

ROCHESTER HISTORY

Edited by BLAKE MCKELVEY, *City Historian*

VOL. XIII

JULY, 1951

No. 3

The Seneca "Time of Troubles"

BY BLAKE MCKELVEY

We don't normally think of the beautiful Genesee country as the scene of imperial clashes. Perhaps, on second thought, we can name the sites of a few French and Indian battlegrounds and vaguely recall that the Sullivan expedition invaded the valley, but primarily we think of the Genesee as a peaceful land, of its part in history as much more on the constructive than the destructive side. And so it was. Yet even the Genesee country saw its "time of troubles," as Toynbee would phrase it, and perhaps we can learn something from a review of the two centuries when imperial clashes ravaged this region.

As generally occurs, the fate of the Senecas, the Stone people as they were called, who held sway over the Genesee country for approximately four hundred years before white settlers arrived, was linked with the fortunes of neighboring and far distant peoples. In the final showdown the Senecas gave way before the greater numbers and the more advanced technology of the invading white men, but for many decades after the first contact their position appeared to grow steadily stronger. They displayed a genius for winning battles that earned them wide prestige. Perhaps they relied too much on violent military forays, which eventually sapped their power, but if any Indian group in North America could have met the European challenge, it would have been the Senecas and their allies.

The Triumphant Senecas

The fortunes of the Senecas were of course tied to those of the great League of the Iroquois of which they were a principal member from the start. Indeed its formation, around 1570, was a major basis of their

ROCHESTER HISTORY, published quarterly by the Rochester Public Library, distributed free at the Library, by mail 25 cents per year. Address correspondence to the City Historian, Rochester Public Library, 115 South Avenue, Rochester 4, N. Y.

power and a promise of new achievements for Indian civilization. At a great council fire at Onondaga, the five nations of Iroquois, or Men of Men as they called themselves, had finally agreed to bury the hatchet, to settle tribal differences at league councils, and to permit their young men to spring to arms when called to the aid of their allies against outside foes. It was conceived as a peace league, designed to put an end to the internecine raids which had disturbed the area since the first appearance of the Iroquois tribes some two hundred years before. Unfortunately the five charter members (from east to west: the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas and the Senecas) did not succeed in winning the adherence of their more distant Iroquois cousins, the Neutrals and Eries to the west around Lake Erie, the Andastes to the south in the Susquehanna valley, and the Hurons north of Lake Ontario. The causes of this failure, whether arising from personal or tribal jealousies, are shrouded in the always unwritten and this time forgotten records of league diplomacy, but the ensuing conflicts contributed inevitably to the League's downfall.

Even in normal times the organization of a league to settle the differences between five nations or tribes by peaceful agreement would upset the balance of power in the area; moreover, the times were not normal around 1600. Rumors were already floating about of strange white men from beyond the sea: of Spanish explorers flitting across the southern states, of Frenchmen sailing into the St. Lawrence, and of fishermen from several European countries camping each winter along the New England coast. An invasion threat became clearer in 1608 and 1609 when Champlain landed at Quebec and Henry Hudson at Albany.

These Europeans did not come as conquerors, however, but as explorers and potential traders. They were eager enough for peaceful relations, and it was only in self defense or in response to the requests of the Indians that they displayed their superior weapons. Moreover, these weapons were not so superior—terrifying, certainly on first contact, but unreliable in bad weather and ineffective against a numerous and stout opponent, as the Iroquois themselves were to demonstrate.

A strong union of native tribes might well have coped successfully with such strangers. Mutually advantageous trading arrangements might have been worked out by a league that really controlled the interior. Perhaps the European Challenge came too soon, checking the gradual evolution of such a league—the "might-have-beens" of history are sometimes interesting and instructive but never conclusive.

In any event, the white newcomers, offering peace and trade, were recognized by the first canny natives they met as a source of strength and prestige over neighboring tribes. The French in Canada and the Dutch on the Hudson quickly sensed this situation, and each eventually chose the strongest group in its immediate region as its principal friend—the French, the Hurons in Canada; the Dutch, the Mohawks near Albany.

Except for occasional skirmishes growing out of misunderstandings or misdirected expressions of friendship (as when Champlain accompanied a Huron expedition against the Oneidas),* the first two decades were peaceful by Indian standards. Men on both sides were curious about the strange manners and resources of their new associates. The European explorers found neither the gold nor the legendary passage to China they sought, but they invariably returned from western trips with boatloads of furs which could be sold at great profit back home. Among the Indians, whose property except for raiment and equipment was held in common, the new trinkets, knives and other weapons, garments, and tools created a great stir and engendered a willingness to hunt and accumulate a surplus of beaver and other furs for trading purposes.

Thus the French and the Dutch found themselves at the outlets of potential trade routes, while their principal friends, the Hurons and the Mohawks respectively, each sought to establish a monopoly over the interior fur trade.

The Mohawk trade soon encountered difficulties, partly because the Dutch were too weak to control the independent traders who reaped large profits from the exchange of guns, powder, and rum for choice furs. It must be recalled that the Indian concept of trade was the exchange of gifts made with much ceremony and good fellowship. If the gifts did not satisfy, the parley might be broken off in anger and the unfriendly strangers plundered as they departed. The presence of rum and the desire for more gunpowder frequently precipitated the latter outcome. But, once the Indians had tasted the white man's firewater and handled his firearms, it became almost impossible to carry on the fur trade without the use of some of these items. The Iroquois were

*Or was it the Onondagas, as a new book by Mansfield J. French, *Samuel de Champlain's Incursion against the Onondaga Nation*, maintains. It was in connection with this expedition in 1615-1616 that Étienne Brûlé crossed and recrossed the upper Genesee in his effort to bring a party of Andastes from the Susquehanna to aid in the attack. The party's tardy arrival may account for Champlain's repulse, but Brûlé gained undying fame as the first white man to visit the Genesee country.

the most successful in acquiring arms, adding the loud "thunder sticks" to their arsenals and thus increasing at least their psychological advantage.

It was the western Iroquois, led by the Senecas, who carried the war against the Hurons. They were especially incensed when some of their hunting parties encountered the hunting and trading expeditions of the Hurons who were pushing out along the lake to tap the fur resources of the west. An exchange of atrocities led to more serious blows; finally a prolonged and vindictive Seneca raid pillaged most of the Huron villages between 1648 and 1650. Many of the inhabitants were massacred, but hundreds of women and youths were carried back to the Genesee for adoption. When some of the Hurons who escaped gained refuge among the western, non-federated Iroquois tribes, the fury of the Senecas was directed in turn against the Neutrals, the Eries, and the Andastes. Finally, after almost four decades of intermittent strife, the Senecas, swollen in numbers by their numerous adoptions but with the flower of their own stock depleted, emerged as the predominant tribe in the League. Their ten to twenty thousand members, settled in a half-dozen villages within a ten-mile radius of East Bloomfield, held sway over a vast wilderness that extended two or three hundred miles north, west and south. Control of the western fur trade seemed to be within their grasp.

The Missionaries

Unfortunately for the Senecas, other developments had complicated the picture. The Europeans were no more purely interested in trade than were the Indians. National glory and religious zeal as well as material profits operated as motive forces on all sides. Thus, while the Senecas were liquidating their western neighbors, the English, having failed to oust the French from the St. Lawrence, proceeded to ease the Dutch out of New York. But long before their control was firmly established at Albany and their bid for a share in the fur trade effectively asserted, zealous Catholic missionaries from France had penetrated the Iroquois strongholds, presenting religious and ethical challenges and offering a new pattern for peaceful development.

Intrepid missionaries, first the Franciscans and then the Jesuits, had in fact accompanied the French explorers and traders from the beginning. Thus a succession of Jesuit missions sought peaceful entry to the Iroquois villages. The first came as a captive in 1642 and was

unable to establish friendly relations between the Five Nations and the more receptive Hurons. The Jesuits renewed their visits in 1656, following the destruction of the Hurons and the martyrdom of some of their own brothers. They were accompanied this time by a band of fifty Frenchmen, traders, smiths and priests, who established their headquarters on the shore of Onondaga lake near the principal council fire of the Iroquois. They found some welcome and support among the adopted Christian captives, now scattered among the tribes, and one of the Jesuits, Father Joseph Chaumonot, journeyed west that fall to visit the Seneca town of Gandagaro on Boughton Hill and the captives at Gandagourae near the site of present Holcomb. For nearly two years the French retained their foothold at Onondaga, endeavoring to win the Iroquois to their faith and to develop bonds of trade. Their peaceful teachings made few converts, however, especially after the return of the young braves from their successful but costly raids on the Eries. Suspecting a plan to massacre them as spies, the French escaped under most dramatic circumstances in March, 1658.

Having failed to win over the Iroquois by friendly means, the French under Governor de Tracy tried sterner methods. Thus an expedition pushed south along Lake Champlain in 1667, just when the British were first replacing the Dutch on the Hudson, and burned several Mohawk villages. The Iroquois, whose bark dwellings could easily be rebuilt, were less injured than impressed by this blow, and with the fur trade at Albany unsettled by the shifting English-Dutch control, they decided to invite the Jesuits back and to endeavor to open trade channels with Quebec.

It was at this time that the French enjoyed their most peaceful penetration into the Genesee country. Numerous missions were opened throughout the League's extent. Father James Fremin established the first mission among the Senecas in 1668. Father Julien Garnier soon joined him, followed later by Fathers Jean Pierron and Pierre Raffeix. Four bark chapels were erected: La Conception at Totiakton, St. Jean's Chapel at Gandichiragou a few miles south, St. Michaels near present Holcomb, and St. Joseph the fourth, several years later, at Boughton Hill.

The strange teachings of the Christian faith, often listened to respectfully, were sometimes greeted by expressions of understanding. The Jesuits were at least learning to speak the dialects of their

hosts, if they could not always probe their hearts. "The greatest obstacle to Faith," as one put it, "is belief in dreams." In other words, the deep-seated mystical qualities of the native religion would frequently break through and shatter the new teachings. The conscientious Fathers learned caution, often refusing baptism, unless the convert was on his death bed, for fear he might later fall from grace and his soul be damned.

Whatever their afflictions and discouragements, the Jesuits did not falter. Moreover, their presence gave assurance of peace and trade and offered a promise of constructive development. They had learned to distrust the independent traders whose unrestrained practices, including the sale of brandy and gunpowder, often demoralized the natives. Instead, they encouraged the Indians to carry their annual surplus of furs direct to Quebec and sometimes accompanied them on such journeys. Here clearly was a plan that might have nurtured a peaceful intercourse between the Europeans and the Indians of the American interior—a plan which the Senecas might have adopted to their great advantage. Unfortunately they did not have a free choice.

Imperial Rivalries

The American wilderness was never the peaceful Eden of the wishful philosopher's dream. The unsettled strife that had repeatedly sent the scattered tribesmen searching for each other's scalps continued, but to it were now added a lust for profits and a zeal for imperial glory that increasingly absorbed the older conflicts. The British, whose control at Albany was finally assured in 1674, sent Wentworth Greenhalg west on horseback for a friendly tour through the Iroquois villages in 1677. It was the first horse most of the Indians had seen and helped to dramatize the closer interest the British now took in their affairs. The Jesuits' advice had meanwhile been disregarded in France, where a strong faction backed LaSalle's effort to establish a commercial monopoly over the fur trade. In the conflict which ensued between independent "courier de bois" and rival groups seeking a monopoly, the trading interests of the Indians as well as their hopes for independence were jeopardized.

An early sign of this rapidly shifting scene appeared with the arrival of LaSalle at Totiakton in 1669. He had paddled up the lake with twenty companions, including two Sulpitians, Fathers René Galinée and Dollier de Casson. Disembarking at the Indian

landing on Irondequoit bay, they tramped inland to the principal Seneca village in search of guides for a journey up the valley and over the highlands to a river said to lead to the Gulf of Mexico. After several weeks devoted to conferences, sightseeing expeditions to the burning spring and other places, and feasts on dog meat among other delicacies, LaSalle finally accepted the unwillingness of the Senecas to open a trade path through their territory. Undaunted, he returned to Irondequoit and paddled westward along the lakes on further explorations.

Whether or not LaSalle made all the discoveries sometimes claimed for him at this time, he was back again a decade later with grand plans and large backing for a trading monopoly on the Great Lakes. The first two sailing craft (built at Fort Frontenac, recently established with Iroquois consent at the side of present Kingston) had appeared on Lake Ontario, and it was in the larger of these, a twenty-ton brigantine, that LaSalle reached Irondequoit late in December, 1678, en route to Totiakton where he sought Seneca permission to build a similar boat on Lake Erie. Just how he secured their consent is unknown, for the hostility displayed by the Senecas that winter during the slow construction of the *Griffin* on the upper Niagara proves that they had not understood the nature of his proposal.* The *Griffin* was nevertheless successfully launched the next summer, a trading post was erected at the mouth of the Niagara, and commercial operations of considerable extent were undertaken during the next several months, despite constant Seneca opposition, until accumulating disasters to boats and personnel and the long absence of LaSalle in the western wilds brought the effort to develop a lake trade route to an end.

The Jesuits had remained at their Iroquois posts throughout this episode, unmoved by the mounting hostility against them. LaSalle was convinced that they had embittered the Iroquois, especially the Senecas, against him. The Indians were equally convinced that the priests were reporting on all their movements and had thus considerably hampered the success of their expedition against the Illinois in 1680-81. There were, however, mixed feelings of relief

*That this hostility was not shared by all the Senecas is made evident by the friendly visit LaSalle again made to Irondequoit the next summer. It was at this time, in June, 1679, that the Franciscan Récollets, Louis Hennepin and Gabriel Zénobe, arrived in the brigantine and erected a small bark chapel on the approximate site of Our Lady of Mercy High School in Rochester, where a marker commemorates the event today.

and regret in 1683-84 when the Jesuits began to withdraw, for the Iroquois rightly interpreted this action as a sign of impending attack from Canada. Father Garnier was one of the last to leave, ending a residence of some 15 years in the Genesee country when he departed quietly by way of Irondequoit early in 1684.

The opposition of the Iroquois to French plans was strengthened by a more vigorous activity at Albany. The Albany trade had several large advantages. The greater advance of English handicrafts enabled their merchants to ship finer products at lower prices than the French could afford. English blankets came in brighter colors and more attractive weaves, their knives and needles were made of better steel, their guns and powder were credited with superior qualities. Moreover, the British West Indies supplied rum in greater quantity and at more reasonable prices than the French brandies. Since the Albany merchants, recruited principally from the old Dutch families, had learned to wait for the Indians to come to their doors with the furs, an arrangement which permitted the Iroquois to control the trade through their lands, the British found the Five Nations ready in 1683 to negotiate a treaty, a "chain of friendship" which bound each to respect the interests of the other and to render mutual assistance when needed. It may have seemed to some of the sachems that the Colony of New York and through it the British crown was being added as a sixth nation to the Iroquois confederacy, but to the successive governors in New York it appeared that Britain's sovereignty was clearly extended to the Great Lakes.

The French, scornful of British claims, had already planned to chastise the unruly Iroquois. Governor de LaBarre headed a punitive expedition in 1684, but under such imperfect arrangements that its advance ended in debacle at LaFamine, as it was appropriately called, without reaching the Iroquois country. A second and more ably directed expedition under Governor Denonville landed an army of over 2000 French and Indian allies at Irondequoit bay on July 7, 1687.

The next two weeks saw the largest parade of hostile military forces that Monroe County has ever witnessed. The motley army of French regulars, Canadian militia, and Canadian and western Indians moved slowly south, barely escaping ambush at two points, and burned the Seneca villages located in the present townships of Victor and Mendon. Corn fields were hacked down and food stores

destroyed, but the wily Senecas hiding in the forest gave battle only when an isolated party offered easy scalps. Finally, after breaking camp at Mendon Ponds, the army trudged back to its boats, nursing more casualties than it had inflicted, and paddled westward from present Sea Breeze to Niagara where a fort was erected on the site long since abandoned by LaSalle.

But a show of force, though it had impressed the Iroquois at an earlier day, was no longer effective. Vengeful Senecas hovered around the fort all winter, practically imprisoning its garrison of 100 regulars. Scurvy claimed most of these unfortunates, driving some out to hunt for food and to lose their scalps to Seneca braves. Only twelve survived when relief arrived the next spring, and the fort was soon ordered demolished. The terrible Lachine massacre at the very gates of Montreal in August, 1689, more than avenged the Denonville expedition.

Thus the French drove the Iroquois into the arms of the British who used them to advantage during the ebb and flow of the conflict known as King William's War, 1689-1697. The English forces at Albany, unsettled by the revolution of 1688 at home, were much less prepared for armed conflict than the French in Canada, and the latter might easily have seized control of the Hudson had it not been for the hostile Iroquois. Yet the Five Nations were not so disinterestedly aiding the British as they were earnestly looking out for themselves. Only the governor's generous supplies of powder and guns restrained them from accepting French peace offers on at least two occasions.

The British position deteriorated somewhat during the peace that preceded Queen Anne's War. Albany traders not only found it convenient and profitable to send their goods to Montreal where the French were willing to endure the hardships of its distribution, but they also began to demand more furs for each jug of rum, blanket, or rifle sold at Albany. Moreover, as the English had failed to secure the release of Iroquois captives in Canada, the League had to open its own negotiations to that end.

The Mirage of Neutrality

Despite its almost uninterrupted string of victories, the Iroquois League found itself in an essentially weak situation by the opening of the eighteenth century. No candid admission of this fact was

made, but a new reliance on diplomatic missions instead of war parties is suggestive. A similar development a century before, when the League possessed ample power to back up its negotiators, might have proved effective, but now the emissaries, whether to Quebec or Albany, went almost as supplicants, pleading for old rights and privileges and sacrificing in the process more and more of their independence. Their great hope was to achieve the status of a neutral in the apparently irrepressible conflict between France and England.

The new attitude became apparent as the Iroquois delegation journeyed to Quebec to negotiate peace at the close of King William's War. To prove their desire for peace they not only presented wampum belts but requested that the Jesuit fathers, the French traders and smiths, return to their villages. As a special pledge of good faith the Senecas asked that Joncaire return to reside with them and to arrange for the departure of the French captives who had won adoption into their tribes. All they really wanted from the French, however, was the release of their young men still held captive in Canada.

When questioned by the British concerning these negotiations, the Iroquois reaffirmed the "chain of friendship" with them. They would welcome British missionaries, too, they declared, and they eagerly requested that smiths be stationed in their villages. As for their negotiations with the French, they noted that the English had also made a treaty and that Albany traders now went to Quebec regularly; they claimed the right to do the same. The British accepted these explanations and, brightening the chain of friendship with a distribution of gifts, promised to consider the request for smiths. Neither the forces at Albany nor the Iroquois were ready for an aggressive prosecution of Queen Anne's War, which broke out in 1702.

The difficulties confronting the Iroquois were still basically economic. Their hasty adoption of the white man's firearms had made them dependent on him for a supply of powder and shot. While the fur trade had provided these needs for a time, the fur crop of the area was rapidly being depleted. Moreover, the more furs they brought in, the lower the prices fell, and they never seemed able to supply more than their immediate needs. They had learned that a broken gun or a leaking kettle could be fixed, but they needed smiths to perform these services. The presence of smiths, traders

and priests hampered their freedom of action in many ways, yet a return to the good old days seemed no longer possible.

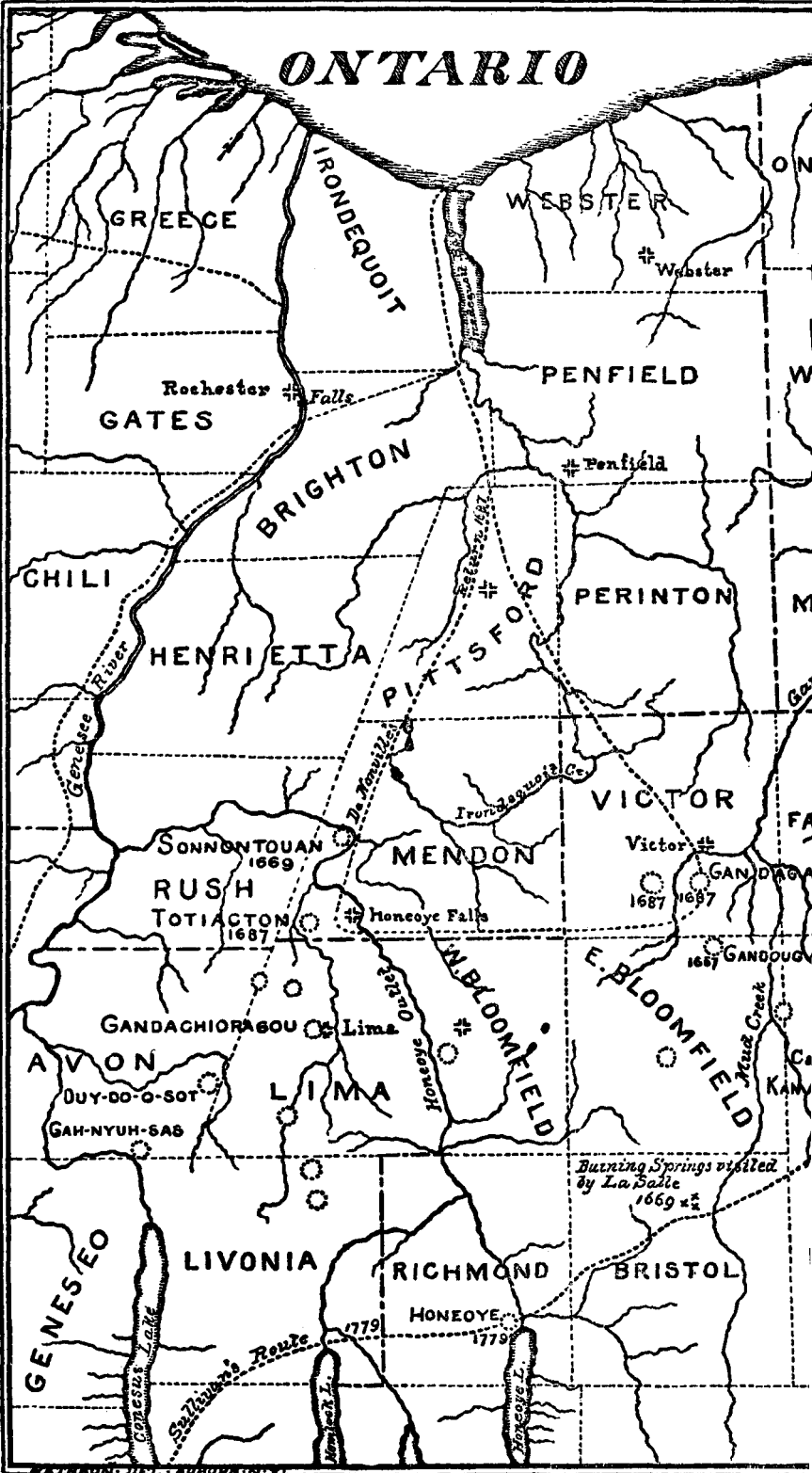
The most influential leader of the Five Nations at this period was not an Iroquois, but Louis Thomas de Joncaire who as a young French officer had been captured and adopted by the Senecas a decade before. After several years among the Senecas he had been returned to Canada, and now in 1700 was welcomed back as a son, destined soon to become a sachem. Always friendly to the Jesuits, he brought Father Julien Garnier back to the Senecas and frequently helped to station priests in other Iroquois tribes.* He supervised the visits of French traders and the lodgment of smiths for varied periods at the different villages. He secured the return of more than a score of Frenchmen who had lived for many years among the Senecas, most of whom, incidentally, were not too eager to leave their Indian wives and families. He persuaded the Senecas to permit the construction of a trading post at the Niagara portage, near present Lewiston, and finally served as the principal agent in the establishment of Fort Niagara.

The British counter moves were at first ineffective. Lawrence Claasse, their principal interpreter, of half-Dutch half-Negro descent, could not match Joncaire in either dignity or intelligence, and although he was sometimes accompanied on his numerous journeys through the Iroquois tribes by Peter Schuyler, Mayor of Albany, and occasionally by a Livingston, these men had not mastered the Iroquois dialects and did not readily participate in Indian customs. As the Albany traders, content to wait for the furs to come to them, made few journeys westward, so the local smiths preferred their Dutch firesides in Albany to perilous residences among the tribes.

Although Queen Anne's War ended without any decisive action on the New York frontier, the British had won victories elsewhere and the treaty of Utrecht recognized their suzerainty over the Five Nations. The authorities at Albany neglected, however, to inform their Iroquois allies of the treaty's terms until after the French had spread a rumor that the British had proposed an alliance to enslave them. A great council was hastily convened at Onondaga to negotiate a treaty of peace and friendship with the French. It was only in the

*Following Father Julien Garnier's brief second mission in 1701, Fathers Vaillant de Queslis and Jacques De Hue resided successively among the Senecas until 1710.

ONTARIO



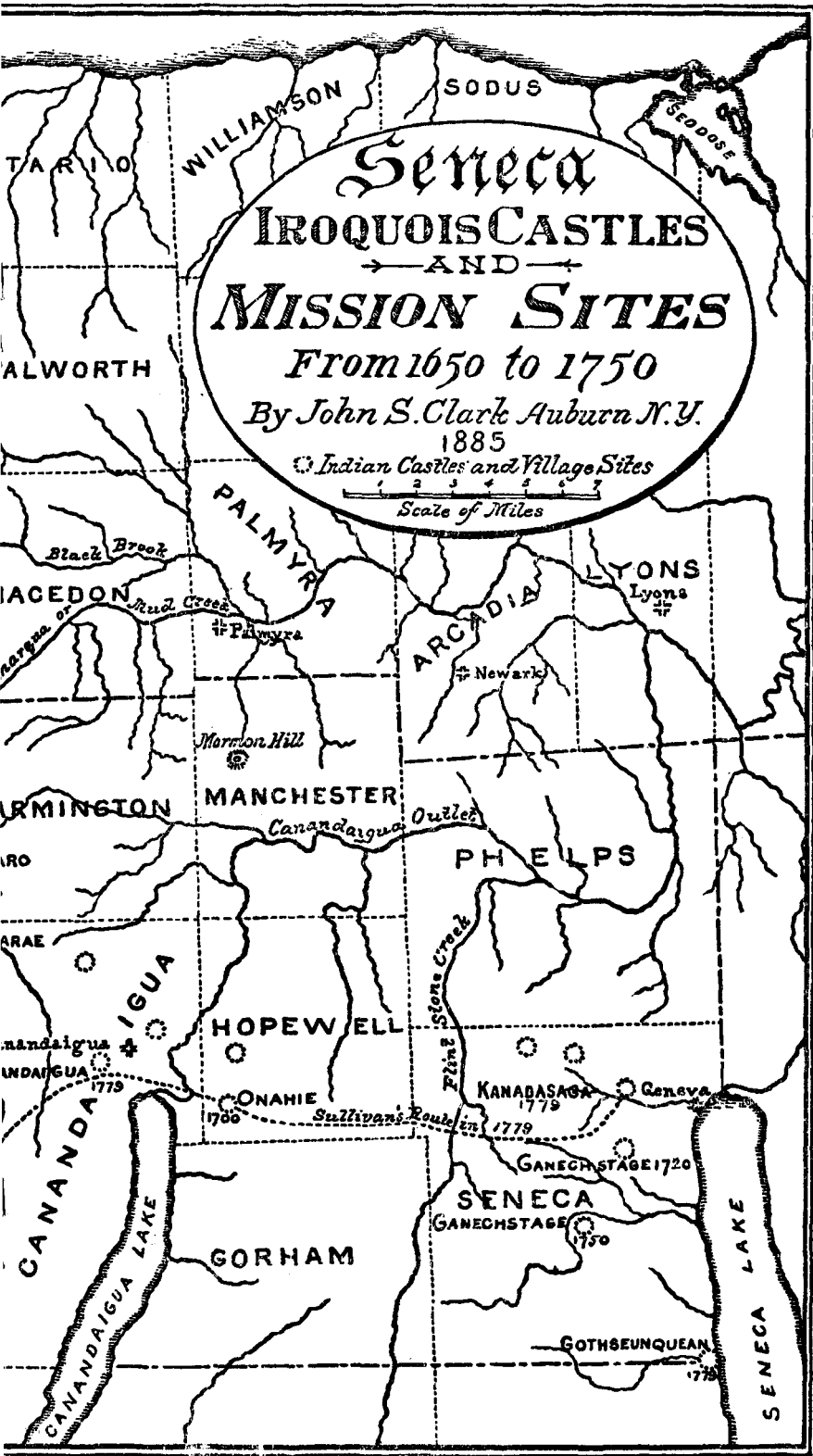
Seneca IROQUOIS CASTLES — AND — MISSION SITES

From 1650 to 1750
By John S. Clark Auburn N.Y.
1885

○ Indian Castles and Village Sites



Scale of Miles



nick of time that Lawrence Claasse and Peter Schuyler arrived to forestall it. The treaty of Utrecht was duly explained, and the Indians were requested to send the French missionaries, smiths and traders home, bag and baggage; they were assured that England would pay better prices for furs, would supply smiths and even missionaries if desired.

The Iroquois response revealed some of the resentment they must have felt over the now quite evident loss of their independence. They could not challenge the British power nor forego the benefits they received from trade at Albany, but they no longer wished to challenge French power either. They agreed to send the French back *as soon as* the English supplied smiths to keep their guns and kettles in repair. As for the Protestant missionaries, they would welcome them *as soon as* the prices at Albany were low enough to enable the Indians to buy Sunday clothes!

There was, of course, no sudden exodus of French. In fact it was at this time, 1720, that Joncaire built his trading post at Lewiston. Moreover, at least a temporary French post had been established at the mouth of Irondequoit bay four years before. Six Albany traders discovered it there, staffed by four traders and a smith, in the fall of 1716, and when the British inquired about it, the Senecas invited them to come and tear it down, but pleaded their need for smiths. Lawrence Claasse found a smith still there, or there again, in June, 1720. New York finally appropriated £500 and £300 in 1721 and 1722 to send Captain Peter Schuyler, Jr. with six traders and smiths to establish a British trading post at the Indian landing on Irondequoit creek near the point where the trader's cabin stands in Ellison Park today. Designed to counteract French infiltration, the post must have been ineffective or too costly for it was soon discontinued. Five English or Dutch smiths were stationed for a few winters among the Iroquois tribes but the service proved disagreeable and was hard to maintain.

Apparently it was at this time that both the French and the British began to realize how weak the Iroquois had become. Both decided at last to flout the old opposition to fortifications on the lands of the Five Nations—now the Six Nations with the admission of the Tuscaroras between 1714 and 1723. The success of Joncaire's post at Niagara, and the rumor that a fort was to be built there, prompted the British to secure League consent for a trading post at Oswego

which they forthwith equipped with a stockade. This in turn precipitated French plans for a fort at Niagara. When, at British prompting, the Senecas protested against stone fortifications, the French compromised on a stone house built (as they explained to their king) to serve as fort if needed! Again the British followed with a stone house at Oswego.

Inevitably the Iroquois found themselves professing lasting friendship to both sides and promising to defend their respective establishments. They were, in fact, deriving some immediate benefits from the situation, both because of the hospitality each establishment afforded, and because of the furs earned as porters, runners, paddlers and guides. The strength of the League was nevertheless weakened. Growing bolder in their negotiations, both the English and the French frequently questioned the unity of League decisions—an easy attack in view of the inconsistencies—with the result that the separate tribes were forced to justify their own positions and the old sense of unity was lost.

Joncaire persuaded a portion of the Senecas, who were moving westward to new villages on the Genesee River, to establish a summer camp on Niagara more convenient to his post. Even before his death in 1739 two of Joncaire's sons, both of whom had grown up among the Senecas, played increasingly important roles in French affairs at Niagara, drawing support from their many friends within the tribe. A succession of French priests visited the western villages, sometimes for residences of several months at a time, and French smiths and traders continued to appear among them.

The British on their part had finally undertaken to maintain Protestant missions in the eastern tribes. Their first missionaries, however, penetrated no further than Fort Hunter, a few miles west of Albany where they preferred to reside. Their chief contact was with the Mohawks, for whose children a school was established at the fort in the late thirties. It was not until the arrival of the Reverend John Ogilvie in 1749 that the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which had supported this program for nearly half a century, began to see hopeful results.

Several additional factors contributed to the decline of the Iroquois. Their population, perennially decimated by war, was now ravaged by smallpox contracted from the Pennsylvania settlers, which seemed to confirm the French charges that the British hoped

to exterminate them. Their total number of combatants was estimated at only 1500 in 1738, less than that of the Senecas alone fifty years before.

The French, on their part, did not always appear as disinterested friends. In their search for furs they had skirted far beyond the most westerly reach of the Iroquois, and their traders were now bringing the furs back by sailing sloops, protected by a string of forts and requiring only a few Seneca carriers over the Niagara portage. Moreover, the price of such furs as they could find, either by distant hunts or in return for services, was discouragingly low. The French market had been hit by a change in hat styles, and the English and other European markets were frequently glutted.

The British at Albany were no longer so keenly interested in furs. The colonial settlements had grown into populous communities whose many affairs now overshadowed the old fur trade. Indeed they were already beginning at many points to press westward onto the Indian lands, and it was difficult at Albany to assure the Iroquois that their lands were secure. So uncertain was the New York Governor concerning his Iroquois allies during King George's War that he endeavored to preserve a tacit neutrality. He could not prevent the western Senecas from enlisting, under the leadership of one of Joncaire's sons, in a French and Indian attack on the Virginia frontier, but he did hold most of them in line by mustering and equipping their braves for two expeditions which were later disbanded.

The treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle in 1749 closed this inconclusive war by returning all gains to the respective losers—except the French gain in prestige among the Indians. The French were eager to make the most of this advantage. Fort Niagara was enlarged and an auxiliary fortress built at the portage; Fort Rouille was erected on the site of Toronto; a string of forts was located along the Ohio with the aid and cordial cooperation of the western Senecas at each dedication. The fur trade no longer paid the cost of such expansion, which the Crown reluctantly assumed as a legitimate burden of empire, plus the expense of generous gifts to friendly Indians, who now included not only the western branch of the Senecas but much larger interior tribes.

The British counter moves came at this point under the direction of Sir William Johnson appointed Indian agent for New York in

1746. Reverend John Ogilvie's mission among the Mohawk gained some support, but not enough to counteract the success of Father Francis Piquet, a Sulpitian who established a Catholic mission on the site of present Ogdensburg and journeyed along the Ontario shore enlisting converts for his settlement which soon numbered 2000 members—much the largest Six Nation settlement at this period. When two Moravian missionaries traveled through the central Iroquois villages in 1750 they were shocked at the hostility and debauchery they encountered. They lacked the hardihood and the experience of the Jesuits, but now even some of the chiefs were lining up with the priests and other opponents of the liquor traffic which was frequently condemned as a more serious evil among the Indians than either war or smallpox. British as well as French authorities frowned on the sale of liquor, but independent unlicensed traders on both sides reaped great profits from it. Myndert Wemple, the Dutch smith who resided as Johnson's representative among the Senecas more or less continuously throughout the fifties, brought back frequent reports of the demoralization suffered from this cause. Unable to secure the support he needed for the proper control of the frontier, Sir William Johnson resigned in 1751.

A restless spirit was breaking out all along the colonial frontier, and it was chiefly to meet this situation that the first inter-colonial conference was held at Albany in 1754. The growing settlements had now developed sufficient strength and self-confidence to tackle their common problems without waiting for action from London. Unity of action was desirable, particularly along the frontier, and at the recommendation of Benjamin Franklin and William Johnson it was agreed that all the colonies should pool their resources to hire one Indian agent who should handle all negotiations of this character. In order to speed this work General Braddock named William Johnson Indian Superintendent for the Iroquois and their allies—an appointment which arrived too late for a peaceful test of its utility, for the final French and Indian War was already breaking out.

The Fall of New France

A full account of the activities of the Iroquois or even of the Senecas during the last French and Indian War is far beyond the purpose of this paper. What interests us is the effect of that conflict on Seneca and wider Iroquois fortunes, which certainly took a new

downward trend at this point. Not only did the fall of New France ultimately deprive them of a potential ally against the British, but in an even more fundamental respect the long conflict had made them dependent on outside supplies either as gifts or as payments for military services. The increased outlays of both the British and the French for friendly gifts had encouraged this development for a number of years, always with the hope that the Iroquois would prove effective allies in case of war. Now the outbreak of armed conflict brought repeated calls for Indian assistance from both the French and the English.

Thus the Senecas as well as other tribes aided the French in the ambushing and pursuit of Burgoyne's army near Fort Pitt at the start of the war. And now, for almost the first time among the Iroquois, small bands fell on the pioneer settlers who were moving west in Pennsylvania and the south, burning their cabins, killing and scalping the adults, and carrying a few of the more likely youths off as captives. It was on such a raid that thirteen-year old Mary Jemison was taken captive and carried west for adoption by a Seneca family on the Ohio. There she was married in 1757 and soon removed to her husband's village near Gardeau on the upper Genesee flats, where she continued to reside for more than seventy years, winning respect and fame as "The White Woman of the Genesee."

Meanwhile the French, aided by a force of 500 western Senecas led by Chabert Joncaire, likewise struck with fury and success at Fort Oswego. The rest of the Iroquois, alarmed by these displays of force, declared their neutrality. Many of the young men, however, joined the French and helped to build up the force with which Montcalm captured Fort William Henry and endangered Albany. The slower recruitment of British forces began to tell in time, however, as did the more generous appropriations under William Pitt, which enabled Sir William Johnson to distribute more lavish presents among the tribes and to insure a measure of support from them.

Most important was the large number of militia gradually assembled in various units about Albany. It was from these colonials, strengthened or at least accompanied by some detachments of British regulars, that John Bradstreet enrolled the force of 3000 with which he captured and destroyed Fort Frontenac in 1758. Small detachments of eastern Iroquois accompanied him but were given no major part in the attack and appear to have been used primarily

to forestall Indian hostility. Bradstreet destroyed seven French armed vessels and brought two unarmed sloops back to the ruins at Oswego, thus crippling French trade and threatening the supply of the upper forts. Only the uncertainty of the British concerning the neutrality of the western Senecas and other western tribes could have justified the failure to move on to the capture of Fort Niagara at this time.

Chabert, Joncaire's youngest son, was active all that winter, visiting the tribes, distributing provisions, and equipping their braves for battle. They gathered from many directions to the forts at Niagara the next spring. There they presented a constant worry and a daily expense for provisions and presents. Meanwhile, William Johnson's generous policy had won over the eastern Iroquois, especially the Mohawks, whose messengers stirred discontent and indecision among Chabert's Senecas. Indeed the leading sachems, convened at Canajoharie in April, had pledged Johnson the support of the entire League!

As the British acted promptly in building up their colonial armies on the Mohawk that spring, the Iroquois tribes took more positive steps to prove their allegiance. Some of the young braves of the Onondagas and particularly the Senecas were already off to the west with French forces ravaging the British around Fort Pitt, and the Iroquois converts of Father Piquet on the St. Lawrence were of course supporting the French, now back at Fort Frontenac, but all warriors still available in New York State began to congregate on the flank of General Prideaux's army where Johnson's agents kept them happily supplied. By the time they had reached Niagara more than 900 Indians, mostly Iroquois, had placed themselves under Johnson's command.

But it was on the 2200 colonials, chiefly from New York and New England communities, strengthened by a poorly equipped detachment of Royal Artillery, that the success of the expedition depended. They camped the second and third nights out of Oswego at Irondequoit, July 2 and 3, and on the 4th at a small bay seven miles west of the Genesee (which they named after their commander, General Prideaux, whose name was later confused with that of Braddock, and Braddock's Bay it is today). Two days later they landed at Four-mile Creek and proceeded to invest the fort four miles to the west. The siege lasted 18 days, including two Sundays

on which Reverend John Ogilvie, the missionary to the Mohawks, now chaplain for the entire army, held the first Protestant services on the Niagara frontier. With the death of General Prideaux, killed by an exploding shell early in the siege, command of the army fell to Sir William Johnson.

Captain Francois Pouchot had some 500 combatants in his garrison, plus 38 employees, of whom five were women or children. Most of the Indians, on whom so much had been expended, disappeared into the forest after Chabert Joncaire, ordered to abandon the post above the falls, retreated with a few chiefs into the fort. An additional discouragement to the defenders sprang from the failure of the two French gunboats on Lake Ontario to bring assistance. Pouchot's last hope, for the safe arrival of the relief army from the west, was blasted when the 600 or more French soldiers and traders and 350 to 600 western Indians rushed headlong into an ambush hastily prepared below the falls by William Johnson. This frightful disaster on the morning of the 24th convinced Captain Pouchot of the futility of further resistance and he capitulated that night. The French were permitted to keep their guns for self protection against the Indians, but as the surviving captives from the relief party that had come down from the western posts were conducted with the garrison from Fort Niagara back to Oswego and Albany, the influence of France disappeared from the Great Lakes.

The League's Downfall

The fall of New France, sealed in the Treaty of Paris in 1763, left a strange quiet hanging over the frontier. Sir William Johnson's peace treaty signed at Detroit with thirteen western tribes in 1760 had not proved wholly satisfactory, as Pontiac's uprising there in 1763 and the Devil's Hole massacre at Niagara in the same year revealed. There was much resentment among the tribesmen over the steady advance of the frontier of settlement. At Niagara the Senecas were protesting specifically against the introduction of ox carts on the portage road, where they had long served as the principal carriers. Moreover, the services of their young braves were no longer in demand at the posts, and although the British continued to distribute large sums in presents, the restless young men lacked a meaningful function. The fur trade was revived and centered largely in Canada, but here also it was rapidly absorbed by the

French, Dutch, English, and Scottish voyageurs who increasingly displaced the Indians.

Hard-pressed for funds to replace their lost incomes from the fur trade and military service, the Indians began to sell their lands. In an effort to protect the interests of the Indians, who were now regarded somewhat as wards, the British authorities drew the famous Proclamation Line of 1763, beyond which white settlement was prohibited, and reorganized the Indian service with Sir William Johnson as northern Superintendent. Of course the proclamation line did not hold in all places, and Johnson negotiated the treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 whereby the Iroquois tribes granted additional concessions and established what they all solemnly proclaimed as the final western boundary of white settlement, running from that fort south to the Susquehanna.

Aside from the strong ties of friendship developing between some of the Indian agents and their wards, almost the only friends the Indians had at this period were a few missionaries from some of the dissenting sects. The most notable of these, the Reverend Samuel Kirkland, began his prolonged service among the Iroquois in the early sixties. From his headquarters at Oneida, he made frequent visits to the Onondagas and the Tuscaroras as well as to the other tribes, but it was among the Oneidas that his chief influence developed. The earlier Church of England traditions continued strong among the Mohawks, while the Senecas were most scornful of all Protestants, though Kirkland often visited their eastern settlement at Kanadesaga on the present site of Geneva. Inevitably these religious differences contributed to the forces which were breaking down the old solidarity of the League.

The American Revolution accentuated several of these problems and speeded the League's downfall. It was quite natural that most of the Indians should have sided with the king's forces, with whom their contacts were most direct and whose interests were somewhat parallel. Many of the young braves welcomed an opportunity for military service; many of the older sachems saw a new hope for checking the steady advance of white settlement. Yet the Oneida, Tuscarora and a few other tribes, where the adjustment to the American agricultural society had made some progress and where American mission influences were strong, sided if at all with the revolutionary forces. The efforts of the Senecas and some other

tribes to remain neutral, because of old hostilities to the British, further divided Indian councils. The Mohawks took the lead, at least among the Iroquois, in rallying war parties to the king's side, with the hope in their case of recovering lands lost to the settlers, but little confidence was felt among even these Indians that a British victory would assure the future of their tribal heritage.

The fratricidal violence which devastated frontier settlements on both sides of the Iroquois borders increased in intensity as the war progressed. Led by the Tories who had fled or been driven out of the Mohawk and Wyoming regions, and who were themselves trying to recapture their homes, Butler's Rangers and the "loyal" Indians attacked with destructive zeal the patriot militia and their settlements. The burning of many homes in the Mohawk and Wyoming valleys in 1777 and 1778 prompted retaliation against local Tories and nearby Indian settlements. This led in turn to even more destructive attacks at Cherry Valley and other settlements in which the lives of women and children were not always spared. As most of the Iroquois, except the Oneidas and Tuscaroras, had participated extensively in these raids, endangering the Continental Army's supply of foodstuffs drawn from these rich agricultural valleys, General Washington equipped General John Sullivan and General James Clinton with an army of some 5000 continentals in 1779 to march through the Genesee Country and lay waste to the Indian villages.

The devastation wrought as they advanced from the Susquehanna valley northward through the Finger Lakes country and westward to the Genesee surpassed any on the white man's frontier. Although in this case no captives were slaughtered, since most of the Indian villagers had fled, and although the army turned back on September 15, after burning the Genesee Castle on the west bank of the river, it could report the total destruction of 39 villages east of that river and crops estimated at 160,000 bushels of corn besides vegetables and fruit trees wherever found. The army had not quite reached the borders of Monroe County, but bitter hardships were suffered that winter among the hundreds of Iroquois refugees who gathered there and around Niagara and on the upper Genesee. New and similarly destructive raids continued unabated until the close of the war.

Nothing was gained, certainly not by the Indians, from these frightful conflicts. Indeed a peaceful or neutral frontier might

have lulled the hard-pressed continentals into a neglect of the frontier which could have enabled England to establish a boundary along the Alleghanies, thus assuring at least a longer period of occupancy to the Indians. Instead, the treaty established the Great Lakes as the boundary, and again the Iroquois had to make their peace with a new conqueror, this time with one who wanted their lands rather than their trade or their military assistance.

Outnumbered and abandoned at least for the time by the British, the Iroquois signed a second Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1784 which recognized their title to the lands west from Cayuga Lake to the intersection of the Pennsylvania line with Lake Erie. Their right to sell these remaining lands could henceforth only be accomplished under prescribed government supervision, a provision inserted in order to safeguard them from private exploitation. Even with such restrictions the rapid disposal of their titles at pitifully inadequate prices, notably through the Phelps and Gorham purchase in 1788, threatened to dispossess them entirely and to precipitate open revolt. In an effort to right some of their wrongs and establish continuing friendly contacts, the Federal government sent General Israel Chapin to Canandaigua, where a new treaty was negotiated in 1793 assuring the tribesmen annual payments and Federal protection in their remaining holdings. Characteristically enough, the Indians delayed their action at this conference until news arrived from Ohio of Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers, in which the last hope for an Indian buffer state was snuffed out.

Peaceful councils thus prevailed at the close, and although the story of their treatment by land speculators, sharpers, and even by government agents during the next century and a half is not an edifying one, yet the Senecas and their allies, whose descendants continue to live on reservations in western New York as well as in Canada, have in fact increased in number preserving something of their ancient tribal customs. Many in each generation have gone forth to merge themselves into the larger American public, contributing on the same basis with other special stocks to the enrichment of its colorful cosmopolitan civilization.

If the modern Seneca, when invited to join a community parade, dons a headdress adopted from a western plains Indian—in order to avoid disappointing the young white braves on the sidelines—he need feel no chagrin. The great dreams of his forebears have passed,

but so have those of the Dutch on the Hudson, the French at Quebec and Niagara; even the English and the colonials, who triumphed for a time, have passed on. Yet none has completely disappeared, for each gave of his blood and his traditions something to help in the making of the present society and population of the Genesee country.

Bibliographical Note

This summary account, which of course makes no pretense to originality, is based on a number of excellent studies the reader may wish to peruse at greater leisure.

First in importance for this area is the fine scholarly account by Frank H. Severance, *An Old Frontier of France* (1917), an exhaustive but not exhausting two-volume review of the events in the Niagara region, including the Genesee, during the French period. Earlier treatments and documentary sources have all been used by Severance, but for the Genesee area the reader may like to examine Peter Wraxall's *An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs*, edited by C. H. McIlwain in 1915; the more lengthy reports of the Indian councils as published by the New York Historical Society in its *Proceedings* of 1869; and of course the voluminous first hand records found in the *Jesuit Relations*, edited by Thwaites and others in 73 volumes 1896-1901. These and other sources dealing with the Genesee before 1800 have been exhaustively explored by Mr. Alexander M. Stewart and reported in numerous articles; note especially his detailed chronicle of "Early Catholic History in the Rochester Diocese" which appeared in the Official Diocesan Review and Annual Calendarum of the *Catholic Courier*, Rochester, October 25, 1934. Mr. Stewart has generously read this paper and corrected several inaccuracies, but it must be confessed that many "errors of omission" and some generalizations still disturb him.

Other books of first rate importance are: George T. Hunt, *The Wars of the Iroquois* (1940), in which the source of their power is suggestively explored; Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930), a fine informative study; John W. Lydekker, *The Faithful Mohawks* (1938), a treatment of long neglected Protestant missionaries; Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts. Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwest Frontiers, 1748-1763* (1950), an assessment of the cost to the giver and to the receiver of these gifts; Arthur Pound's very readable *Johnson of the Mohawks* (1930); Harvey Chalmers, *West to the Setting Sun* (1943), a fictionalized biography of Joseph Brant; Howard Swiggett, *War out of Niagara* (1933), a strong lawyer's brief for the Tory Butlers; Alexander C. Flick, *The Sullivan-Clinton Campaign in 1779* (1929), a convenient chronology with excerpts from key documents and a bibliography. Arthur C. Parker's extensive researches on this subject are briefly summarized in his article "The First Human Occupants of the Rochester Region" in Volume X of the Rochester Historical Society *Publications*, to which a convenient list of his many publications is appended.

The John S. Clark map is reproduced from the Rochester Historical Society *Publication Fund Series*, Vol. VII, where it serves as frontispiece to an article by Dr. Parker, "The Red Man's Gateway to the Genesee Country," pp. 219-223. (See also the reproductions of several original maps of the period in that volume and in Volume X.) General Clark was a diligent student of French and Indian contacts in the central and western New York area. Numerous maps prepared by him have been given to the Cayuga County Historical Society at Auburn. Clark's spelling of some of the Indian village names does not always conform to that in my text, which follows Dr. Parker and Mr. Stewart. However, if the spelling of Indian names and the identity of village sites, as well as the routes of various trails, will always start an argument among authorities, the map will, I am sure, prove a great aid to the reader.