], the descendants of Haudenosaunee women who had "married out" could be excluded

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[127] Section 9(2) of the *Indian Act* [R.S.C., 1985, c.1-5] reads "The names in a Band List of a band immediately prior to April 17, 1985 shall constitute the Band List of that on April 17, 1985." Section 11(1)(a) of the *Indian Act* [R.S.C., 1985, c.1-5] reads: "Commencing on April 17, 1985, a person is entitled to have his name entered in a Band List maintained in the Department for a band if (a) that person was entitled to have his name entered in the Band List for that band immediately prior to April 17, 1985."

[128] See *supra note* 98.

(Native Women's Association of Canada, 1986: 17; Moss, 1990: 281). In the case of Six Nations of the Grand River, a problem arose over reaching majority consensus in the development and implementation of membership codes.

Many people – some of them maybe Longhouse – had refused to vote on the issue since it involved membership under the *Indian Act* whose local administration is the concern of the band council. Moreover, they refused to participate in the affairs of the Six Nations band council, since they saw the council as representatives of the *Indian Act*. A 50% plus one vote to approve a band membership code was, therefore, not attained at Six Nations. A membership code was never established, though this did not prevent the development of a band residency by-law.

In 1986, Six Nations passed the residency by-law to allow for the eviction of non-band members from its territory. The development of this by-law followed on the heels of *Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act,* and the unsuccessful attempt by band council to pass a "band membership code".

The now seventeen year old by-law allowed the community to cope with a returning group of status Indians who, along with their non-Indian spouses or children, stood to increase the Six Nations population and put a strain on resources following the passage of *Bill C-31.*[129] The intention was to protect a shrinking land base – the ever-

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[129] Band membership was not automatic under *Bill C-31.* Rather, those who had lost status under the *Indian Act* were required to re-apply to be put back on the band membership list.

present history and reality of which I have already documented in Chapter Three – by requiring that residents of the Six Nations reserve be band members (see Turtle Island News, January 30th, 2002: 1). At the same time, the by-law has been at the centre of controversy on more than one occasion; and in each case, it has threatened to divide, alienate and exclude Grand River Haudenosaunee.

During my research at Six Nations, a complaint had been filed under the residency by-law against a non-status woman who had resided on reserve for 22 years with her status Indian husband (The Brantford Expositor, 25 January 2002: A1). An eviction notice had been served, and the band council had asked that she leave the reserve. In this case, the by-law had been applied to a non-band member – notably, the spouse of a status Indian man. But the terms of the by-law – however "vague" or "uneven" in its application[130] – have not been restricted to non-Indian women who have married Haudenosaunee men. Eleven years ago, in 1991, a similar issue had been brought to council; though at that time, an eviction notice had been served to a woman whose father was a Six Nations band member (see Whyte, 1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 1992).

These cases point to the very real issues confronting modern day Grand River, as

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[130] As one journalist reported in a local newspaper during the course of my research at Six Nations "Non-natives are evicted only if someone complains ... Complaints can be made on a whim, or as a result of spite or a neighborhood dispute. [At Six Nations] Complaints are handled by Six Nations elected council, which checks the band membership, and if the name is not there, issues an eviction notice. There is no objective, independent group, [sic] to appeal to. There are no exemptions for hardship cases or for persons who have proven themselves assets to the community. And there's no enforcement." (The Brantford Expositor, 25 January 2002: A5).

well as countless other First Nations that have been affected by Indian status provisions. Bill C-31 has facilitated continued sex discrimination against the first and second generation descendants of Haudenosaunee women – but not men – "who married out".

For bands that had passed membership codes on – or prior to – June 28th, 1987, it remained possible to exclude the first generation descendants of "out marrying" women. While this is not what took place at Six Nations, Clatworthy and Smith have documented that over 90% (219/236) of all codes passed in Canada were passed on or before the specified deadline (Smith, 1992: 9, 14). In each of these cases, bands had the ability to either include or exclude all those "conditionally entitled".[131]

Human rights issues have been created and sustained by the band membership provisions of the *Indian Act* [R.S.C., 1985, c.1-5]. In some cases across Canada – but not all – band membership codes have enabled the further exclusion of Indigenous women.[132] In short, the inability of Indian women to transmit band membership automatically to first

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[131] My purpose in this section of the chapter is to show how the *Indian Act* [R.S.C., 1985, c.1-5] facilitated continued sex discrimination through its band membership provisions. It is not my aim at this time to identify which bands have perpetuated sex discrimination, though that is possible through the use of data gathered in Clatworthy and Smith (1992).

[132] In 1990, and with respect to this issue, the Quebec Native Women's Association recommended that "Membership rules developed by bands ought to be consistent with section 15 of *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, as was recommended in the *Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1988 Report on Bill C-31.* We maintain that any government, whether it be a band government or the federal government, must protect the right of the individual" (quoted in Indian and Northern Affairs, 1990: 26).

generation descendants constitutes continued sex discrimination under the auspices and ordainment of the Canadian state.

At Six Nations, band membership codes have not impacted on individuals, but the fact that *Bill C-31* has reinforced patriarchal prerogative is evident in one major way: there remains a continued emphasis on paternity as expressed in federal and band level provisions which discriminate against the children of single Haudenosaunee women.

Bill C-31 institutionalizes and entrenches a system of male dominance as expressed through the continued emphasis on patrilineal descent. Just as the first *Indian Act* ordained that Indian status be transmitted through Haudenosaunee men, so has *Bill C-31* institutionalized patriarchal relations within Haudenosaunee communities. *Bill C-31* is to put it simply, a legislation that naturalizes and entrenches dominant patriarchal notions of kinship structure.

Through the Indian status and membership sections of the *Indian Act* [R.S.C., 1985, c.1-5], the state has literally sanctioned a legacy of exclusion which makes racist distinctions on the basis of blood-quantum, and sexist distinctions (and prescriptions) on the basis of gender.

The communities that have developed discriminatory membership codes have upheld patriarchal laws which were institutionalized in 1895 (when women were excluded from a voice in band elections) and 1951 (when bands were authorized to withdraw the band membership of women who "married out").

Membership codes that discriminate against women and their descendants force people into the same outsider statuses as initially developed through the *Indian Act.* In this way, the Haudenosaunee have been able to participate in a post-colonial oppression of their own people. What initially served to separate Indigenous women from the status collective remains starkly unacknowledged.

The continued sex discrimination in *Bill C-31* owes much to the inattention of both federal and some band level governments. Initially, the federal government declared that *Bill C-31, An Act to Amend the Indian Act*, had simply eliminated over 100 years of discrimination directed toward First Nations women (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1987: 1). At other times, the government has been forced to recognize and acknowledge problems with the new legislation. In a presentation to the Standing Committee on *Bill C-31* in 1985, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women recommended that Parliament amend *Bill C-31* to meet the minimum requirements of section 15(1) of the *Charter*, as well as section 36(4) of the *Canadian Constitution* (1982).[133]

On June 28, 1988, Native women's groups further urged that bands and band membership codes be brought into congruence with the equality sections of the *Charter of*

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[133] Section 15(1)(b) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* reads: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." Section 36(4) of the *Canadian Constitution* reads: "Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Aboriginal and Treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons."

Rights and Freedoms (House of Commons, 1988: 48 & 50). At present, the Government of Canada – even though well aware of problems with the new legislation – has not taken steps toward amending the *Indian Act* [R.S.C., 1985, c.1-5]. The issues have remained without adequate attention for almost twenty years.

In short, sex discrimination was recreated and sustained by *An Act to Amend the Indian Act*. It is undoubtedly the case that, under the law, Haudenosaunee women and their descendants face continued discrimination at the hands of both federal – and potentially – band level governments.

With little or no immediate recourse at either the community or Parliamentary levels, some Native women's groups have endorsed resolution through judicial means (Native Women's Association of Canada, 1992). Essentially, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* – similar to the *Bill of Rights* in the 1960s and 1970s – is held to offer a viable route for the resolution of grievances against patriarchy.

But the use of the *Charter* to resolve issues of sex discrimination has sparked extensive controversy among some Haudenosaunee, as well as other First Nations groups. One of the central issues is with inter-group challenges. The question is whether those who take forward individual rights based claims do so at the risk of undermining the rights of the collective.

Mary Ellen Turpel (1989/90: 41) has noted that a contradiction arises when an aboriginal person, feeling dissatisfied with a band level government (or *Indian Act*

government) decision, turns to the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* for recognition of his or her individual rights. This is an issue I will address in future research, but for now, it is important to acknowledge the types of human rights issues that the *Indian Act* has introduced for the Haudenosaunee.

To sum up, racism and sexism have worked together historically to define and structure the social and political history of the Grand River Haudenosaunee. At early contact, being civilized would not only have meant adapting to European values and practices, it would have meant becoming subject to notions of interpersonal or institutional male dominance. This simply reaffirmed early religious and state inspired initiatives to re-structure familial and kinship organization.

It would be less than accurate to contend that all men have passively collaborated with sexism or that all men have taken advantage of the sex discriminatory sections of the *Indian Act* to better their own positions. Many have recognized sexism as a destructive force in the Six Nations community, and many of these men and women are seeking to recognize and affirm the esteemed position of women by living in a way that honours the Haudenosaunee traditions. I will return to this matter of attitudes about traditions and sexism in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

The preceding historical discussion permits at least two major conclusions. First,

competing interests based on gender – when they do arise – cannot be understood outside of historical context. And second, that the dual and systematic forces of racist and sexist discrimination have clearly combined to produce distinct forms of subjugation which have impacted on Haudenosaunee women.

As I have shown in this chapter, the creation of gendered hierarchies began during earliest European contact, and was later reaffirmed and consolidated by colonial policy and the *Indian Act*. While there is diversity with respect to the extent to which these influences have affected the people of Six Nations, the asymmetrical and institutionalized power relations they have fostered between Haudenosaunee women and men cannot be denied. In short, the ensuing conflicts of interest between Haudenosaunee women and men where they do exist are rooted in a structure of racist and sexist domination.

Indian status provisions discriminated against Haudenosaunee women on the basis of gender – in ways that were different from non-Indian women because of race. They also discriminated against Haudenosaunee women on the basis of race – in ways that were different from Haudenosaunee men because of gender.

In short, not only have Six Nations women been discriminated against as Haudenosaunee women, they have also been discriminated against as Indians. At the ordinance of the Canadian state, they have experienced a combined and interlocking discrimination at the intersection of race and gender (Cannon, 1995).

Proceeding from the second conclusion, it follows, given the historical reality, that

any analysis or liberating strategy should be committed to terminating a structure of dominance based on racism and patriarchy, and also, should acknowledge the interrelationship among these systems (ibid). The emphasis must shift from thinking about race and gender as separate categories or domains of experience toward thinking about race and gender as systems of relations which structure and organize (re)productive activities (Ng, 1993: 50).

A third and additional conclusion is that the transformation of gender relations at Six Nations remains largely unexplored. As I have discussed, there are many questions that continue to go unanswered in relation to the impact Indian policy and the *Indian Act* on the Grand River Haudenosaunee.

How have traditional kinship systems survived repeated colonial attempts toward destruction? How did the official exclusion of women restructure gender relations as this relates to a history of politics at Six Nations? To what extent do hereditary or traditional forms of governance remain intact? How have men aligned themselves with, or subverted, patriarchy offered up to their advantage in the *Indian Act*? In Chapter Five I attempt to provide some insight into these questions.

Chapter Five
Voices from the Present: A Gathering of Haudenosaunee Perspectives

This chapter is the second of two that is focused on the impact of colonialism. It presents the results of research I conducted at Six Nations of the Grand River through August to November, 2001. As I will discuss in further detail, I am concerned with five open-ended interviews – each of them spanning one to two hours in duration. The interviews were intended to collect as much information as possible about women's traditional and contemporary statuses, the *Indian Act*, and later in one interview, the "two constituencies" as these have been defined in the literature on Six Nations to date (Chapter Three). The chapter is divided into two major sections. By way of introduction, I provide a brief overview of my own identity as the descendant of a woman who lost status under section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act*. In doing so, I am concerned with positioning myself as researcher (Smith, 1987, 1990); and also, with describing what brought me to research women's status, politics, and the coincident history of colonial and patriarchal injustice. The remainder of the chapter will represent as closely as possible the thoughts and views of my study participants on each of the areas I have identified. It is my goal here to problematize, treat as indispensable and indeed affirm the knowledges I represent in an effort to resist what has been referred to as "conceptual imperialism" or the "ideological practice of sociology" in the literature on qualitative research methods (Smith, 1990: 42-43, 52). In conclusion to this chapter, I make

recommendations for future research and indeed, based on my interviews, consider an approach to researching Six Nations social and political history that is document-, literature- *and* interview-driven.

First Words: Positioning Myself as Researcher

In recent years, research in Aboriginal communities has received considerable academic attention. On the one hand, scholars have been concerned with fostering the development of research that is both responsive, and responsible, to the social and political aspirations of Indigenous people (Smith, 1999: 117; Battiste and Henderson, 2000). They have endeavoured, as it were, to have recognized and affirmed the distinct perspectives and understandings deriving from the culture and history of Aboriginal peoples through various forms of inquiry (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1993: 37-38).

On the other hand, scholars have been concerned with the relationship of the researcher to his or her subject matter (see TeHennepe, 1993; Smith, 2000: 230). Every scholar has a motive for the inquiry that s/he conducts, and it is important that these motives be established in an effort to break with the cycle of exploitation that has existed in historic inquiry, and as an expression of responsibility to the communities that he or she contemplates (ibid). These issues and others were of importance to me in the research I conducted at Six Nations, and it is based on this emerging literature that I contemplated

my own position in relation to the people of the Six Nations.

The research that I undertook at the Six Nations is very much concerned with the position of the researcher in relation to his or her inquiry. In setting out to gather information, and indeed following from the dissemination of results, I have given considerable thought to where I stand in relation to the focus of my inquiry. It is through these and other deliberations that I arrived at a more reflexive understanding of what I know to be an "aboriginal issue", and indeed what I take to be "aboriginal issues" in the Canadian context.

In providing answers to the hard question of "who am I in relation to this project?", it was necessary to turn attention toward my own identity as a person of mixed Anglo-Haudenosaunee heritage; and also, to think more about the role of the *Indian Act* and the statutory subjugation of Aboriginal women in general. It was necessary, in other words, to think of my own identity as the descendant of a Haudenosaunee woman who lost (and later acquired) Indian status under section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act*.

What do I know to be an "Aboriginal Issue"? What do I know about "Aboriginal Issues"?

As the descendant of a Six Nations woman who lost Indian status under section 12(1)(b) on marriage to a non-Indian man, I have known the *Indian Act* to have made gender discrimination the foremost of "aboriginal issues" in my life. In this regard, I have written elsewhere about *Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (1985) whose purpose

was to end years of blatant sex discrimination directed toward Haudenosaunee and all other Aboriginal women under section 12(1)(b) (Cannon, 1995). In research to date, I have been critical of the success of this legislation which received royal assent in Canadian Parliament on June 28, 1985 (ibid). I have shared in that criticism with other academics, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (Holmes, 1987; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1990). Along with others I have been intent on researching residual forms of sex discrimination (Chapter Four), and I have done so from the perspective of a person who deals with these forms of sex discrimination in ways that I have only started to articulate.

Residual forms of sex discrimination under *An Act to Amend the Indian Act* have been well documented in the literature. As the Canadian Advisory Council on the status of women once said of *Bill C-31*: "Sections 6(1) and 6(2) ... perpetuate the unequal treatment of Indian men and Indian women by giving fewer rights to the grandchildren of women who 'married out'"(quoted in Holmes, 1987: 39; Chapter Four). Those who are registered under section 6(2) (i.e. the children of women who once "married out" and others like myself) can only pass legal status onto descendants in cases where the other parent is a status "Indian" (under either one of sections 6(1) or 6(2)).[134] This same rule, as

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[134] Notably, the *Indian Act* simply assumes that *Indian Act* status is passed on to succeeding generations through opposite sex partnerships. In essence, the *Indian Act* makes heterosexuality "compulsory" (see Rich, 1993) through its status provisions. A further analysis of the way in which the *Indian Act* has regulated (and continues to regulate) First Nations sexuality in this regard – and from where such ideals emerged – is warranted but beyond the scope of this dissertation (but see Cannon, 1998).

discussed in the previous chapter, does not apply to those who are registered under section 6(1) (i.e. the children of men who "married out"). In effect, it is not only women, but the descendants of women who once married out that face ongoing injustices among the Aboriginal populations of Canada.

The research that I conducted in relation to a history of politics and women's status at an historic and contemporary Six Nations was very much concerned with the issues I have outlined. In setting out to do research at Six Nations, I was intent on gathering the thoughts and views of my study participants on issues related to residual discrimination, the history of sex discrimination in the *Indian Act,* and matters involving *Bill C-31* because based on my own experience, I take these issues to have had the greatest impact on the status of many Haudenosaunee women. Indeed, I set out generally to articulate what the *Indian Act* has meant for the people of the Six Nations, and to what extent – if any – the Canadian state has been absolved from taking responsibility for the racial and gendered "divisions" it took part in creating (see Leacock, 1983: 111-121). I have been interested in elaborating what has been – at least in my experience – one of the most contentious political issues facing modern day Grand River, Haudenosaunee women, the modern day descendants of "out-marrying" women, and indeed, all First Nations in Canada.

The study of Haudenosaunee women's status, gender politics and sex discrimination in the *Indian Act* is certainly not new. In research to date, the esteemed

status and position of Haudenosaunee women in relation to social, political and economic organization has been well documented (Mann, 2000, also see Chapter One). This literature has described the influence and role of women historically in Haudenosaunee communities, but it stands in some contrast to the disruption that is said to have resulted from colonial policy such as the *Indian Act*. Whatever the historic role of Haudenosaunee women, this literature has suggested that their statuses as heads of matrilineages, and as leaders, was transformed by patriarchal and colonial injustice (Jamieson, 1978, 1986). But what factors are responsible for this transformation of Haudenosaunee women's status? I have been preoccupied for most of my academic career with that question. Furthermore, I have been fascinated by the absence of literature that addresses colonialism's impact on gender relations and women's status, especially among the Haudenosaunee.

To date, the literature on Six Nations has not compared the historic roles of women with those of the contemporary. Nor the coincident history of racist and patriarchal injustice that took place at Six Nations of the Grand River. Researchers have not addressed the question of women's status within the broader context of acculturation, cultural perseverance, and social and political change. Throughout this dissertation, I have suggested that these and other omissions have worked to obscure the intimate relationship between patriarchal and colonial injustice; and – as a largely unintended consequence – have pushed women to the margins of Six Nations political history. I have also attempted

to shed light on these issues by considering Six Nations social and political history in previous chapters. But these chapters are for the most part document- and literature-driven, and they do not elaborate the thoughts and views of the Haudenosaunee themselves on questions of women's status and politics. The aim of this chapter is, thus, concerned with having the testimonies I gathered inform the historic literature in an effort to reach a more critical understanding of *both* politics and women's status at Six Nations.

What Brought Me to Six Nations Territory?

What brought me to Six Nations, then, was first and foremost a determination to show how women's status has been transformed or at least disrupted by colonialism. In doing so, I wished to contribute to an existing body of literature that focuses comparatively on all aspects of human social structure, including social change as this relates to gender relations, political organization, ideology, religion, demographics and so on (see Landstreet, 2003). At the same time, I am intending to document *the coincident history of sex discrimination and colonial injustice* in a way that reveals how "race" and gender discrimination have developed together historically to structure Six Nations politics and produce distinct forms of subjugation for Haudenosaunee women (see Chapter Three). My aim and motive in describing these nuances of history stem directly from the witness I have paid to "Aboriginal politics" in my own life experience; and indeed, my identity itself which does not lend itself well to binary or either/or

categorizations.

As discussed, I have known the *Indian Act* to have made gender discrimination one of the foremost of "Aboriginal issues" in my life. In this regard, I do not separate "Aboriginal issues" from "women's issues" because this would require that I choose between issues that affect me as a status Indian (and Six Nations band member), and those that affect me as the descendant of a woman who lost Indian status under section 12(1)(b). To me, there is no way to distinguish between these issues unless the history of patriarchy and sex discrimination is understood to have taken place apart from the history of racialization and colonial injustice. Yet all too often, this is the version of history, and indeed, the choice that I am presented with as I read through the literature on First Nations political history, including that of the Six Nations.

The history of patriarchal and colonial injustice is rarely understood in terms that are interrelated or, as I have suggested, "coincident" in the literature (but see Ng, 1993). Even Shimony (1961/1994) in her pioneering analysis of the Six Nations reserve did not elaborate the roles that Haudenosaunee women – Longhouse or otherwise – were playing in terms of political organization at mid-twentieth century Grand River. Moreover, Shimony did not consider the way in which the authorization of a council by male suffrage in 1924 represented – along with colonial injustice – a renunciation of women's traditional roles as this relates to the traditional structures of governance at Six Nations (see Chapter Three). This is a peculiar omission, especially since Shimony made a

concerted effort to document "recent political history" (ibid: 91-101), as well as a "roll call" of hereditary chiefs (ibid: 101-123).

Were Haudenosaunee women assumed out of the *official* political process when the Confederacy Council was replaced by the elected system? How did patriarchy become institutionalized at Six Nations, in what forms, and at what pace? What historical complexities were involved? Have women in the Longhouse maintained their roles in an ongoing Six Nations Confederacy? I was intent on acquiring greater insight into all of these questions – which have left Haudenosaunee women "hidden from history" – through the research that I conducted at Grand River. The inquiry I conducted was intended, in other words, to connect the literatures on women's status and governance – all of which have tended to remain mutually exclusive in the research and literature to date. Combined, these are the issues – all of them motivated by an identity that has forced me to learn more about the history of patriarchy, sex discrimination, and *Indian Act* status distinctions – that brought me to conduct research at Six Nations. They were not, however, the only issues I wanted to consider.

What brought me to Six Nations was also a determination to show how the Six Nations have displayed a remarkable degree of cultural and political perseverance despite ongoing colonial and patriarchal intrusions. The preservation of the Confederacy government into the twenty-first century (Chapter Three), the affirmation of collective identities through historic wampum (Chapter Two), and the esteemed statuses of women

within the Longhouse (Chapter Two) are exemplary in this regard. Indeed, all of these issues are indicative of "cultural continuity" and a "resistance" to colonialism that I was eager to discuss with my study participants; and also, to have documented in my dissertation. Having said that, I endeavoured to think critically about "cultural continuity" and "resistance" in the research that I undertook, and to identify some of the ethical and conceptual limitations associated with both of these concepts.

Cultural continuity and resistance are useful ideas; both as analytic tools, and for describing the nature of Six Nations political history. Resistance, for example, draws attention to colonial and patriarchal injustice and, more importantly, the refusal by some Haudenosaunee to accept or comply with these forms of oppression. The inquiry I conducted at the Six Nations was intent on developing an analysis of these issues, as well as a comparative understanding of women's status historically and at present. Having said that, resistance – and cultural continuity – were not without their limitations when it came to Six Nations political history.

While useful and important, resistance in particular can work at reproducing Western Eurocentric binaries and, thereby, reduce historical complexities into simplistic either/or understandings. If not used cautiously, Ortner suggests that resistance "re-inscribes imperialism and domination even as it names and critiques it" (quoted in Haig-Brown, 2001: 29). As Haig-Brown (2001: 29) further elaborates:

> [R]esistance immediately assumes a hierarchy in which one group supposedly dominates while the other is dominated (oppressor/oppressed;

> mainstream/marginalized; dominant/subordinate). This ... makes far too simple the active and dynamic flow which makes up most people's lives. It also feeds the myth of Western domination as absolute ... the work of resistance can detract from the work that people want to do within their communities as their gaze is drawn away from home to refocus on a so-called dominant power.

There are, thus, a number of difficulties in using resistance as an analytic tool, and for researching and analyzing historic events. At Six Nations in particular, resistance cannot adequately describe a number of important issues. Researchers who are eager to document "acts of resistance" at Six Nations, for example, might run the danger of interpreting members of the Christian constituency (see Chapters Two and Three) as "dupes of colonialism" – especially since their efforts to "reform" a twentieth-century Confederacy seem peculiar outside of the oppressor/oppressed dualism. As well, it is difficult to argue the power of the Canadian state as absolute when, for a multiplicity of reasons, and as I have described, the Six Nations Confederacy government remained operational until – and indeed beyond – 1924. But problems exist beyond the theoretical in using "resistance" to describe historical events.[135]

Specific to my own research, none of the study participants I interviewed at contemporary Six Nations actually used the word "resistance" to describe their lives, let alone their behaviour. As I intend to illustrate, many simply expressed what they knew

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[135] Patricia Monture (1999: 83) has also taken exception to the concept of resistance, because as she puts it, resistance "may only draw the person deeper into individual struggles with colonialism and oppression". As she writes "Go down to court with me some day and tell me how any act of resistance is going to keep any charged individual out of the reach of the long arm of the law. It is not. In fact, his (or less frequently her) resistance may have gotten them there in the first place."

about the history of their community, the Longhouse religion and its adherents, the current state of political affairs, their understanding of women's roles (both past and present), and so on. As well, one of my study participants informed me that – regardless of the history of colonialism and patriarchal injustice – "nothing had changed" in relation to women's status at the Six Nations reserve (pp.1, Interview Transcript #4, 12 October 2001, Toronto, ON, also see Shimony, 1961/1994: xxi)). In my estimation, the reasons that were provided for this statement – as well as opposing views – ought to be described in their own terms, and not simply as a "re/action to an oppressor" (ibid: 30). I will return to a discussion of these issues shortly when I discuss the work of Dorothy Smith and "conceptual imperialism"; but for now, it is enough to recognize the need for elaborating the scope and content of the testimonies I gathered at Six Nations. Moreover, it is important to question the extent to which concepts like resistance are able to describe the complexity of issues identified by my study participants.

Beyond issues of resistance, and as mentioned, I was also concerned with matters involving the persistence of culture at Six Nations. Six Nations efforts to preserve their independence and cultural practices by maintaining – and in some cases regaining – control over such from the Canadian state have been well documented in the literature. As Shimony (1961/1994: xxxvi) once wrote of Longhouse adherents at Grand River "[D]espite changes and despite greater incorporation of Six Nations peoples in the Canadian culture, the conservative community has retained many of its practices, and I do

not foresee the sudden disappearance of their practices and folk beliefs". Like Shimony, then, I have used "cultural continuity" to describe the will of at least some of the Grand River Haudenosaunee – their ability to persevere despite the host of modifications that were made to social structure where governance, kinship, economic organization, women's status and gender relations are concerned. At the same time, I have been sceptical about using cultural continuity to describe political issues.

While useful for describing the nature of social change at Six Nations, cultural continuity is problematic to use as an analytic tool, especially because it is so difficult to operationalize. The issue is one that I believe confronted Chandler and LaLonde (1998) who examined the role of cultural continuity as a factor in reducing the overall suicide rate among British Columbia First Nations.[136] In seeking to operationalize a definition of cultural continuity, these researchers encountered important conceptual difficulties. The following explanation perhaps best illustrates the issues to which I am making reference:

> [T]he cultural life of the First Nations ... has been so undermined by government policies and practices explicitly conceived as ways of systematically rooting out all traces of aboriginal culture that *much of what remains is not so much continuous cultural life, as an attempt to reconstruct it.* As such, our criteria for what could count as continuity needed to be expanded to include evidence of efforts on the parts of communities to *preserve, rebuild or reconstruct* their culture by wrenching its remnants out of the control of federal and provincial

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[136] According to their research, cultural continuity is actually "constitutive of what it means to have or be a self [and] to somehow count oneself as continuous in time" (ibid: 191). As they suggest, "anyone whose identity is undermined by radical personal and cultural change is put at special risk of suicide for the reason that they lose those future commitments that are necessary to guarantee appropriate care and concern for their own well being" (ibid).

government agencies (ibid: 209, emphasis mine).

As Chandler and LaLonde describe, cultural continuity is perhaps most clearly evidenced in efforts to "revitalize, rebuild and reconstruct" cultural life. Among the several markers they identify in comprising these efforts are the steps taken to secure land claims, self-government, education services (or band administered control of education), police and fire services, health services, and cultural facilities (ibid: 209-210). In effect, their work is focussed on the everyday activities that constitute cultural continuity as both a dynamic and ongoing process; and in this regard, it is both useful and instructive. At the same time, there are problems with utilizing cultural continuity – especially to describe Six Nations political history – at least in the way they describe.

Take for example the Six Nations Confederacy which has endeavoured to manage its own affairs based on historic treaties (most notably, *Guswenqah* or Wampum), the Great Law (or *Kayanerenhkowa)*, as well as the spiritual tenets of the Circle Covenant wampum (Chapter Two). In political dealings, I have already explained how the Confederacy government bases these assertions of political autonomy on this background and history, and not on state-inspired notions of "self-government".[137] I have also

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[137] It is worth noting that – with the exception of the Akwesasne – the Six Nations reserve, along with the Mohawk Nations of Tyendinaga, Kahnawake and Kanesatake have never been involved in self-government talks or negotiations with the Canadian state under its Aboriginal Self-Government Policy (Canada, 1995). As Shimony (1961/1994: xxxv) once noted of this matter "The Confederate Council ... gives notice that its self-government is based solely upon the Great Law, established by the Peacemaker, and dedicated to the principles of peace, power, and righteousness".

explained how the Confederacy government is, in itself, testimony to a degree of political autonomy that has yet been unbroken among the Haudenosaunee. As Grand Chief Mike Mitchell of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (1989: 109-110) once wrote of this:

> Our belief and faith that we are still an independent nation go back to the first treaty signed in North America, in 1664, when the original European settlers came to confer with our people in Albany, New York. What came out of that was the Two Row Wampum Treaty, in which conditions for our collaboration were agreed to by both sides [...] The original Two Row Wampum agreement stipulated that each side would refrain from interference in the other's government.

Accordingly, the "belief and faith in an independent Haudenosaunee nation" is based on principles established in early historic agreements between the state and the Six Nations people. These are the symbols of continuous cultural life; and of historic, political relationships that have been subject – unilaterally – to disavowal by the colonizer. To describe these historical relationships as the "revitalization" or "reconstruction" of cultural life – in the terms set out by Chandler and LaLonde – is to do an injustice to Six Nations political history as well as the Grand River Haudenosaunee. Put differently, there are – potentially speaking – very real ethical problems in misrepresenting historic relationships through the use of analytic concepts such as cultural continuity to describe the Grand River Haudenosaunee. But the problems associated with cultural continuity are not simply ethical in nature.

Similar to the concept of "resistance", none of the study participants I interviewed at contemporary Six Nations actually used words like "cultural continuity" or "revitalization" to describe their behaviour or political relationships. As I intend to

elaborate, the people I interviewed simply expressed their understanding of historic treaties, the importance of women in maintaining the clan system, the presence of an ongoing Confederacy government, the presence of women as faithkeepers and clan mothers, and the importance of the Great Law or *Kayanerenhkowa* in dealing with contemporary political issues. In my estimation, these understandings – as well as opposing views – are expressions of "the way things are", and they ought to be theorized in (literally) their own terms, and not simply as indicators of cultural continuity. It follows that I was determined to prioritize the experience and knowledge of the study participants whose testimonies I gathered at the Six Nations Reserve from August to November, 2001. The justification for such I see as being twofold.

On the one hand, the aim to prioritize the testimonies I gathered instead of using concepts to "explain" them is based on the ethical standards set out in recent literature on respectful research in Aboriginal communities. These and other issues have been considered at length by Maori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 2002) who – in detailing a new approach to inquiry concerning Indigenous peoples – identifies an unmistakable link between imperialism and historic inquiry[138] In order to "decolonize"

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[138] As Smith explains: "[I]mperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about Indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, back to those who have been colonized. Edward Said refers to this process as a Western discourse about the Other which is supported by 'institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles'" (1999: 1-2).

methodologies – and furthermore – to break with the cycle of exploitation that she elaborates, Smith suggests that researchers think critically (along with study participants) about the way in which knowledge(s) get categorized, classified, and represented back to individuals through the vocabulary of scholarship, and doctrines of academic discourse (Smith, 1999: 2). It is important, then, to resist the impulse of imposing a conceptual framework – through the use of concepts such as cultural continuity, resistance, colonialism and so on – onto the words of one's study participants (see TeHennepe, 1993: 219). The determination to prioritize the testimonies of my study participants can also be justified sociologically. The materialist writings of Dorothy Smith are especially instructive in this regard.

According to Smith, it is necessary for sociologists to move away from what she calls "conceptual imperialism", or the tendency to subsume people's everyday activities within an existing interpretive and theoretical framework (1987: 88).[139] On the one hand, this requires that researchers position and situate themselves – as I have done in

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[139] As Smith notes: "We learn to practice the sociological subsumption of the actualities of ourselves and of other people. We find out how to treat the world as instances of a sociological body of knowledge. The procedure operates as a sort of *conceptual imperialism.* When we write a thesis or a paper, we learn that the first thing to do is to latch it on to the discipline at some point. This may be by showing how it is a problem within an existing theoretical and conceptual framework. The boundaries of inquiry are thus set within the framework of what is already established. Even when this becomes, as it happily often does, a ceremonial authorization of a project which has little to do with the theory used to authorize it, we still work within the vocabularies and within the conceptual boundaries of what we have come to know as 'the sociological perspective'" (Smith, 1987: 88)

elaborating my own identity and the way this has shaped my research interests – as embodied actors within a given set of social and material relations; as well as in their research.[140] On the other hand, it also requires that researchers look to the lived experience(s) of the people whose everyday worlds they are attempting to illustrate and understand. In the terms set out by Smith, the goal of research and sociological inquiry is, thus, to treat as indispensable – and indeed affirm – the knowledges that are held by individuals in the world in which they act, live and know (see Smith, 1990: 52). To do otherwise is to engage in what Smith calls the "ideological practice of sociology"; a process that as she suggests:

> [...] ensures that the determinations of our everyday, experienced world remain mysterious by preventing us from making them problems for inquiry. The concept becomes a substitute for reality. It becomes a boundary, a terminus through which inquiry cannot pass. What ought to be explained is treated as fact or assumption (ibid: 43).

Smith recommends an approach to inquiry, then, that is very much rooted in the everyday world as people both live and perceive it. In doing so, the work of observation, data collection as well as the dissemination of research and results does not "rewrite the other's world" or "impose upon it a conceptual framework that extracts from it what fits with ours" (ibid: 25). Rather, "their reality, their variables of experience, must be unconditional datum. It is the place from which inquiry begins" (ibid).

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[140] As Smith explains: "The only way of knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within. We can never stand outside it. A relation in which sociological phenomena are objectified and presented as external to and independent of the observer is itself a special social practice also known from within" (Smith, 1990: 22).

The research I present in this chapter is very much concerned with the principles set out by Smith. As discussed, her approach to research favours "thick description" of the sort that Norman Denzin (1989: 83-103) and Clifford Geertz (1973) over that of "conceptual imperialism", and has provided me with a strong sociological justification for prioritizing the thoughts and views of the people that I interviewed. Her work also provided me with a rationale and methodological justification for reporting, treating as indispensable, and indeed incorporating into my research, some of the information that I had not anticipated from my study participants. As I now discuss, this was especially useful following my experience of the interview setting.

Interview Schedule and Research Methodology

For the most part, the literature on Haudenosaunee women has been concerned with women's roles politically, economically, and as heads of matrilineages prior to the arrival of the First Europeans and colonization (see Shoemaker, 1991: 38). But the more urgent question is: what happened to Haudenosaunee women at Grand River after some of the most radical changes to social structure and of the sort that I have described in previous chapters took place? My objective in conducting research at Six Nations was first and foremost determined to shed light on that question, and to show how women's status has been transformed – or at least disrupted – by colonial injustice and sex discrimination. In doing so, I developed a series of open-ended interview questions that

were intended to find out more about the history that is missing from the literature; and indeed, more about people's thoughts and opinions on women's status in general.

On the one hand, I wanted to ask the people I interviewed from Six Nations to describe what they knew of women's traditional statuses. I also wanted people to speak of the changes to women's status that they saw as taking place after events such as 1924 and amendments to the *Indian Act.* I asked people the following questions: What are the traditional roles of Haudenosaunee women? In what ways have the roles of women changed most significantly, if at all in your view? What has the *Indian Act* meant for women and has it affected you at all? How much do you recall of *Indian Act* legislation that discriminated against Six Nations women? What did the *Indian Act* mean for women's positions politically? What do you recall of the legal protests, or the women involved in them, against section 12(1)(b)? Did these protests affect you at all? Do women still hold positions of political influence here at Six Nations? These were among the eight questions I used to guide the interviews I conducted at Six Nations. But as I soon found out, it was difficult to adhere to the structure of questions I had imposed on myself at the outset of my research project.

The questions I developed were useful in helping me to prepare for the interviews I conducted. They were also useful in serving as a guide to help collect as much information about the topics and themes I had selected for inquiry. But on several occasions, it was important to break with the structure of questions I had prepared to show

respect for study participants who were interested in hearing more about my research and aims, my kin-based connection to the Six Nations reserve, and who spoke generally of issues ranging from band elections, their experience of employment and politics, and even residential schooling. In effect, I did not commit myself to a structured set of interview questions because to do so – especially over the short space of time I shared with the people I interviewed – would have been impossible, impractical, pushy, and even tactless. Moreover, it would have resembled an approach to research that has come under increasing criticism by post-positivist and Aboriginal scholars who insist that Indigenous people be able to influence, participate in, and indeed shape the research process (see Smith, 1999: 183-199; also TeHennepe, 1993: 200).

The challenge I faced as researcher, then, was to create a written piece of research that shed light on my original research questions while, at the same time, leaving room for study participants to influence the aim and focus of the interviews I conducted. In this regard, it was common to change the focus of an interview depending on the people I was able to talk with, or even based on the conversations we had shared prior to sitting down together. It was also common to experience – along with my study participants – a change in the aim and direction of my questions through the course of an hour long interview.

As I will discuss, one of my study participants spoke more about his experience with politics at Six Nations, as well as his thoughts and views on "tradition" in general,

than he did directly about historical change and women's traditional roles. I also spoke for some time with another study participant, Muriel, about the "two constituencies" said to have existed historically at Six Nations in the work of both Sally Weaver and Annemarie Shimony. In this exchange, important insights were shared about the systems used by academics to classify the political activities and beliefs of the Grand River community. I had not anticipated discussing this theme at the outset of my research programme, nor in the telephone conversation I had shared briefly with Muriel prior to meeting with her. To be sure, it would not have been possible had I adhered to a structured set of interview questions.

The research I conducted at Six Nations, then, was not committed to a structured set of interview questions. Rather, and as mentioned, I found it useful to exercise a degree of flexibility where sitting down with people from the community was concerned. Leaving things open-ended and flexible in the process of conducting my interviews allowed me to gather people's thoughts and views on "tradition" in general, and on the systems that have been used to classify people's political beliefs and activities. In coming pages, I will discuss these thoughts and views in further detail; but for now, it is enough to say that the decision to remain as flexible as possible in the research I conducted at Six Nations led me to an important realization; notably, that there is a great deal more to be documented about contemporary political life from 1924 and onward at Six Nations. It is important to place that realization into sociological context by returning again to Smith's

idea of "Conceptual Imperialism".

Sociology Beyond Conceptual Imperialism = A Diversity of Haudenosaunee Perspectives

The interviews I conducted at Six Nations were concerned with two general themes as mentioned at the outset of this chapter. These were: women's statuses (both traditional and contemporary) and sex discrimination based in the *Indian Act.* On each of these topics, I wanted to learn more from the people I interviewed; and I also wanted them to speak about how things have changed over the years at Six Nations in their view. Early on in my research; however, I realized that there was more to talk about (more than I had at first anticipated, that is) with the people I had chosen to interview.

To put this differently, I realized that the literature has said many things about the Six Nations Haudenosaunee, and I wanted to hear people's opinions about that soon after my research began. I also wanted to hear more about the history I have read concerning the events of 1924 as well as the events preceding and indeed following from *Bill C-31.* Early on in my research, people made it clear to me that there was much more to be said. In short, it became clear that my structured set of interview questions[141] would have been methodologically inappropriate; and as mentioned, impractical or even pushy. As I will describe later in the chapter, this was one of the first "findings" I reached in my research. A second involved my own personal identity.

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[141] Original interview questions can be found in Table K.

The research I conducted at Six Nations brought me to the realization that I have a personal and vested interest as researcher in learning more about the Six Nations – the community to which I am connected through an Oneida mother, and upon which I have never been able to reside.[142] As such, I found myself at various stages asking people to comment on things that I have found personally troublesome through the years, fascinating, or both. This was especially true of the interview I shared with Muriel where I asked her about the characterization of the reserve into Shimony's "Conservative" and "Reform" binary. We spoke at some length about this characterization, and – as I intend to make apparent in upcoming pages – what had started as a more structured interview became more like a conversation or even a dialogue between the two of us.

The matter to which I am alluding has of course been acknowledged, and discussed, at some length over the past twenty years in the literature on qualitative

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[142] It is important to note that my mother was born to a Mohawk father and an Oneida mother (both from Six Nations, though my Grandfather was raised by his aunt at Tyendinaga Territory) and that, on that basis, I ought to think of myself as an Oneida man under the traditional, matrilineal system. I have confirmed my grandmother's heritage through the Indian and Northern Affairs membership database of which I have sometimes wondered about in terms of accuracy. But I have also learned of my clan affiliation (Turtle) through a maternal uncle, as well as the Nation to which my grandmother belonged. That I have had to search for this information represents one of the ways that residential schools and the *Indian Act* has affected me as a status Indian, and descendant of a Haudenosaunee woman who lost status under section 12(1)(b). My grandmother – who was schooled at the Mohawk Institute – was not always comfortable in any questions about being Haudenosaunee, perhaps because of her experience. Of course, this information would have been more readily accessible to me had I grown up on the reserve, which – I want to make clear – was not at all possible under the terms of section 12(1)(b).

methodology. Some researchers have detailed a more semi-structured approach to the interviews setting, so that talk and conversation "conducted in a dialogic, reflexive manner" necessarily becomes part of the research process (Bishop, 1996: 29-32). Haig-Brown (1995: 30-31) has also reflected on the time she spent with people at The Native Education Centre on the edge of Vancouver's east side. As she states:

> The formal interview often strongly resembled the intense and intimate conversations one occasionally engages in with a close friend. We sometimes went out to lunch for these conversations, partly to find a private space removed from NEC and partly so that I could attempt to reciprocate people's time and knowledge [...] Informal interviews, what I have come to call 'research as chat', are ... important in ethnographic research. These may occur at any time, once a researcher becomes familiar to and with the other people in the place of study. I usually recorded these chats after the fact. They often enabled people to follow up on more formal interviews or to comment generally on the day's significant details; they also served to guide me to other research opportunities.

The idea of "research as chat" is one that was most relevant to the research I undertook at Six Nations. Indeed, I often found myself engaged with study participants about issues involving history and politics – none of which I had originally planned on hearing about based on my proposed interview questions. Some of these conversations were about conference experiences (Raymond); historical events involving such things as *Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (Muriel), as well as reflections about band politics (Muriel, Grace). Each of them involved my own personal involvement, and an acknowledgement of who I am in relation to Six Nations Territory.

In short, I found myself – often on an ad hoc basis – wanting to engage with

people on matters of history and the community in which I have never been able to reside. Some of these matters, especially the matter of *Bill C-31,* and sex discrimination in the *Indian Act* were important to me as the descendant of a women who lost status under section 12(1)(b). Others arose in the context of spending an hour or more talking with another person. For these reasons, as well as the others I have discussed, I abandoned my original plan to conduct a structured set of open-ended interviews at the Six Nations reserve. In turn, I rejected principles established in a great deal of positivistic research which attempts to "control, minimize or eliminate personal individualism" and to maintain a great "distance between the researcher and researched" (Bishop, 1996: 27).

In the pages that follow, I have hoped to create a set of joint reflections about women's status and political history at Six Nations. They are reflections about historically meaningful events of which I have – in some, but not all cases – experienced along with study participants. I hope to present this information in a way that does justice to study participants, and that is respectful of Six Nations Territory. Some of the testimonies are quoted at great length in order to meet these objectives. I have also elected to use subheadings as a method of helping to organize and present the information I gathered. This requires further discussion.

The method of organizing material through subheadings is very much based on the issues I have considered important to my research project with the Grand River Haudenosaunee. I do not intend to suggest, in other words, that the subheadings I have

used to categorize people's thoughts and views are those that were always chosen by them, nor that I am representing things that are important to the Haudenosaunee. Rather, they are a means of organizing (for purposes of the written text and document that I am writing here) what took place in the course of five open-ended interviews. Put simply, the subheadings I choose are a means of presenting the thoughts and views of Six Nations Haudenosaunee on a set of topics that I – as an aspiring young sociologist – decided were important to consider.

I took the liberty, then, of organizing my transcripts (and the fragments taken from them) for the purposes of creating a written piece of research into four major subheadings: *Women's Traditional Roles; Tradition and Change at Contemporary Six Nations; The Indian Act, Sex Discrimination and the Six Nations Haudenosaunee*; and finally, *The Legacy of 1924*. In doing so, I made a series of choices about what to include from the thoughts and views that I gathered. I also realized another one of my research findings in that process; notably, that it is difficult as a researcher to avoid subsuming people's everyday activities within some type of conceptual framework (Smith, 1987).

By the very act of creating *and imposing* subheadings, I have chosen – in other words – to "categorize information" and indeed "codify" my work. Having said that, the use of subheadings to organize material does not conceal the wealth of additional information that came out of the interviews I conducted. Nor do concepts like "governance" allow me to describe the beliefs and values that Grace, for example,

explained to me when I spoke with her about what it means to be self-governing. These are some of the issues that I will return to in latter parts of the chapter when I discuss in greater detail the information coming out of my research. For now, I provide a review of the interviews I conducted (using subheadings as an organizational tool) from August to November, 2001. In effect, I am presenting a diversity of Haudenosaunee perspectives.

Participants Profile

Five individuals in total participated in the research I conducted at Six Nations. Three of them were women and two of them were men. Each of the participants was a member of the Six Nations reserve, and though I did not establish it as a criterion, all of them were residents on the reserve.

Their ages ranged from late 30s to early 60s making them each old enough to recall events leading to, and indeed following from *An Act to Amend the Indian Act* – the legislation which stands as a symbol of sex discrimination and colonial injustice. Notably, none of the people I interviewed were of an age to have experienced the events of 1924 and the implementation of an *Indian Act* government at Grand River. Having said that, some people did speak of this history – and what they knew of these events – albeit in very different ways. This was due, at least in part, to the criteria I used to select the people I interviewed.

The criteria by which I chose my study participants were based on my

understanding, and indeed, my knowledge about the reserve and the people who reside there. I chose individuals from "all walks of life" – people I have met, heard about, and spoken with in my several years of endeavouring to know more about my Haudenosaunee identity. These are people who I know to be Longhouse adherents, past or presently involved politically and/or socially in the community, and who (in each case) possess knowledge about the written history of the Six Nations.

In terms of sampling, then, my research might best be regarded as having adhered to what the anthropologist Michael Agar (1980: 120) once referred to as *judgmental sampling*. Agar described this as "the seeking out of particular people" who are "specialists in the area you want to know more about" (ibid). In seeking informants, in other words, one is not necessarily concerned with the number of respondents (or in charting their frequencies of distribution for that matter), but rather with ability of respondents to contribute to the research questions at hand.

To put what I am saying simply, a more systematic test of the testimony and information I provide in pages to follow would require a greater broadening of my world of informants. It would require checking what I have learned among the entire community and those I did not talk to before I could consider it as representative of the entire group. Accordingly, I wish to emphasize that my objective here is to provide readers with the kinds of "thick description" I have already mentioned, and as derived from a very specific sampling of individuals from the community.

In terms of confidentiality, I have chosen not to identify the actual names of the individuals I interviewed in this dissertation. This chapter was mailed to all of those with

whom I shared an interview. At present, however, I have not been able to speak with every person about what I have written.[143] It is out of courtesy and a respect for the fact that not all might choose to have their words (involving such sensitive issues as the *Indian Act, Bill C-31*, women's traditional status, and some of the stories I know to be traditional) represented as I have here for academic, Haudenosaunee and other Aboriginal readers, that I decided to use pseudonyms.[144]

Some of the pseudonyms I use are names that I know to have been common to the Six Nations throughout history. Hilton [Hill], for example, was the name of the first elected chief of Six Nations Territory in 1924 (Beaver, 1997: 31). Raymond [Hill (1924-2003)] is the name of my grandmother's brother who passed into the spirit world during the writing of this dissertation. There is only one name that is real in the pages to follow and that is William ["Bill"] Montour. I worked as an economic development assistant at Six Nations Band Council in the summer of 1990 while he was elected chief, and I have intended to express my best regards for him as a person who *chose to be* respectful of the

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[143] So far, one of my study participants expressed interest in the work I have produced as a "Bill C-31 Indian" (i.e. the term often used to define a status Indian and descendant of a woman who lost and later acquired *Indian Act* status). I note that this individual graciously helped to clarify something that appears in transcription in the pages to follow.

[144] My use of pseudonyms is also consistent with the confidentiality section of my informed consent document which I had study participants sign and date (Table L). These documents (along with my tape-recorded interviews) are strictly confidential, and are being stored in a secure location in my office at the University of Saskatchewan.

Haudenosaunee Confederacy and its hereditary chiefs. Whatever the names I have chosen, all of the individuals I interviewed expressed to me several important insights involving Grand River Territory.

In setting "people from all walks of life" as my only criterion for the people I interviewed, my aim was to secure as in-depth and wide an opinion as possible on the questions and issues that I brought before community members. In other words, I did not seek to dichotomize, nor am I wanting to further dichotomize the Six Nations community into two distinct political constituencies. In fact, I am concerned with the very systems that have been used to classify the political beliefs and activities of the Grand River community itself. Do the people of Six Nations divide themselves into Longhouse or Christian as has been proposed in the literature? As I will suggest: not precisely, and this observation (though further research is necessary) was one of many unexpected developments that came out of the interviews I conducted, and indeed, during the time I spent talking to people at Six Nations.

Women's Traditional Roles

As discussed in Chapter One, the literature suggests that women held positions of esteem and influence among the historic Haudenosaunee. Women made political decisions, ranging from nominating and even removing men from their positions as chiefs and leaders. They influenced the deliberations of the Confederate Council, and held all of the hereditary "titles" related to chieftainship and clan membership. Women are also central to the Haudenosaunee story of creation, the *Kayanerenhkowa,* and the story of the

Peacemaker.

Of the five individuals I interviewed at Six Nations, all five provided me with further insight, information as well as their thoughts and views on the matter of women's status, traditional roles, and positions of influence. In fact, the memory of women's traditional roles – roles that are believed to continue on into the contemporary world – was made especially clear to me in the very first interview I conducted at Six Nations. As Eva, explained to me:

> The Haudenosaunee were a matrilineal society. Leadership was chosen. The chiefs were chosen, and they were chosen by the clan mothers. You can see the strength of women everywhere, even in the creation story. From the very beginning of time, women held the greatest gift: the gift of giving new life. The basis of our very beginnings to *this world* rests with women. Our Mohawk language is also interesting in terms of the importance of women. The language is female unless you are making some specific reference to a male thing – a rooster, for example. There is also the *Karihwatehkwen* [Thanksgiving Address]. The world is, in essence, female. The Haudenosaunee have always acknowledged, respected and honoured women. Women held authority. They looked after life, gardens, foods, seeds ... and men hunted (pg.1 , Interview Transcript #1, 12 August 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

As Eva suggests, women's status and influence were not entirely political in nature, but also derived from the Mohawk language and women's roles as life-givers which I discussed in Chapter One. Women are also said to have held "authority" among the traditional Haudenosaunee, though concepts that appear in the literature – such as "matriarchy" – are not used by Eva to describe these responsibilities. In fact, I asked her for her thoughts on using the word "matriarchy" to describe women's statuses. The following exchange is interesting in this regard:

M: Can you tell me about the kind of authority that women had? I mean, I have

> read a great deal by some academics who refer to the Iroquois as "matriarchal" - they almost suggest that women exercised power over men ...
>
> E: ... Well I think when I use the word authority, it may be over-stated. I mean simply that there is a respect shown to women. Women bring forth life and they look after the songs which thank creation; birthing songs and songs that bring forth physical life. Women also hold on to a lot of "should and shouldn't do" teachings. This is something I remember of my own mother. The elders never ordered you to do things. What they did was tell you, if you do this or that, than this might happen, or this might happen. They always left it as a case of "you decide" (pg. 1, Interview Transcript #1, 12 August 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

Eva suggests that there was a "respect" for women; deriving in part from the wisdom acquired through life experience, and the ability to influence others. Women, like elders, never ordered people to do things. Rather, they left it as a case of "you decide". The types of influence to which Eva refers will require further investigation to determine more about their scope and unique expression. In doing so, more could be learned about the traditional and contemporary roles of Haudenosaunee women.

With respect to the traditional roles of women, I found little difficulty in gathering information from the people I interviewed. In fact, this information was called to mind quite readily by some individuals. Raymond had himself researched women's traditional roles, and I had an interesting discussion with him about what he found to be missing from the literature and other information sources. As he put it:

> There is information available. But like, I mean, the role that women play now is not really available. Annemarie Shimony, who has now passed on, had an excellent book on what they did. But there are other people as well who have written on the roles of clan mothers, and the role of women. And then another person, Patty, who is here, who also gave us lectures on the role of women. So there was a lot of information there. But what I really wanted to find out was, well, what role do they play now? You know? And so I had to start from what I

> know, which is not necessarily the role of clan mothers. I started first with a survey of Native women artists and an art show that had taken place on Native women. When I started to explore this, well, all these artists began to appear. In fact, one has gone on, and has played a very important role. Jolene Rickard. I remember thinking, my god, there is something here that is really quite exceptional (pg. 9, Interview Transcript #3, 14 September 2001, Brantford, ON).

Raymond's testimony was interesting to me, because he nominates the artistic endeavours of Haudenosaunee women as among one of the roles being played in a contemporary context. The role of women among the contemporary Haudenosaunee most surely extends beyond the example he identifies, but on my observation, Raymond identifies a significant development in itself. Raymond also speaks to the lack of information that is available on women's roles within a contemporary context. I had an opportunity to engage with him further about this issue, and he spoke of a conference he had attended:

> M: [W]as it easy to learn about women's roles? Was the information available?
>
> R: No. Other than in the traditional sense. There were people that already had fragments of it, or knowledge about some roles. Like, for instance, we had four clan mothers here, and two were actually speakers: Patty and Margaret. There were two speakers that actually spoke here. Cheryl was here and so was Mary. Anyway, there were four clan or five clan mothers – they were here and participated in the conference. And there were some very active members of the conference itself. I am just trying to think. I don't think some of them... Some of them didn't realize they had lost anything, because they still play a role, first of all. I think Mary thought there was still a role to play. But as she heard and told the history, I think she felt, well, that is it. It was almost like: "Ah that is what we are, and this is what we have evolved to". By the end of the day, I think she felt a real energy to do more. To promote traditional roles. And she knows what her role is. And so there was no question, I think, that the conference also gave her some inspiration to move forward.
>
> M: So I am very curious about something that you just said, though, in terms of some of the clan mothers feeling like they didn't think that their roles had changed that drastically ...

R: ... No, they didn't really realize that. No, they had never thought of it as that because I think that, in a sense, the Confederacy council itself hasn't changed. You know, it may not be taking authority on an issue. It may not be playing any official role. But it's almost a spiritual role. And the clan mothers are playing the role that she would always have played, you know? She would not have saw her role as changed ...

M: Maybe the role hasn't changed at all?

R: Maybe it hasn't. I don't know. That's probably true. Maybe it hasn't.

M: Do you think? What do you think? I mean, maybe it hasn't. Maybe things haven't changed?

R: ... Well, I think it has, but I think ... I think it has, but ah, maybe that was one of the things ... It was very institutionalized, as I understood it in the past, and it's not at all now. It's more, "Hey we gotta get together behind the Longhouse and decide whose gonna be the Chief", and it's very much like that, as opposed to a real council of women deciding, you know, what's going to be done. It isn't that.

M: And so actually, you don't think that there is a woman's council, or women that meet?

R: No. No. In fact, you know, there's little break outs of groups. People get together (pg. 7-8, Interview Transcript #3, 14 September 2001, Brantford, ON).

Raymond identifies something that I take to be one of the most significant issues to have developed out of the research I conducted. Some women, according to Raymond, are likely to believe that their roles have changed. But as he also suggests, some of these women did not think their roles had changed at all in a contemporary context, and he used words like "formal" and "informal" to describe this process. With respect to the matter of things remaining the same, I asked others to comment and share their thoughts with me. This response requires discussion in its own right.

Tradition and Change at Contemporary Six Nations

In this dissertation, I have suggested that a number of factors were responsible for transforming women's status at the Six Nations; including Euro-Christian religious influence and residential schooling; the imposition of band council governance; the use of the father's side for state administrative purposes, and the statutory subjugation of women through the *Indian Act* and subsequent amendments.

On the one hand, I have suggested that women went from occupying positions of esteem and influence to positions of statutory subjugation. On the other, I have been careful to document the historic agency of the Grand River Haudenosaunee at various stages throughout history.

The interviews I conducted at the Six Nations were very much intent on gathering the thoughts and views of the Haudenosaunee on these issues, especially as this relates to the preservation of culture, the traditional roles of women, and the factors most influencing a change in women's status. These thoughts and views require closer consideration.

According to some of the people I interviewed at Six Nations, change was viewed as an inevitable outcome of history. As Raymond put this, women's roles in "government" and in "teaching" were transformed through "acculturation" and the acceptance of the "British tradition". To quote him directly:

> In traditional times, the women, clan mothers, the women of the Haudenosaunee had responsibility and that responsibility was of course to maintain the council house, maintain, I guess, a form of government. They were also responsible for

> teaching the children. So they had a major role, and the roles - male and female - were very clearly delineated, but also separate. But we became more acculturated and accepted more the British tradition. Women's responsibilities slowly started to chip away, chip away, chip away, until finally, I would say, at the beginning of this century, maybe 1930, women's roles had been lost (pg.1, Interview Transcript #3, 14 September 2001, Brantford, ON).

With the acceptance of the "British tradition", women's roles were transformed – and eventually "lost" according to Raymond. This is said to have taken place at the turn of the century, though Raymond spoke of the difficulty in finding "proof" of such later in our interview. In fact, he spoke of finding proof as "an academic thing" involving the "arguing of points". He also drew reference to technological developments as having effected change at contemporary Six Nations. As he put it:

> [I]n terms of proof, of how I would look at it, there are major changes that have gone on. And probably if I went to Patty and said "Hey", you know, "look at how your role has changed - this is how it changed", she would say "My role hasn't changed". Anyway, that's getting into an academic thing, and arguing points ... One of the things that I find right now is the use of electronic information equipment – that we have indeed changed. And many will say "You're wrong, we haven't changed", but there is noticeable change within our community down there because people are so tuned in. In fact, it's interesting because some people handle their business the old way, like when before there was a computer. And now they don't know how to handle it (pg.10, Interview Transcript #3, 14 September 2001, Brantford, ON).

Raymond identifies "electronic information technology" as a factor influencing change at Six Nations. He points to the presence of people who "handle their business the old way" which suggests that modern day conveniences and technological developments are not being utilized by all of the people at Six Nations in their everyday lives. Raymond also suggests that some women do not believe their roles have changed at all at Grand River.

The latter is something significant to have developed out of my research, and it was something that I became intent on learning more about.

Of the individuals that I interviewed at Grand River, all five were intent on providing me with information as well as their thoughts and views on women and whether their roles have changed. Grace suggested women's roles were changed over time. But as she also pointed out to me, the role of women – while it may have been transformed on a political level – has stayed the same. As she put it:

> Change started with colonization and the *Indian Act,* that's where things changed when it came to women's roles. Traditionally, though, women's roles never changed. Traditionally, those roles have never changed, because when we have our ceremonies, and when we have our Longhouse traditions, the roles that women have as faith keepers and the role within the Longhouse itself has never changed. It's still the same (pg. 1, Interview Transcript #4, 12 October 2001, Toronto, ON).

Despite their imposition and intrusion into the lives of the Grand River Haudenosaunee, "colonization" and the *Indian Act* did not bring about an end to women's traditional roles. In explaining this to me, Grace drew reference to the Longhouse religion, where the "ceremonies" and "traditions" have never changed, and where women still play a role as "faith keepers". When this issue of change and women's traditional roles resurfaced in our discussion, I asked her to explain this to me in further detail. The following exchange was insightful:

> M: I guess I am curious, in your experience, how would you say that the traditional roles of women have changed most significantly?
>
> G: I don't think they've changed at all. Nuh-uh, they haven't changed in the sense that all those teachings are still there. Those teachings have still been maintained.

> And the roles that women have in the Longhouse still exist. If we were to divide it up time wise, it's almost like there are two different ideas, like, one dealing with colonization and the other our political system. In our traditional government, women and men had balance with each other – in dealing with society, in dealing with the external people – that's where the balance was between the two, between the men and the women. Colonization did not allow for the recognition of that balance between men and women. That's when it started to change, like the leadership role of our men and women.
>
> M: Ok, but how do you account for that change though? Like, what caused that do you think?
>
> G: Like, to me, there was a whole bunch of things that caused it.
>
> M: So not just one thing then, huh?
>
> G: Nope, no. Like the effects of white men and how they treated their women - you know, the patriarchy - that changed men. Men have lost respect for the women's roles as leaders, as clan mothers, and chiefs – that is the disrespect that is there. They don't follow what the women's roles were supposed to be. And so that is part of what has changed. But the traditional part - that to me has never changed, you know what I mean? It's almost as if - to me - they haven't changed because we still understand them, and we still know them, and we still follow them in our ceremonies. But when it comes to the political part, like the governance of our people, that has changed because of outside influences (pg. 5-6, Interview Transcript #4, 12 October 2001, Toronto, ON).

As Grace suggests, colonization disrupted the balance between men and women as that had existed under traditional government, and it also brought about a learned disrespect for women. But as Grace also clarifies, women's roles are still understood, they are still known, and they are still followed in ceremonies. Later in our interview, we discussed this issue in greater depth – as well as her thoughts and views on the effects of white men and how they treated women.

To be sure, colonization brought about a number of changes at the Six Nations

reserve. But to reiterate Grace's point, women's roles – while they may have been disrupted on a political level – were not at all thoroughly transformed by colonization. In her view, women's traditional roles are still being practiced and acknowledged in the Longhouse and the teachings are still in place in ceremonies and in oral tradition. When I asked if she would explain these "teachings" to me, she made reference to "the ceremonies" that deal with women's responsibilities. She had the following to say of their importance:

> The ceremonies tell us what our responsibilities are as women and as men because there are certain responsibilities that women have. In the learning songs and in planting songs, the connectedness that they talk about – like women's connectedness to the earth and to the Creator and, especially, when giving birth or when planting – is a connection that is right there. Women are said to be the ones that are responsible for the seed, like that is all part of the song that's sung during the planting. There are certain songs that women sing and they talk about her connectedness and her relationships to the earth, and to the Creator, and to her children, and to her partner. And even during marriage ceremonies, that's another thing they talk about is the relationships between each other, and what your role is – as a wife, or as a mother or as a grandmother – and all of what you are supposed to be in a marriage. So all of those things teach you what your roles are (pg.4, Interview Transcript #4, 12 October 2001, Toronto, ON).

For Grace, the "ceremonies" and "teachings" are key to maintaining the relationships and responsibilities of Haudenosaunee women and men. In sharing this with me in detail – and through the use of examples – her words are testimony in themselves to the survival of Haudenosaunee cultural knowledges. They also provide a basis for understanding the ways in which women's traditional roles are both realized and maintained at contemporary Six Nations. Having said that, Grace also spoke of what has been lost at contemporary Six Nations, the nature of which requires closer consideration on its own

terms.

In the course of our interview, Grace had the following to say about what has been lost, the changes brought about by history, colonialism, and the imbalances created between men and women. As she explained:

> Well, you have to go back into history really. What has happened between our men and our women is that - as I was saying - men have lost respect. Respect is gone. That's what happened, you know? There isn't any understanding of each other's roles anymore and it's almost as if people have forgotten. People actually started to think like white people, and started to really be influenced by it. That created the imbalance. And so, politically, what's happened is that men have started to think like white men, where women are just supposed to, you know, work in the kitchen and not be involved in discussion. That's what happened is that women, the clan mothers, are working in the kitchen, and they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, like, making decisions, and the men abiding by those decisions. Men were just supposed to listen and follow what the women's instincts were. That's what the peacemaker came and told us – that's why women have a different power, or different strength than men. They have a deeper instinct about what's going on, and so that's how they are supposed to see things, and feel things differently then men. And they are able to distinguish things, and understand things differently, and that's what men respected about women, but that's been lost. Even the women lost those instincts because they have had to deal with a lot of violence and abuses – sexual abuse and all of that kind of stuff – that's been going on since colonization. Women have become oppressed by our own men. But women are starting now to come back to life, just like everybody else is coming back. To understand who they are (pgs. 6-7, Interview Transcript #4, 12 October 2001, Toronto, ON).

As Grace suggests, an imbalance has been created between men and women at Six Nations, and abuses have taken place since colonization. But even though women's roles have been forgotten by some, they have not been entirely lost in a contemporary context. Some people have actually forgotten (or perhaps have never been taught), as Grace explains, about their traditional responsibilities. But as Grace also points out, there is

something significant taking place in terms of gender roles; at least among some of the contemporary Haudenosaunee – notably – a coming back to life. People are coming to understand who they are as men and women; and also, working to understand what has been otherwise forgotten in terms of their traditional roles and responsibilities.

The work that people do at Six Nations to understand the traditional roles and responsibilities of men and women is an interesting point to consider. In fact, I asked Eva to explain how a Haudenosaunee woman lives "traditionally" in modern day society without getting "caught up" in the *Indian Act* or other forms of dislocation created by colonization. She had the following to say:

> Well, she will give many thanks to the women who live by the old ways. She also learns the language, and she goes to the ceremonies, and there are plenty that are left over. I spoke a lot about this kind of thing with an old friend of mine who is now passed away, Norman, he was Indian and a prophet. Before his death, I sat with him and he said to me "It's time now to do it". These were the words he said he wanted to leave with me before he died. And I guess that made me realize a lot of things. You know, you can still turn on the tap and give thanks to water. You can still give thanks for food. You can still thank the creator. It is an important mindset. Many of the traditions have been weakened but they haven't been lost (pg. 4, Interview Transcript #1, 12 August 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

Traditions may have been weakened but not entirely lost in a contemporary world. As Eva suggests, a woman can live traditionally in a modern day society by giving thanks to women who live by the old ways; by learning from the language and by going to ceremonies. But as Eva describes of her realization as prompted by the death of an old friend, there are additional ways of realizing a traditional way of life in a contemporary world. I found her reference to an "important mindset" by which a person can give

thanks to water – when turning on the tap – food, and the Creator in a modern day setting quite interesting. Combined, they are the means through which – in her view – the traditional roles of women (and men) might be realized among the contemporary Haudenosaunee.

Language, ceremony and giving thanks were not the only means of living traditionally according to Eva. Indeed, later in our interview, she spoke of adhering to traditional values in a modern day setting, and she offered her views in this regard. I asked her to describe how people might best "return" to traditional roles and responsibilities in today's world. She again had the following to say:

> Well I think it has to begin with knowing yourself. The old people knew themselves. They also knew their people. They also knew about role modelling. I think that we need to return to the practice of role modelling. That is how healing can take place. It is also important to visit. No one visits any more, but it is very important socially to visit people. As a girl, I can recall people coming to visit us all the time - the dudo's [Mohawk saying for a grandparent or also an older person]. And some of those people who I thought were our family, well, I later found out they were no blood relation. But that is the way it was. If people came to visit, you would feed them, and sometimes, if it became too late, they would sleep over. That is the kind of human contact we need to return to (pg. 3, Interview Transcript #1, 12 August 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

The act of healing is something that needs to take place in a contemporary world. Eva talks of the challenge of healing, and also, the personal challenges that she faces as a woman who works at Six Nations in what she describes as a helper role. She spoke of women she knows who have dealt with personal histories and the past; including that of residential schooling, and had the following to say in relation to her own personal working objectives:

> I worked for a time at [First Nations Community Organization] in [City] and I worked on traditional health. I listened quite a bit during that time, to the stories of women who told me things. When I put the stories together, I realized that a lot of these women had been in residential schools. They expressed to me a lot of stories of feeling abandoned and without help and I wanted to help. And that is the way I look at my work, Martin. I am a helper, not a healer. I try to develop tools to help others help themselves. A lot of times, healing starts within. A lot of the healing I have witnessed happened in three phases. People typically recognized the past, and started to move forward by dealing with the past, and they sometimes made choices to go back to school. For many women, they went through a process of discovering their own strengths. So it was also through my experience that I came up with the name [confidential]. And that is something that I heard so many of the women that I worked with in [City] explain. All too frequently, they would say that no one wanted to hear them, that no one ever listened. And the impact of that was often inter-generational - it was something that carried on into families. In my work with women now, we work a lot with songs. We work with music and we feel the body through the vibration of sound. For so long, our bodies have been numb - whether through alcohol or drugs or over-eating. So many behaviours are of the extreme, but finding some kind of balance is the goal (pgs. 2-3, Interview Transcript #1, 12 August 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

Eva's biographical reflection holds important insight into the question of women's status, as well as the inter-generational or ongoing factors involved in transforming it. By this, I mean to draw attention to residential schooling and its inter-generational impact as having affected the status of Haudenosaunee women.

Colonization, the *Indian Act*, and residential schools. These are some of the factors that were identified by my study participants as having effected change at Six Nations in terms of women's roles and that of tradition itself. In combination, these factors were believed to have changed, or at least impacted on both women's status as well as traditional activities. Depending on who I talked to, the factors effecting change were thought to have impacted on the Six Nations Haudenosaunee in varying and

complex ways.

But two things remained consistent through the research that I conducted. First, that some people are committed to upholding the spirit of tradition. The continuation of tradition is for some, in other words, an important personal and political endeavour. Second, that women's status has been severely disrupted because of colonization. As Eva and Grace both expressed to me, Haudenosaunee women have become oppressed by Haudenosaunee men. Abandoned, women are often numb by the injustices created through residential schooling with either few resources or help. These are not the only the only factors that people identified as having contributed to the oppression of Haudenosaunee women. In fact, people spoke of sex discrimination in Indian policy. It is to an examination of people's comments on the *Indian Act* – perhaps one of the most significant of patriarchal injustices imposed on the Haudenosaunee people, and of key interest in my research – that I now turn.

The *Indian Act*, Sex Discrimination and the Six Nations Haudenosaunee

The research that I conducted regarding politics and women's status at contemporary Six Nations was concerned with gathering the thoughts and views of my study participants on issues related to the history of sex discrimination in the *Indian Act,* and matters involving *Bill C-31.* Indeed, I set out generally to articulate what the *Indian Act* has meant to the Haudenosaunee, and whether or not status provisions – including those that are sex discriminatory – have been devastating or divisive when it comes to

community relationships. The devastation created by Indian status provisions has been substantial at Six Nations, and it has not been absent from community politics. In fact, it becomes an issue each time a challenge is posed to the residency by-law discussed in Chapter Four.

These challenges are an impending reality at modern day Grand River – and in many First Nations communities across Canada – especially because of the many lives that have been affected by Indian status provisions. Issues stemming from the residency by-law have required of the Six Nations community to balance its own right to decide on band membership (in the interest of protecting both culture and a land base) with the residency entitlements of out-marrying Haudenosaunee whose spouses may not be status Indians. The negotiation of status provisions was of importance to me in the research I conducted and I will discuss that in a moment. For now, it is important to acknowledge what I learned about the events preceding *Bill C-31* and the passing of the Six Nations residency by-law.

In an early interview, I was intent on having Hilton share his perspective on the events leading up to *Bill C-31.* This is an idea that is significantly underdeveloped in the literature on Six Nations; yet in asking him to comment, he focussed more on matters as they unfolded on the reserve after *Bill C-31* was passed. He also suggested that developments were more pronounced at the national political level in the years preceding *Bill C-31* than they were within the community. The following exchange, quoted here at length, is revealing:

H: It was really sparked by Mary Two Axe Early, and that was really the spark that the court ruled, you know, that she shouldn't have to lose her status then ... It basically told the government you have to fix it up in some kind of way. So this was the government's way of fixing it up by saying nobody can lose their status, and then by bringing back those who had lost their status if they could prove that they were of Indian descent. And the biggest problem was also that they gave bands the opportunity to develop their own residency rules and by-laws and their own laws on who should be an Indian and who shouldn't be. Who should be registered and so on.

M: I see. Are you referring to the development of [band] membership codes?

H: Well, yeah. What happened was that we argued this with the government itself. Six Nations did, because under that code they said we had to have some kind of a plebiscite, or referendum process, or whatever you wanna call it, and they said that we had to have fifty one precent of the eligible electors, and we told them we can't because you cannot get fifty one percent of the eligible electors. There are two problems with Six Nations. First of all, we are so large and only about 8000 resided here at that time, or less. People were all over the world, and yet they said that fifty percent of those eligible to vote ... and that it had to be those who were eligible ... Well, you can't find all these people when they are working in all parts of Canada, but they are still registered on the Indian Affairs registration as band members.

M: I see. So that was one issue.

H: Well, that was one of the issues. The other issue of course is that the Confederacy never did believe in voting on anything dealing with the government itself, so you weren't gonna get those votes either. So our chances of getting fifty one percent of the electors out was just not there, and we tried to explain that to the government but it didn't seem to make any difference.

M: Yeah. So that's one of the dilemmas that the Council confronted?

H: Yeah, that's right. That was one of the arguments we had when they brought in the new rules. The other one was on adoption. We wanted to be sure that the children ... only the children who were at least fifty precent Indian would be put on the band list, even if they were adopted. We tried to get that, and they disagreed with that too. I guess their reasoning was that children raised on the reserve may suddenly not have a home ... I mean, you can see their point of view. I mean, you have to look at all the points of view, and there was some merit to it

you know.

M: It strikes me as a very complicated thing ...

H: It is very complicated (pgs. 2-3, Interview Transcript #2, 13 August 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

The events preceding amendments to the *Indian Act* took place at the national as opposed to community level. As Hilton suggests, the discussions were sparked by Mary Two Axe Early – a Mohawk woman from the Mohawk Nation of Caugnawaga – who spoke out against the sex-discriminatory sections of the *Indian Act*.[145] Hilton had more to say about this as well as the issue of national attention. I will discuss these words in a moment. For now, it is important to acknowledge Hilton's recollection of events; and also, his words on the political issues that confronted Six Nations in the development of what he referred to as "residency rules and by-laws".

Hilton's words on *An Act to Amend the Indian Act;* and more specifically, the political issues surrounding the development of residency rules and by-laws are important

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[145] Section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act* – the section that required of women to lose Indian status upon marriage to non-Aboriginal men – was long opposed by Aboriginal women in Canada. As early as 1950, Mary Two Axe Early – to whom Hilton made reference – spoke out against the contentious section (see Silman, 1987: 13). At the time, however, the issue did not gain widespread attention because there was no public venue in which to articulate such concerns. In the late 1960s, the hearings of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women provided such a medium and Two Axe Early submitted a brief to the Commission itself (Borrows, 1994: 9). The Commission's report recommended "that the Indian Act be amended to allow an Indian woman upon marriage to a non-Indian to (a) retain her Indian status and (b) transmit her Indian status to her children" (1970: 238).

to consider. They provide insight into the way in which the Six Nations (and perhaps other bands) have adapted to the legislative changes brought about by the *Indian Act.* They also shed light on an issue involving voting trends at Grand River. The source of these voting patterns stems back to the late-eighteenth century as I documented in Chapter Three.

As Hilton suggests, voting patterns have been significant to the people and politics of contemporary Six Nations. This was nowhere more apparent than in the referendum and vote concerning the band residency code after *Bill C-31* was passed. The "problem", as Hilton put it, was that the "the confederacy never did believe in voting on anything dealing with the government itself". The choice to boycott band and by-law elections is something that significantly emerged from the interview I shared with Hilton. In fact, Hilton's words suggested to me an area that has been significantly understudied in Six Nations political history, namely, the political views and beliefs of the Six Nations Confederacy government, or those that adhere to its principles.

To date, this issue has received only brief and superficial consideration in the literature. Shimony, for example, spoke of "Confederacy attitudes" as this relates to the issue of voting in band council elections, but she understood these as rather empty acts of "resistance" and "protest". As she wrote in 1961:

> Complete disregard for the Canadian government is still the attitude of the conservative faction, because any recognition whatever would make it appear that the Iroquois accept the right of the government to adjudicate in Indian Affairs (1961/1994: 93).

Shimony's insights are interesting, but what is the more substantive opinion of the Confederacy on the refusal to vote in band elections and by-laws? What is the Confederacy's opinion on the issue of intermarriage? On what basis – and certainly a choice does exist – have individuals (and even beyond the issues of political characterizations) chosen to boycott band council and by-law elections? These are the more substantive questions that will need to be answered in the literature on voting patterns and Six Nations political history.

In short, the interview I conducted with Hilton at Six Nations contained a number of important insights about Six Nations political history. Hilton was aware of one of the women involved in creating change for Aboriginal women as this relates to the sex-discriminatory sections of the *Indian Act.* He spoke of matters preceding changes to the *Indian Act*, and as brought on by *Bill C-31* in the late 20th century. He also shared his recollection of community politics in the time leading up to changes in the *Indian Act*, and indeed at Six Nations. In fact, I asked him to comment on what he remembered of the political landscape during the mid to late 1980s. The following exchange is important in this regard:

> M: I was curious about whether or not the Six Nations ever had forums to discuss or debate the C-31 issue, or if you ever recall any heated discussions ...
>
> H: ... I don't really think so. I don't really think back to the 80s very often, because like I said, everybody knew, and everybody was supportive of the process going on. Nobody thought that it was ever right that women should be banned from the reserve because they married a non-Indian. And while non-Indian women could come down here and live, nobody thought that was right either. And so I don't really think there was a movement here to do something, because

> something was already being done anyway – by the elected Council of the day and its members of whom belonged to the National Indian Brotherhood or The Assembly of First Nations as it later turned out to be.
>
> M: Uh-huh, and I guess prior to 1985, Chief and Council – could I assume they would have turned a blind eye to this kinda thing? Like you know, turn a blind eye to non-Native men living on the reserve?
>
> H: Well, I don't think there is any question. Like I said, there were people living here on the reserve. I mean we can go back to 1885 and it was like that. You can say the very same thing about 1885 (pg. 5, Interview Transcript #2, 13 August 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

If people "turned a blind eye" as Hilton suggests, then how successful was the *Indian Act* in legislating women who married non-Haudenosaunee men outside of the status collective in the years preceding 1985?

This question goes unanswered in the history of the *Indian Act,* sex discrimination and the Six Nations Haudenosaunee. Its importance, however, cannot be underestimated in terms of shedding light on status provisions; and more specifically, the way that these distinctions have affected historic relationships between status Indians at the Six Nations in the years preceding *Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act.* I will consider this issue in more detail shortly, but for now, it is important to acknowledge Hilton's views on the history of sex discrimination and the *Indian Act.*

Throughout the interview, Hilton reiterated his position that major developments leading to *Indian Act* amendments took place at the national level. He said nothing of community events or forums from 1973 to 1985 (including the renowned case of Yvonne

Bedard[146]), but he did speak of the people, and an elected band council who championed the rights of out-marrying Haudenosaunee women. Hilton also expressed his thoughts and views on the people and politics involved in helping to secure the rights of women at the national level. As he suggested of political developments:

> It was dealt with at a much higher level than just the bands. Now there were a lot of people from communities talking, but it was at this government-to-government kind of level even back then. I suppose we would say it was the National Indian Brotherhood, now The Assembly of First Nations, way back then was who was dealing with those questions. There was a women's movement that started – if we remember way back to the 80s – and they were looking for women's rights. And it wasn't Indian rights. That's where everybody kinda gets mixed up. It was not Indian women's rights, it was women's rights, period, across the whole spectrum of the whole country. Discrimination against Indian women was just one part of this big package. And there was a lot of discussion on it, and a lot of heated arguments on this issue (pg. 4, Interview Transcript #2, 13 August 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

In future research, the difference that Hilton identified between "Indian women's rights" and "women's rights" will require closer consideration. So too will the history he refers to where community events in the years preceding *Bill C-31* is concerned.

Muriel, for example, held an entirely different memory of community initiatives – and of framing the issues – in the years preceding *An Act to Amend the Indian Act.* In

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[146] Yvonne Bedard is a Six Nations woman who, in the 1970s, posed an official legal challenge to section 12(1)(b); and the elected Band Council at Six Nations. This case was heard at the Supreme Court level, along with that of Jeanette Corbiere Lavell (an Anishnabe woman from Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve No. 26 on Manitoulin Island in Ontario) who had also lost status under section 12(1)(b). See *Attorney-General of Canada v. Lavell and Bedard, [1974] 1 S.C.R.*, also Weaver, 1974: 55-57).

contrast to Hilton, she even remembered writing of her views in response to a call for submissions about people's thoughts and views on the development of band residency rules. She spoke of community objections, and her overall recollection of the mid-1980s in the following excerpt:

> You mentioned the C-31 issue, I can remember in 1985 before that legislation was passed, we had this whole process in the community... There was gonna be a ratification vote and all this kinda stuff, and we had this call for submissions, about what do you think and stuff. And I can remember writing my submission and I wrote it as "Just-A-Mom", you know? And I wrote it and said that, you know, "Everyone wants to get even, but if we put this thing through, and we don't let our people who marry off come back here, in two generations we're not gonna be here, hello?". And I didn't even get a response. I mean, I didn't get a thank you, how do you do, or nothing. You know? And people have just gone with the prejudices of the day now. I am hopeful that this is gonna change because we are gonna do ourselves in and it doesn't make any sense. I mean, if you look at a population that's a small population surrounded by a larger population, you are gonna have intermarriage, you know? Traditionally, we had a way of adopting in. Like I said, as with Stan. And there was a way of including, and training, and learning, and maintaining the society. But the way it is now, its on a path for destruction. Absolute disintegration, and it just makes me ill (pgs. 19-20, Interview Transcript #5, 15 November 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

Some people were opposed to *Bill C-31;* especially the idea of letting people who married off come back to the Six Nations community. In the 1980s, Muriel disagreed with that opposition, and spoke of her ongoing disagreement with those who have gone with the prejudices of the day. In fact, Muriel spoke powerfully of her views on intermarriage, as well as the practice of excluding some people from the Six Nations community in the interview I shared with her. As she suggested, intermarriage is something that continues to affect the entire Six Nations population, and there will be

consequences for the entire Haudenosaunee depending on the way that it is handled. People can follow the prejudices of the day, or they can be hopeful where adopting in and overcoming prejudices are concerned.

In particular, Muriel acknowledged the practice of adoption; of training, and of including people into an otherwise smaller population. She also identified a person who had been adopted into the community through "traditional" means. In future research, it will be necessary to learn more about traditional adoption, and to describe the thoughts of people on these and other procedures, especially as this relates to finding solutions to the issues created by *Bill C-31*. For now, I have elected to describe Muriel's views on intermarriage. These were views that stood in contrast to the views of others I interviewed at Six Nations.

In fact, one of the people I interviewed had strong feelings about the intermarriage of Haudenosaunee women. This became especially apparent when I asked this person to comment on the impact of the *Indian Act* on Haudenosaunee women. The following excerpt – transcribed from one of my interviews – sheds light on some of the opposition that exists at Six Nations on the matter of women marrying out:

> Q: Can you tell me about what kind of impact you see the *Indian Act* as having had on women? Like, the status sections that required women to lose their status when they married non-Native men?
>
> A: Well the *Indian Act* required that some people lose status as Indians. There were a series of meetings here at Six Nations in the '70s about that issue. At the time, I made quite a statement about my feelings on women who married non-Native men. At the time, I said that only Indian men and women make Indian children. I still have very strong feelings about Indian women who marry non-

> Indian men. Everyone has a certain thing that bothers them, and I guess that's probably mine.

The past and present matter of "Indian women marrying non-Indian men" produces strong feelings and outright opposition in some people. The matter of "Indian men who marry non-Indian women", however, is rarely ever acknowledged. In fact, very little is said about the non-Indian women who – prior to 1985 and upon marriage to Haudenosaunee men – became status Indians.[147] It is, thus, necessary to ask the questions: To what extent were the children of these intermarriages able to maintain residence on the Six Nations reserve, and thereby, an awareness of their nation's culture and history? In effect, what factors were responsible – at least in part – for facilitating "the making of Indian children"? To be sure, the *Indian Act's* status provisions were central to this process, especially because they determined an individual's official, and legal entitlement to residence in the community.

Haudenosaunee women who "married out" had never voluntarily consented to a loss of Indian (Act) status. Those who believe otherwise threaten to distort the historical record. Indeed, the "voluntary" act of marrying-out had quite different consequences for Haudenosaunee men than it did for Haudenosaunee women. Even if women made so-called "choices" when they "married out", this did not justify the sex-discriminatory sections of the *Indian Act*. From 1869 to 1985, only women (along with their children)

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[147] I would like to acknowledge Patricia Monture-Angus for making me think more about "Indian men who marry(-ied) non-Indian women".

lost legal status as they married "non-Indians". After 1951, women who "married out" also lost band membership, as did their children. In effect, it became illegal after 1951 – at least officially and under Eurocentric law – for out-marrying women to live on the reserve. Even when women were separated from their husbands or widowed, they could not – under the terms of Canadian law – return to the Six Nations community (as with Yvonne Bedard). These issues played a part in the formation of Six Nations identities, including my own.

Of course, not everyone supported *Indian Act* legislation or even the removal of women from the community for that matter. As discussed, Muriel had strong words to voice in public (even though she recalled them as not being heard) about the consequences of excluding women who once married off. She did not make a distinction between "women's issues" and "Indian issues" when it came to section 12(1)(b). Instead, she spoke of the way that Indian status provisions have affected – and continue to affect – the entire Haudenosaunee population. Muriel's views, and others like them, will require closer consideration in the research on *Bill C-31*. So too will the views of Hilton who spoke of practices that broke with the requirements of the *Indian Act* in the years preceding 1985; and also, of people who "turned a blind eye" on those who were non-Indian and living in violation of section 12(1)(b).

To speak of matters more generally, the everyday, material significance of Indian status distinctions will require closer consideration in the literature on Six Nations political history; and in order to highlight the way that the *Act* has affected the people of

the Six Nations. Further inquiry into the issue of out-marrying women – and also, in-marriage – will also be useful. On what basis, for example, have people objected to intermarriage; and also, to the prospect of *"Bill C-31* people" returning to the reserve? What role does chronic under-funding, limited resources and a shrinking land base – the history of which I outlined in Chapter Three – play in fostering resentment, and in the need for maintaining the residency by-law that I spoke about earlier? In effect, how are people who have acquired *Bill C-31* status socially constructed as a threat to the community? How is the Canadian state absolved from taking responsibility for the "racial" and gendered "divisions" it took part in creating? These are questions that I identify as being important, even though I was unable to develop and include them in this particular research programme. They are, put simply, areas for further qualitative investigation where the *Indian Act*, sex discrimination and the Six Nations Haudenosaunee are concerned.

There are a number of other issues that will require additional qualitative analysis. Take, for example, the people with whom I unexpectedly spoke to about history and politics from 1924, especially when the renowned classification of Six Nations into "two constituencies" was raised. It has been thirty years since this idea was put forth, and I found myself asking study participants to comment on political allegiances, and the "conservative" or "traditional" binary put forth by well-intentioned scholars. The results were interested and revealed a series of subtleties that have not yet been addressed in the literature on the Grand River Haudenosaunee. It is to a preliminary investigation of this

political history that I now turn.

The Legacy of 1924

According to the literature, and as discussed, there are two distinct political constituencies that have existed historically at the Six Nations reserve: Longhouse and Christian, or as Weaver put it in the 1970s, "conservative" and "reform". Historically, the formation of these constituencies is said to have taken place around the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as the Confederacy Council (and Six Nations people) adapted to both religious disunity and differences in acculturation; and also, to various institutional changes brought on by colonialism and ongoing land encroachments (Chapters Two and Three)

Major political change is also said to have taken place at Six Nations on October 14th, 1924. Before that time, the Government of Canada was not intent on terminating the Confederacy Council government, making the history of governance at Six Nations distinct from that of all other First Nations in Canada (Chapter Three). The decision to intervene in 1924 followed on various reform-based efforts; the recommendations of Andrew T. Thompson to the Canadian government; and in the final instance, Parliamentary Order in Council # 1629 which demanded that the Six Nations follow an elected *Indian Act* system of governance.

The events of 1924 still punctuate Grand River political history, and they are not without recollection by many Six Nations Haudenosaunee. Despite losing official power

in 1924, for example, the Confederacy Council continues to voice its political convictions to both government officials and the Canadian state (see *Hamilton Spectator*, 21 June 1999: A1&A4, also see Shimony, 1961/1994: xxxiv & xxxv-xxxvi). At the same time, the events of 1924 are commonly understood to have transformed the social and political landscape of Grand River Territory, and to have created a series of historically-based political tensions within the community itself.

In fact, as recently as 1973, Confederacy adherents – in refusing to accept the validity of the elected Band Council – padlocked the doors of the Council office shut, thereby prohibiting access by elected *Indian Act* chiefs and councilors. The events in question led to an injunction, and judicial litigation[148] where it was concluded at the Supreme Court level – for a complex set of reasons which stand outside of the scope of this Chapter – that the Six Nations was not a "sovereign" nation (Bourgeois, 1986; Chapter Three).

Combined, the events of 1924 as well as more contemporary developments have further transformed political relations between the Band and Confederacy councils. As I intend to discuss, the events of 1924 have even had some bearing on contemporary political activities. Indeed, of the five individuals that I interviewed at Six Nations, three of them in particular had something to say about the events of October 1924, as well as their thoughts and views on subsequent historical developments. Others spoke of recent

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[148] see *Isaac et al. v. Davey et al. (1977) 77 D.L.R. (3d) 481*

political developments that have attempted to assuage the tensions between the Band and Confederacy Councils.

One of my study participants, Muriel, was familiar with the work of Sally Weaver and Annemarie Shimony – who both described the presence of "two constituencies" at the Six Nations – and she shared with me her own perspective on the matter of categorizing political and religious activities on the reserve. The thoughts and views that I gathered require closer consideration when it comes to developing a history of politics at the Six Nations. In effect, they require a consideration on their own terms.

Cultural anthropologists and historians have characterized the Six Nations community as having two distinct political constituencies. On the one hand, this characterization has provided a means of describing political dissimilarities between that of the Confederacy and Band Council governments, as well as the distinct practices of both the Christian and Longhouse faiths. Having said that, this characterization has said nothing about the complexity of cultural, religious and political beliefs, nor has it outlined recent political developments and activities as these exist at contemporary Six Nations.

Even Shimony admits to her original classification as a view that was "overgeneralized" but not "a totally inaccurate assessment of the past" (1964/1991: xxvi). She makes no attempt, however, at elaborating the "complicating subdivisions" and "various attitudes" said to exist at contemporary Six Nations (ibid). In the course of my interviews, I asked one of my respondents, Muriel, to tell me more about the complexity of political and cultural life, as well as her thoughts and views on the work of Shimony in

general. The following exchange, quoted here at length, contains a number of important insights:

> M: [W]e were talking about that distinction that Sally Weaver and Annemarie Shimony had made between conservative and non-conservative, or whatever. And I think, you know, I was curious about whether that would stand today given that Sally Weaver generated it in the seventies and I wondered if you had any thoughts on that. Is it as simple as two political constituencies on the reserve today? Or do you think that it's a little bit more complex than that?
>
> Muriel: Oh I think it's a lot more complex. As I mentioned to you last week [on the telephone], to me, the political relationships have really changed. And I've actually worked through some and have witnessed some of those dynamics. You know, our work in education for an example. We did a lot of work for ten years to see if we were going to run our own post-secondary education system locally and ... that was the first time I think – at least in my living knowledge – and my living history – that the elected chief went to the Longhouse and went in and, you know, sat and asked questions or had questions to ask and then actually met in the dining hall. You know...
>
> M: ... Who was that then?
>
> Muriel: At that time that was Bill Montour and he was elected chief, and actually, the events leading up to education being established under local control, or under local administration, came about at the end of one of those meetings in the dining hall down on the Onondaga Longhouse because we had had a series of community meetings and this is where the dynamics are really quite clear. Like, when you have the community meetings everybody's there.
>
> M: OK
>
> Muriel: I guess if you have to characterize it, we had everybody there. From the extreme traditionalists, to the I-wanna-be-non-native people. You know what I mean? Those people, they were all there in those meetings.
>
> M: Specifically on education?
>
> Muriel: Ah, sometimes, and sometimes it's health. You know, and you go into these forums that are held in the community, you know, in the upcoming elections you'll see the same cross section. They're all there in the room, and so they're

interacting in a way that didn't happen in Sally Weaver's day. In Sally Weaver's day, it was very you know this-is-our-camp-and-that's-your-camp-and-we-don't-really-talk-to-each-other and we-don't-really-try-to-come-to-a-forum-where-we-might-problem-solve-in-even-oblique-ways. You know what I mean? Ideas could spin off and maybe we might find a creative solution. That did not happen until the events in which I was involved with personally. That was in the late eighties and early nineties where we were really under the crunch in terms of post secondary. So we've had a series of community meetings with this cross section of people. What happened was that every traditional decision-making idea got put on the table, and they kinda kept working them and reworking them and then reworking them until everybody would come to something where everybody can kinda live with and then that got taken away off at the side, and the two political major players -- the two councils -- informally met at the dining hall and basically, you know, Bill was told if you're gonna do this we're not gonna stop you. So that's how that went down. It was a way of making a decision that had never happened before. In my knowledge it had never happened before.

M: What do you mean?

Muriel: Well it was a way of making a decision for the community so that something could happen for the community, and a problem could be addressed, and there wouldn't be continued second guessing and questioning ... should we do this or shouldn't we do it. The decision was made, the board was established, the office opened in a matter of, like, two months once that meeting took place and so you know it cleared the path for things to happen ...

M: Yup.

Muriel: And after that, Six Nations has administered its post- secondary education. So, I mean, that would not have happened in Sally's day, so... You know, the elected chief of the day would know traditional people, but that dynamic of even informal problem solving or diplomacy wasn't happening, you know, and I think that part of it was the personalities that were involved.

M: Yea, I was just gonna ask that. Like, you know, how would you attribute the success of that meeting or whatever, so would it be personalities I guess?

Muriel: I think it was personalities. At that time, Harvey had been in education for many, many years in this community. Harvey was a hereditary chief. And Bill understood the traditional system and was very respectful of it. Younger chief, you know in terms of, well, he didn't, I hate to say this, but he wasn't an *Indian*

Act chief in the sense of like ...

M: ...OK.

Muriel: You know what I mean, like: "we've gotta be like non-Native people to be good"? He knew that we could keep some of who we were and still be okay. Like, he respected that whole thing, and he conveyed that very well, and I think those kinda dynamics of those people, those players, at that time, with that pressure on the community, you know, led to what we have now. Because in many ways, Bill deferred to the Confederacy, you know what I mean? Like, he would go to them for guidance on things, and he would say "You know, I'm not gonna do it if you say no, but unless I hear otherwise I am gonna have to do X", you know what I mean? And unless they stood in his way, he would do it. Now later on in his own personal life, he had some run-ins with the community, but that was on a business venture, and it was separate, and that's outside the political process. So yes, the community dynamics have evolved. And they continue to evolve (pgs. 2-3, Interview Transcript #5, 15 November 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

Muriel recounts the events leading up to – and indeed following from – education being established under local control and administration at the Six Nations reserve.[149] As she recalls, a series of informal community meetings had taken place after then Chief Councillor Bill Montour approached the Confederacy Council in a way that "had never happened before". These meetings took place informally in the dining hall of the Onondaga Longhouse during the eighties and early nineties, and for Muriel, were key to developments in a major community initiative. As she also points out, these meetings – and the political developments preceding them – require closer consideration if one is to understand political relationships among the contemporary Grand River Haudenosaunee.

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[149] Muriel's reference is to the control of post-secondary education and I thank her for clarifying that with me on a recent review of this chapter.

For Muriel, "political relationships have really changed" at Six Nations; particularly during "the eighties and early nineties" when Bill Montour was elected Chief of the Six Nations. As she describes, his actions represented the "first time" in her own "living knowledge" and in "living history" that an elected chief undertook to foster communication between the two local governments at Grand River. His actions also give cause for revisiting earlier characterizations of the reserve being divided into two distinct political constituencies; because as Muriel put it, the interaction that he fostered between the Elected and Confederacy Councils exemplified a dynamic of "informal problem solving" and "diplomacy" of a sort that "just wasn't happening" in Sally Weaver's day.

As Muriel suggests of an historic Six Nations, the two constituencies did not come together to "solve problems" or even "interact" during Sally Weaver's day. Nor did the same "cross section" of people necessarily exist at an historic Six Nations. In proposing her own characterization of the reserve population into that of "extreme traditionalists, to the I-wanna-be-non-Native people", for example, Muriel does not rely on previous classifications such as that of "Longhouse" or "Christian" or even "Conservative" or "Reform". To me, the spectrum – or continuum – of political beliefs that she proposes suggests the need for revisiting earlier characterizations which have tended to dichotomize the Grand River population. More importantly, it also suggests that the people of Six Nations have their own means of classifying cultural and political beliefs which may stand well outside of that which has been identified in the literature. Both of these issues will require closer consideration on their own terms and in future

research. So too will the types of decision-making and political relations that Muriel made reference to in the course of our interview.

It would seem, in fact, that political relations between the two constituencies at Six Nations have been very much determined, at times, by the people involved in negotiating a given set of community issues. But as Muriel suggests, harmonious political relations have not only been determined by a "cross section" of community members who – through the eighties and early nineties – were committed to working at, and indeed reworking, ideas until a path could be cleared for things to happen. Instead, Six Nations political history has also been shaped by the players involved in negotiating on behalf of the Confederacy and Band Council governments over time. As Muriel suggests, the success of community meetings – especially during the eighties and early nineties – was very much determined by the "personalities" and the people taking part. Her perspective on political relations resembled that of another individual, Raymond, who also spoke of this matter of importance.

Raymond agreed that Bill Montour was an especially important personality where political relations between the two constituencies were concerned. But following his term as Chief, he said that the talks that Montour had facilitated were never carried on. As he explained:

> Well, at one point in time, and in the last couple of councils, you know – Bill Montour was one of them – he had kind of the beginnings of some talks with the Confederacy and they materialized on some kinds of events. But they never carried it on. I mean, this chief is certainly not interested in it, you know, he has the old mentality of pursuing his goals with the blessing of the Department

> [DIAND]. He does things without informing anyone. He is running the operation like an Indian Agent of a long time ago (pgs. 12, Interview Transcript #3, 14 September 2001, Brantford, ON).

As Raymond suggests, political relations between the Confederacy and Band Council have been influenced by the people, politics, social problems, and personalities that have unfolded – and continue to unfold – at Six Nations. These and other historical developments ought to be considered in any description of Six Nations political history; especially the literature that has tended to dichotomize political relationships and activities. Beyond these issues, it will also be important to consider the status of the Confederacy government through the twentieth century. I was intent on learning more about the Six Nations Confederacy in the course of my own research, and in hearing people's thoughts on events from 1924. I was also interested in hearing people's thoughts on how to better strengthen the relationship that exists between the Confederacy and Band Council governments and what, if any, possibility there is of reinstating the Confederacy government.

Under what terms could the Six Nations have the Confederacy government recognized officially by the Canadian state? What are the ideas that exist on the elected Council system, and the remodelling of the current governance structure at Six Nations? These were two other questions that came up in the interviews I held. In fact, I asked Muriel for her thoughts on the possibility of having the Confederacy government recognized as an official governing body at the Six Nations. The following exchange is interesting:

> M: Do you see any alternatives to the elected *Indian Act* system? Like on the reserve today ... Could Six Nations ever return to a Confederacy style of government? Would that be favourable, or even ...
>
> Muriel: ... Well, hypothetically and theoretically, of course we could. Practically? I don't think we could. Because we don't have enough men who are speakers, number one. Number two, we don't have enough men who have been trained in the duties to be able to do it. Certainly not in this community alone. But that brings about questions that are Confederacy-specific. Would you have a council just for this community, or would you be the council of all the communities and then it's a question of how many titles are gonna be where, and who's got what titles? And so it's a really quite fragile state right now ... I mean you have to be practical, and then work on building people up, and training them, and bringing them along, but the discussion among the Confederacy people has been along the lines of saying: "Well, we gotta get our chiefs installed, and we'll get it all installed, and then we'll be able to move..." I'm sorry that's not gonna happen, and they keep dying.
>
> M: Uh-huh.
>
> Muriel: You know? So, pretty soon, there's not gonna be anybody left to do the stuff (pgs. 9, Interview Transcript #5, 15 November 2001, Six Nations Reserve, Ohsweken, ON).

Muriel points to obstacles that would make the transition to a hereditary government difficult in more practical terms. In her view, boys can still be groomed as chiefs, but as she put it, there are fewer speakers left in the Confederacy; and furthermore, a degree of confusion exists over jurisdiction and the installation of these chiefs. Combined, these issues have been brought about over time; and they represent an obstacle – at least for Muriel – where reinstating the Confederacy government is concerned. These issues will become increasingly difficult to overcome in Muriel's estimation, especially as hereditary chiefs continue to die off and there are fewer people to participate in a hereditary system of governance.

The issues that Muriel identifies will require further investigation in the literature on Six Nations political organization, and the changes brought on by state interference and history. The status of women within the Confederacy government will also require further discussion; especially the extent to which they continue to be involved in their original capacity as heads of matrilineages, and in the appointment of hereditary chiefs. For now, it is important to acknowledge Muriel's words about the difficulties involved in reinstating the Confederacy government at contemporary Six Nations. Of course, not everyone agreed with Muriel's words about the status of the Confederacy, or about having the elected Band Council continue on as the official governing structure. In fact, Grace spoke of her own ideas on political reform, as well as her views on the word "governance" at twenty-first century Six Nations.

Though she did not elaborate, Grace spoke in more general and optimistic terms than Muriel did about the shape of the Six Nations Confederacy. When I asked for her opinion on how best to reorganize the existing political system at Six Nations, she said nothing of the internal challenges facing the hereditary government. In fact, she spoke of abolishing the elected council at Six Nations, and in its place establishing a different system of governance. She also spoke of the elected Council's role in these changes, and of the challenges facing the Six Nations community in establishing a relationship between the Confederacy and Band Council governments. The following exchange is important in this regard:

M: If there was a return to a traditional form of government – to the principles of

> the Great Law – how would things work in that way? How would it take place? Do you think it would be though the confederacy working in partnership with the elected council?
>
> G: There would be no elected council.
>
> M: So just abolish, literally abolish, the elected council?
>
> G: Yea. So say over time, right, the elected council have been administrators. They are the administrators, and they are really good at it – they are really good at being the administrators. So they would be a part of the confederacy's role in being administrators. This is what I see their role as being. What the elected council would be to me ... What needs to happen is that everybody needs to start thinking positively, and that's what we call *Ka'nikonhriyo* – that means having a good mind. And so, when you have a good mind, you know, it's like you are really thinking about what your role is at this time. What your role is, to make things better for the future. And so it's like a whole discipline. Right now, there is so much anger and mistrust between the Confederacy and the Elected Council because of what happened in 1924, and before anything can even happen, those hostilities need to be resolved (pg. 10, Interview Transcript #4, 12 October 2001, Toronto, ON).

Grace speaks of the relationship that could be established between the Confederacy and the Band Council governments. She suggests that the elected Council could still play an administrative role after reinstating the Six Nations Confederacy. But she also identified something that she believes is missing from contemporary politics; notably *Ka'nikonhriyo*; or "a good mind". I took Grace to be referring to ways of thinking – and of knowing – that are distinctly Haudenosaunee. I also took her to be identifying the anger and mistrust that exists between the Confederacy and the Elected Council because of what happened in 1924. As she suggests, these hostilities need to be resolved before anything can happen between the two governments, or before "a good mind" could be realized in the community.

Grace's words on a "good mind" are interesting because they suggest that there is something that lies beyond the conceptual imperialism (Smith, 1987: 88) of words like "politics" and "government"; something that has not yet been realized or even yet developed in the literature on Six Nations politics. These knowledges are distinctly Haudenosaunee and will need to be better affirmed, understood and respectfully documented in the literature. This would help sociologists to better elaborate the concept of "political organization", and to understand the basis upon which the Six Nations Confederacy is principled. More generally, it might also help to elaborate the concept of "governance".

Grace spoke critically of the word "governance"; especially the way that this word has been used in political discourse, and by the Department of Indian and Northern Development (DIAND). In her view, the Canadian state has missed the point where matters of "governance", and the Six Nations Haudenosaunee are concerned. She spoke more of these issues in the following exchange which dealt specifically with the concept of self-government:

> M: I know that there has been a lot of talk about self-government lately. I am curious about what you think about that. What do you think about these initiatives that DIAND proposes?
>
> G: I think it is a bunch of crap. That's all I have to say about it [laughs].
>
> M: How do you think the teachings from the Great Law could inform those initiatives?
>
> G: Well, that's what ... that's what is our self-government.

M: So Haudenosaunee self-government is the Great Law? It's already there?

G: It's already there. It already exists. It's always been there. And that is what our people are waiting for, is just to be able to do it again. To be able to go back to what has already been given to us. [...] My idea of what going back would mean is that we understand what our values, and our traditions, and what our beliefs are about. That has to be maintained as well as whatever structure we have in order to deal with the outside. Because we still have to deal with the outside, you know? Because we still have to deal with the outside system.

M: How ready do you think that DIAND is to recognize the Great Law or the *Kayanerenhkowa*? Do you think they are ready to recognize it?

G: No. No. But they know it exists. I mean they are the ones who studied it in the beginning. And that's how they were able to create the *Indian Act* to totally flip it around. They studied us!

M: Well, I guess there has been lot of that talk, you know, about how the US Constitution was based on the Great Law.

G: Yeah, the Senate in the US acknowledged that in 1988.

M: Yeah, I read that recently. You know, I didn't realize that until after I read it recently. But what do you think is stopping DIAND from recognizing those principles? Like what is their deal?

G: Control. Their loss of control, and uhm ...

[Additional respondent]: Can I say something?

B: Yeah.

Greg: OK, well the main reason why they are not willing to do anything is that their main goal has been to assimilate us, and they can't get rid of that goal. So they have to stop the assimilation, or their attempts at assimilation, because it's failed. Because they are unwilling to accept that – that's why they can't recognize traditional self government.

M: So it's almost as if the idea can't be understood within the structure they are proposing?

> Grace: No, I mean, they already have this whole concept of what self-government is, or what it's supposed to be, right? The whole "governance" thing (pgs.8-9, Interview Transcript #4, 12 October 2001, Toronto, ON).

Self-government is based on an *a priori* concept of governance as proposed in DIAND initiatives. That is what I understood Grace to be saying in this part of the interview. I also understood her to be saying that "self-government" already exists at Six Nations, and that it has never quite left the Grand River Haudenosaunee despite attempts by the Canadian state to advocate the goal of assimilation, and to interfere with politics. In effect, the principles upon which self-government is based have been rejected, but they have not been extinguished by the Canadian state.

In fact, Grace suggests that people are waiting to do "self-government" again, and to have structures in place to deal with the outside system. These ideas have received little if any acknowledgement in political discussions about self-government in the Canadian context, or even in the literature on Six Nations political organization and history. In both cases, there has been little in the way of questioning assumptions where the words "politics", "governance" and "self-government" are concerned.

In the Canadian context, it is unlikely that Grace's preference for the principles established in the Great Law will be taken seriously and acknowledged in Canadian political discourse. In fact, her ideas about what it means to be self-governing in general stand in opposition to how self-government usually gets conceptualized. As Patricia Monture-Angus (1999: 30), a Mohawk woman and scholar once wrote: "Self-government in the Canadian context is typically understood to mean the negotiation of municipal style

governments on Indian reservations". This leaves little room where working with Confederacy adherents on a nation-to-nation basis – or where recognizing principles established in the Great Law – is concerned. These and other issues will require closer consideration in the literature; especially where governance and politics is concerned. However, they are not the only issues that will require further elaboration, especially in the history of politics and women's status at contemporary Grand River.

As my research suggests, there are a host of issues that have yet to be documented in the literature on Six Nations political history. Among the most pressing is the relationship that exists between the Confederacy and Band Council governments at Six Nations. As Raymond and Muriel suggest, this relationship has seen many changes over the years depending on the people and personalities involved in political discussions. These and other developments will require further consideration in the history of politics from 1924 at Six Nations. In principle, the research I am proposing may be of use in formulating a set of common goals between the Confederacy and Band Council governments, and in working to reconcile some of the historic tensions that were said to exist between the two governments in the course of my research. It could also be useful for reformulating earlier characterizations of the Grand River population; notably, those that have tended to dichotomize political relationships and activities.

It will also be necessary to consider, in greater detail, the diversity of opinions I gathered on political reform at modern-day Six Nations. As my research suggests, there is a diversity of opinions that exist on this issue, as well as the possibility of reinstating

the Confederacy government as the official governing body at Grand River. For Muriel, the possibility of reinstalling the Confederacy government becomes increasingly difficult with the passing of time; especially because there are fewer speakers left in the hereditary system, and a confusion that exists over jurisdiction and the installation of hereditary chiefs. Grace held her own ideas about political reform, and the prospect of abolishing the elected council system. She identified a different set of obstacles that were said to stand in the way of political reform; including that of anger and mistrust between the two governments since 1924; and the different ways of knowing "self-government".

Thus, depending on who I talked to, there were different ideas expressed to me about politics and political reform in the contemporary context. But one thing remained consistent through the research I conducted at Grand River: the events of 1924 continue to influence contemporary politics and the relationships between people. In future writing and research, these and other issues – including the source of political differences and how to best to reconcile historic tensions – will require greater consideration.

Voices from the Present: A Gathering of Haudenosaunee Perspectives

In this chapter, I have presented the results of research I conducted at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory between August and November, 2001. In doing so, I have reviewed excerpts from five open-ended interviews that were intended – at least initially – to find out more about the historic roles of Haudenosaunee women.

The importance that is placed on women's roles and tradition cannot be

underestimated. In fact, it is a major finding to have emerged from my work. The people I interviewed suggested that – while women's roles, especially the economic – have changed, the traditions surrounding them have remained consistent with all previous and original formulations, especially within the Longhouse.

What is interesting about my research in this regard, is the importance that is attributed to women's traditional and ceremonial roles by some Haudenosaunee. The importance that is attributed to women's influence, power and responsibilities stands in opposition to Eurocentric and patriarchal models of gendered behaviour and expectations. The knowledge of elders and others at Six Nations about women's responsibilities in this regard requires further analysis, and could in fact be used to challenge contemporary sexist ideology referred to by the women I spoke with.

Knowledge of women's traditional roles is something that surfaced in the very first interview I conducted at Six Nations. Several others spoke at length about women's traditional roles, and they offered narratives that have received very little attention in more contemporary literature. These perspectives will require further investigation in the history of politics and women's status at Grand River.

In future research, it will also be necessary to learn more about the impact of the *Indian Act*. I had not anticipated to hear so much about this legislation, and the way that it has played itself out in the community. More importantly, I would not have heard about it had I adhered to my original set of interview questions and not conversed with people.

The interviews I conducted suggest that there is a lot more to consider where the history of sex discrimination and women's status is concerned. There is also a great deal that is missing from the literature on the Six Nations – and other Aboriginal communities – especially as relates to the events preceding *Bill C-31,* and the social issues created for communities after its passage. This too will require greater qualitative analysis.

That this history has not been explored does not mean that the *Indian Act,* sex discrimination, and Indian status provisions have not affected the people of Six Nations. In fact, there were a diversity of opinions expressed to me on issues of intermarriage, section 12(1)(b) and the history preceding *Bill C-31.* These opinions were of particular importance to me as the descendant of a woman who lost (and later acquired) status under the *Indian Act.* They will continue to affect the status of Six Nations women.

Bill C-31 has affected the status of Haudenosaunee women as well as their male and female descendants. These are issues that I have experienced directly as a status Indian and person of mixed ethno-cultural heritage. In that sense, I have a personal and vested interest in furthering a research programme that considers Indian status, intermarriage and *Bill C-31.* I am also focused on having people comment on the historical events that I have found personally troublesome through the years, fascinating, or both.

Consider Muriel's characterization of the reserve into terms that defy Shimony's "conservative" and "reform" binary. This is an especially striking aspect of my research. Further inquiry will be necessary in order to determine the basis upon which the people of

Six Nations classify their own cultural and political beliefs. Based on my research, it would appear that these classifications are complex, and may stand well outside of the characterizations that have been identified in the literature to date.

In effect, the research that I have presented in this chapter is very much the result of engaging with people on matters of history involving the community of which I have never been able to reside. Grace's thoughts on self-government, Eva's view of tradition in the contemporary context, and Muriel's observations about the "two constituencies" are all views that give renewed depth to the categories so often used to describe the Six Nations, including: resistance, change and cultural continuity.

I will return to these issues of social change, resistance and cultural continuity in further detail in conclusion to this dissertation. For now, it is important to draw attention to the testimonies I gathered without using analytical concepts to explain them. In sum, what I have hoped to illustrate in this chapter is a diversity of Haudenosaunee perspectives.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the results of research I conducted at Six Nations of the Grand River through August to November, 2001. The interviews I conducted collected information about women's traditional and contemporary statuses, the *Indian Act*; and as I have discussed, the various perspectives that are held by people on issues

such as tradition, governance, the history preceding *An Act to Amend the Indian Act,* intermarriage, and the "two constituencies". In presenting this information, I have hoped to show the types of issues that will require further attention in the literature on Haudenosaunee women's status and Six Nations political history. This research must proceed in a way that is document-, literature- and interview-driven so that the Grand River Haudenosaunee can continue to respond to the existing literature on their community.

I have also been concerned with my own identity as the descendant of a woman who lost status under section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act*. I have endeavoured, in other words, to position myself as researcher in a way that draws attention to the coincident history of colonial injustice and patriarchy, as well as the importance of connecting "Aboriginal issues" with "women's issues". In fact, I have been intent on explaining my own personal and vested interest in learning more about the Six Nations as a person who was legislated outside of the Six Nations community, and the way that my identity has shaped the research process and influenced the types of information I focused on gathering. One of the central conclusions of this research is the importance of positioning oneself as researcher, especially where the interview process and collection of information are concerned. It is an aspect of research methodology that I intend to further elaborate for scholarly publication in my present research program.

A second, and more central conclusion of this chapter is that description ought to be favoured over that of "conceptual imperialism", especially where matters involving the

cultural and political perseverance of the Grand River Haudenosaunee is concerned. In reviewing the interviews I conducted at Six Nations, what I have hoped to have shown is the need for elaborating concepts such as "resistance" and "cultural continuity" in a way that does justice to the information that was shared with me during my research. It is to a further consideration of this issue, a summary of my analytic conclusions, and recommendations for further research that I now turn.

Conclusion to *A History of Politics and Women's Status at Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve*

One of the recurrent tendencies in the writing of Six Nations political history – and indeed the writing of other Indigenous histories – has been the inclination to treat patriarchal and colonial injustices as if they were fundamentally unrelated to one another. In preceding chapters, I have illustrated this tendency by highlighting the history of sex discriminatory legislation, and by reviewing the work of preeminent ethnographers who overlooked the roles of women in their analyses of political change and organization at Grand River. In undertaking these types of analyses, I have illustrated a more coincident history of patriarchal and colonial injustice, and I have shown how the injustices are inseparable from one another (also Cannon, 1995). I have also intended to draw attention to my own identity as a person of mixed Anglo-Haudenosaunee heritage, a status Indian, and a Six Nations band member.

Sex discriminatory injustice has always shaped the female *and male* identities of Aboriginal peoples. I have illustrated this fact by suggesting that sex discrimination has shaped the "version" of history that I have presented in previous pages. I have documented the history of women's status and political change because, like so many others of mixed ethno-cultural heritage (Lawrence, 2004; Bartleman, 2002), the *Indian Act* has shaped my identity in ways that make patriarchal injustice of central concern to me. It is, as I have put it, impossible for me to separate "Aboriginal issues" involving colonial injustices (or things that are of common concern to all Aboriginal people) from

"women's issues" involving sex discriminatory injustices because both sets of injustices have shaped my identity in unique and profound ways. More is required where documenting these nuances of Aboriginal identity, the interrelatedness of social and political organization, gender relations and women's status is concerned.

I have offered particular kinds of analyses in the version of history I have provided in previous pages. But the challenge I would like to offer in conclusion to my work, is for sociologists – and academics who are concerned with history, and thinking comparatively about social structure and political change – to pay closer attention to matters involving the transformation of women's status at Six Nations, and in other Indigenous communities of the world. The transformation of gender relations and women's status is key to understanding social, political, economic and kinship organization, especially where the changes brought on by colonialism are concerned. The topic I have investigated has itself taken a peculiar absence, especially from the literature on the Six Nations Haudenosaunee – thought often to be "matriarchal" prior to contact.

Matriarchy is something that has been used in the literature to refer to the nature of Haudenosaunee women's power, especially where political, economic and clan-related influence is concerned. But as I have argued, it is also a concept about which some have expressed scepticism. These individuals have not denied the political and clan-related influence of Haudenosaunee women either historically or at present, but rather, they have emphasized that the origin and grounds for women's preeminence ought to be seen as stemming from traditional stories and understandings – versus that of Eurocentric

concepts – about responsibility, balance and a respect between women and men.

The matter of looking toward oral tradition to which I have drawn attention is only now receiving consideration in the literature on Haudenosaunee women and gender relations (Anderson, 2000; Mann, 2000). I have made my contribution by offering a preliminary investigation of stories involving Haudenosaunee women, and I have suggested that the principle of gender complementarity is something that is intrinsic to them, including the story of Haudenosaunee creation, the "fire within", and the coming of the Great Peacemaker. In offering these analyses, I have not intended to dismiss the presence of women's power relative to that of their European counterparts or in relation to Haudenosaunee men for that matter. Rather, I have meant to prioritize Haudenosaunee storytelling where understanding women's influence is concerned. I have meant to suggest that oral tradition presents a useful challenge to patriarchal understandings about women's roles in a contemporary world. It ought also to inform the debates and discussions that are held about matriarchy in the literature on the Haudenosaunee.

The history and analysis I have provided in preceding pages contributes to a new kind of sociological and historical enterprise. It fits nicely with the trend in social science literature to either challenge or dismantle "the antiquated stereotypes of Aboriginal people as passive victims in the era of settlement" and throughout colonization (Brownlie and Kelm, 1994; also Carter, 1999). I have illustrated, in other words, the vast knowledge that can be acquired through less determinist versions of history, or the kinds of "declension narratives" referred to by Shoemaker (1991, 1995, 2001) where the status

of Aboriginal women is thought only to have worsened following colonization. The analysis I have provided emphasizes the historic agency exercised by Indigenous peoples.

As I have shown, it is very difficult to argue the power of the Canadian state as absolute when, throughout history, the people of Six Nations have been negotiating state interference, colonial injustice, and even Indian status provisions since the political events of 1924 and even earlier. In other words, a determinist version of history does not assist in explaining the histories of accommodation, the challenges that people have negotiated at Six Nations and in other Aboriginal communities, the reasons for making historical decisions, or even the way in which Indian status is experienced and negotiated in the everyday social world. In short, it does not explain entirely the historic choices available to, and indeed made by, Indigenous peoples.

At virtually every point in history – however understudied – the Grand River Haudenosaunee have accommodated the changes brought on by colonial injustice and patriarchy in profoundly unique and complex ways. I have documented some of this otherwise hidden history by looking to various points in time, including: the establishment of residential schooling and the introduction of patriarchal descent (or the tracing of one's lineage through the father's line). I have also examined the introduction of section 12(1)(b) and Indian status provisions that legislated some Haudenosaunee – and I include myself in this category – into outsider statuses within their own community.

Each of these developments took place at different points in time, but all of them share in common a similar set of details that are significant to the study of social and

political change. As I have illustrated, the people of Six Nations were not entirely converted to a nation of farmers, tradespeople or domestics as a result of early Euro-Christian schooling. Moreover, the emphasis placed on the "father's line" did not immediately disrupt or even dismantle the matrilineal system during the mid-nineteenth century. Nor has the introduction (and later amendment) of section 12(1)(b) prevented individuals from challenging the hegemony of Indian status, or from "turning a blind eye" on those who were non-Indian and living on reserve. Combined, these details demonstrate the choices made by individuals, or even that which might be referred to as acts of protest or even resistance.

But to reduce history to so many acts of protest overlooks a lot of historical subtleties and complexities, and may in fact be counterproductive where appreciating the complexity of choices available to individuals throughout history is concerned. Researchers who are eager to document "acts of resistance" run the danger of interpreting non-participants and others as "dupes of colonialism" at Six Nations – especially since their efforts, as is especially the case with twentieth-century Confederacy "reformers" – seem peculiar outside of an oppressor/oppressed dualism. Resistance is problematic when describing people who might simply be showing what they know of community history, politics, the Longhouse religion, as well as women's past and present roles.

To be sure, the people of an historic Six Nations are neither "dupes of colonialism", nor are they people caught in some constant state of opposition, or as Cherokee and Greek scholar Thomas King most recently referred to it in his CBC Massey

Lectures: "caricatures of protest" (2003: 67). What is more likely, is that at Grand River – as with other Aboriginal communities – histories of social change fit somewhere outside of the oppressor/oppressed, traditional/untraditional or conservative/reform binaries of past modes of thinking and scholarship. In fact, based on the conclusions I have drawn, there is a continuum of choices and beliefs that have taken place, and that have indeed developed, among those at Six Nations.

Simply put, it will be just as important to acknowledge people who appear to have been preserving Haudenosaunee stories and culture as it will be to investigate and learn more about those who seem to have colluded with colonial forces. In order to do justice to the Haudenosaunee of Grand River Territory – indeed all Indigenous peoples across Canada – the stories of those who might otherwise be silenced or considered befooled by colonialism must also be investigated. To neglect these individual stories is to risk what Verna St Denis has referred to as "blaming our Aboriginal ancestors as having made the wrong decisions" or "holding them accountable for cultural and social change they did not singularly or always determine" (2004: 39). As a guiding principle of forthcoming scholarship, perhaps it is important to remember that at Six Nations – to use the now famous Marxist dictum – people have created their own history but they have not entirely done so out of conditions of their own making

The history involving hereditary chiefs at 1920s Six Nations, some of whom actually accommodated political change at the expense of women's once esteemed statuses is exemplary of the point I am making. Racism, Eurocentrism and patriarchy

cannot in themselves explain why these people were so intent on establishing systems of governance and kinship organization in the ways they did. Rather, and as I have shown, they believed that the matrilineal system could carry on alongside the system that was now being used for "official" government purposes which traced lines of descent through men. Others disagreed in principle with excluding women from political organization, but considered it a price to pay in the face of colonial politics and legal interference, or perhaps knew better of women's ability to influence – however unofficially – an historic council.

Sociologists, as well as historians, ought to be concerned with the complexities of power and colonial accommodation to which I am alluding. The presence of "reformers" as well as the maintenance of the hereditary council at Grand River is exemplary of what I am suggesting. Neither can be described by making simple reference to an oppressor/oppressed dualism or to a determinist version of history. Rather, it is only in suspending such either/or thinking, or maybe even employing the sociological imagination, that we might come to understand the choices available to people throughout colonization, its impact on social structure, and the complex way in which the Six Nations – and other Indigenous peoples – accommodated social change. It is only at this point that we might start the work of decolonizing history, and indeed, of respecting our ancestors. Of course, I am not meaning to nullify or to cancel out the pervasive influence of colonization at Six Nations, nor even to suggest that an analysis of power, authority and oppression be abandoned in these contexts.

The Six Nation Haudenosaunee have been able to persevere, in other words, despite systemic attempts to impinge upon, interrupt and reshape reserve-based politics. In the face of adversity and colonial intrusion, the people have maintained a collective understanding of the historic treaties, the Great Law, as well as the spiritual tenets of the Two Row and Circle Covenant wampums. Others maintain an understanding and/or respect for traditional and ceremonial undertakings and, in doing so, pose a challenge to years of Eurocentric and patriarchal knowledge systems. These aspects of culture history – as well as the many obstacles presented to Haudenosaunee in seeking to preserve them – cannot be understated in highlighting the agency of individuals or the histories of adaptation to colonial change. But then nor should they be described in principle as indicative of resistance, or even cultural continuity for that matter. As I have shown, the standards of law established in early historical agreements between the state and Haudenosaunee are seen by many as symbols of continuous, uninterrupted cultural life; and of the historic and political relationships that have been subject – unilaterally – to disavowal by the colonizer. They are collective expressions of the way things are, I have argued, as well as the very foundation upon which the history of the Grand River Haudenosaunee is based. Cultural continuity does little to acknowledge the belief and faith in principles established in early historic agreements between the state and Haudenosaunee people – at least where words like revitalization and reconstruction are used to describe them.

With that point in mind, what I have done in previous pages is to show how these

aspects of colonial history ought to be theorized in (literally) their own terms, and not simply as indicators of cultural continuity. I have drawn attention to the need for elaborating what is meant by these and other analytic categories in a way that is intent on thinking seriously about the concepts we employ as sociologists to describe Indigenous peoples and communities. I have drawn attention to a series of ethical imperatives involved in undertaking research at Six Nations. I would also like to conclude that researchers have a great deal to learn and develop by looking at: a) the everyday world as people both live and perceive it, and b) the social positioning of the researcher, and his or her relationship to their subject matter.

The importance of positioning oneself as researcher, as well as its ethical implications is no longer restricted to the feminist and sociological literature (Stanley, 1990; Smith, 1987, 1990; Hartsock, 1987). Rather, it is now receiving the attention of Indigenous peoples, both women and men (Lawrence, 2004, Bartleman, 2002, Anzuldua, 1987; also Penn, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2000). I have contributed to this body of literature by offering the historical perspective I possess as a status Indian, and the descendant of a women who lost and later acquired Indian status under Canada's *Indian Act*. That I have chosen to emphasize my identity as a man, the importance of connecting "Aboriginal issues" with "women's issues", as well as the inseparability of colonial and patriarchal injustice is as significant as it is political in this regard, especially if we consider the urgency with which these interconnections still require understanding in First Nations politics and the law (Cannon, 1995, Nahanee, 1993; Native Women's

Association of Canada, 1992).

I have shown how Aboriginal men – Haudenosaunee and from other nations across Canada – have been deeply affected by *Indian Act* status provisions. As a result of their mother's marriage, 'race' and gender, many men were denied legal status and band membership, even if at Six Nations, a band membership code was never developed. They too were banished from communities as a result of colonial injustice, dislocation and institutionalized patriarchy at both the band and federal government levels. Of course, some of us have managed to maintain a past and present relationship with our communities – an identity – despite the *Indian Act* and other state interferences.[150] But often times, history has resulted in a situation where men, like many women, have had little or no awareness of their Nation's culture or language, and in some cases, have been clearly rejected by their own, as well as non-Native people (Bartleman, 2002). There are so many histories here, but they have not yet been thoroughly documented (see Lawrence, 2004).

Too little has been written of the way the *Indian Act* has affected the identities of men (and women) of mixed-ancestry; which may well be an unremarkable silence stemming from sexist ideology. I am firmly opposed to such hegemony, and I have endeavoured to encourage students and others to position themselves as Indigenous

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[150] see *supra note* 44 at pg. 89, 85 at pg. 166, and 142 at pg. 272. I would like to acknowledge Sadie Buck for guiding me to realize this point before taking up permanent residence in Saskatchewan, and a tenure-stream position at the University of Saskatchewan in July of 2002.

peoples affected by colonialism, to think seriously about how this shapes the research process, as well as the ethical implications of taking such a position (Cannon, 2004a). I have demonstrated the importance of learning more about the interpersonal dimensions of Indian identity and legislation – as well as the everyday experience of Indian status provisions – in hopes that further qualitative detail will emerge at Six Nations and in communities elsewhere across Canada (Cannon, 2004b). I have, in short, used my experience to shed light on histories that might otherwise go unnoticed, or that might remain marginalized in my community.

Apart from my own, I know of no other research that has revisited the early characterization of Six Nations into the "reformer/conservative" dualism as proposed by well-intentioned and notable scholars over thirty years ago (Shimony, 1961/1994; Weaver, 1970a, 1970b, 1972, 1974, 1984, 1994a, 1994b). I have commented on the process that lead me to think more about this characterization, the way in which it stood outside of my original research objectives, as well as the realization that there was a lot more to talk about with the people I interviewed. But beyond these sets of self-reflexive understandings, it is also important to reiterate one of the other conclusions I have reached in thinking critically about my own experience as an Indigenous person: that research with Indigenous peoples and communities must become literature-, document- and interview-based – at Six Nations, elsewhere across Canada, and in the world.

If we accept the argument as originally (and very distinctly) proposed by Maori academics that, in fact, research "is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism ... that

still offends the deepest sense of our humanity" (Smith, 1999: 1; also see Bishop, 1996; Powick, 2004), then it is useful to consider this legacy of previous research in future inquiry.[151] In other words, I have argued that priority be placed on having Indigenous peoples respond to or "talk back" to (hooks, 1988) the research that has already been undertaken in their communities. To ask Indigenous people to elaborate on how such research might have been undertaken differently, as well as the uses and/or dangers it has posed to the community ought to be key. The operative principle is to determine the parameters of previous research, and how the community – as well as the people who have experienced colonization – have had opportunity to correct, add to, revise or indeed challenge interpretations of the past.

The conclusion I am drawing may seem startlingly obvious, but it is decidedly not, and it will not go without scrutiny for that matter. Consider, for example, that in some academic circles, to have placed my own identity and experience of colonization at the forefront of this research – even though it has enabled me to challenge past research conducted at Six Nations – will be seen as subjective, if not self-indulgent, or even unnecessary. Consider, as well, the regrettably large gaps in knowledge where women's status among the Haudenosaunee – thought once to have been matriarchal, but then to

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[151] Of course, the method I am suggesting could be misinterpreted as placing the onus of clarification and responsibility – about the history that people have written about the Six Nations (and many other Aboriginal peoples), and moreover, the things they may have gotten wrong – back onto the shoulders of the Haudenosaunee themselves. I am not, in other words, suggesting that all researchers (Aboriginal or otherwise) are situated, comfortable with, or perhaps even able to carry out the method I have suggested.

have declined – is concerned. This matter of declining statuses has received increased attention in the literature (Shoemaker, 1991, 1995, 2002; Fur, 2002). And if my research is any indication – the relative absence of this matter in the literature until recently embodies the years of research that has been undertaken at Six Nations where things like gender, one's experience as a community member or outside researcher, and the relationship that is shared with the subject matter has gone unacknowledged.

Apart from these criticisms, the people I spoke with at Six Nations shared with me an understanding of women's status that is as significant as it is unexplored. Despite the rapid pace of social change – as well as differences in acculturation – some of them even emphasized how women have maintained social and political influence by embracing a religion that incorporates the matrilineal aspect of clans, a calendar of rituals and ceremonies, as well as the autonomy of the Confederacy or traditional government. But to propose that "nothing has changed" of tradition and women's status in these contexts remains trapped – I now believe – in a dubious set of assumptions about history and the agency individuals.

Tradition is neither static, unchanging, nor is it even immune from the revision of several generations of Haudenosaunee orators and writers who carry the responsibility of sharing this knowledge. Tradition is, in other words, a fluid and dynamic set of principles whose everyday expression may become "modified" to make it appropriate to the modern day social and political needs, challenges and circumstances of Haudenosaunee people (Alfred, 1995). In previous pages, I have hoped to highlight how elements of the

traditional can – and are – being incorporated into contemporary, everyday life. I have also suggested that – beyond questions of memory, accuracy and interpretation – traditional knowledge is a major force and strategy where realizing women's once esteemed status and challenging patriarchal ways of knowing is concerned.

In my estimation, these are areas for further debate and discussion, and they will steer academic discourse – and perhaps even politics – in more suitable directions. It will, in short, be necessary to consider knowledge deemed traditional or Indigenous in greater detail. The influence of this knowledge on people's lives, its behaviourial consequences, and perhaps most importantly, the challenge it poses to patriarchal and Eurocentric understandings about women's and men's roles ought to be a key priority of research. I am now actively engaged in exploring the nature of Indigenous knowledge in my current research programme, but I have also addressed some of its dimensions, influence and expression in previous pages.

It is nothing short of remarkable that some Haudenosaunee at Grand River continue to preserve the rich cultural knowledge of our ancestors. From well attended public recitations held by the now deceased Cayuga elder, Jake Thomas, to the ongoing calender of events, rites and rituals still being practiced by Longhouse adherents, these factors point toward the same thing: that the stories about *Onkwehonwe* (the original ones), who we are as a people, and most importantly, *who we want to be* remains on the minds of many. Of course, it is less clear how these symbols and stories have been transformed in the contemporary context. Nor has women's status fared central to these

kinds of analyses of social change.

If my research is any indication, it would be naive to assert that women's lives have not been changed – or been disrupted severely for that matter – at Six Nations. This will, in fact, require the more immediate attention of sociologists and Indigenous peoples alike. I have illustrated one of the examples I know best; most notably, the sets of issues surrounding Bill C-31.

I have watched for many years as women and families at Six Nations acquired Indian status under *Bill C-31: An Act to Amend the Indian Act*. I have witnessed the enormous sets of pressures placed on reserve-based resources, the land and politics, as well as people in general. This is the history of patriarchal and colonial injustice that is now being told (Lawrence, 2004), and that requires the types of historical analysis I have provided here. I have suggested that similar types of research be undertaken because I truly believe that these types of understandings can facilitate useful debate, discussion and resolution among Aboriginal peoples, including the Grand River Haudenosaunee. The history I have produced may well be of concern to Aboriginal peoples into the twenty-first century, in both politics and in everyday life.

Consider in this regard the work of Bob Porter, a lawyer from the Seneca Nation, and current Director of the Center for Indigenous Citizenship at Syracuse University in New York State. Porter wrote an impassioned article on the prospect of "Building a New Longhouse" among the Haudenosaunee in 1998. In the article itself, he documented some of the major crises facing the modern-day Six Nations of Ontario and New York State,

but perhaps the most notable and interesting among them: the matter of kinship organization, external definitions of self, and the regulation of Aboriginal identities under the *Indian Act*.

"Our end will come", Porter postulates, "when we no longer have or desire kinship relationships with one another" (1998: 931). It has, therefore, never been more important – and I share in this view of the twenty-first century with Porter – to understand kinship organization, and to recognize the way in which identities have been constructed by the state to keep Aboriginal people divided among ourselves. The time has come to consider, in other words, what it is that binds us together collectively as Haudenosaunee people, and to promote greater understanding about the things that drive us apart. In previous pages, I have hoped to contribute to these new kinds of scholarship and understanding. I hope to have written a new kind of social history for Haudenosaunee, and indeed, all other nations of Aboriginal men and women.

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