THE IROQUOIS:
A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THEIR HISTORY

BY PAUL A. W. WALLACE

The Five United Nations of the Iroquois called themselves "the Longhouse," a name that well describes both their geographical relationship to one another, and the government of their Confederacy. The Longhouse was composed of five independent peoples, each speaking a dialect of a common root language, seated in a line of villages on a trail stretching across northern New York from beyond Schenectady to the Genesee River. From east to west—as the names of rivers and lakes in that region remind us—they were the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca nations. The Mohawks were known as "Keepers of the Eastern Door," the Senecas as "Keepers of the Western Door." The Onondagas tended the central council fire. These were the three Elder Brothers. The Younger Brothers were the Oneidas (affiliated with the Mohawks) and the Cayugas (affiliated with the Senecas); later also the Tuscaroras and Delawares1 when they were received into the Confederacy "on the cradle-board."

They had a federal council that met at Onondaga (Syracuse), presided over by the head chief of the Onondagas, Atotarho; but the political bond that held them was light. As in the typical dwelling of the Iroquois—a long frame house with roof and sides of bark and a corridor down the middle, inhabited by several related families, each group with its own separate fire—the nations of the League, though they sent representatives to the Onondaga Council, retained each its own sovereignty virtually intact. An ingenious system of checks and balances, together with a modified

form of the veto, made safe a maximum of liberty for each individual nation. At the same time the periodic meetings of the Great Council at which the common interest of all the member nations was discussed, and the impressive religious ritual associated with these gatherings, served to give the Five Nations an underlying sense of unity stronger than the many differences that divided them.

The course of Iroquois history, although to a partial view it has often seemed confused and unreasonable, may be comprehended easily enough if we first grasp its motivation and then follow its main movements. To attempt such a view, we must sacrifice here any close study of the innumerable filaments of Iroquois policy in order to see better the general drift of their history.²

For convenience, let us consider Iroquois history under five heads, these roughly corresponding with five historic periods: (1) The Founding of the Confederacy; (2) The Coming of the European, with the economic revolution that ensued; (3) The Great War for Survival, sometimes known as the Beaver Wars because of its origin in conflict over the fur trade; (4) Balance of Power, a period during which the Iroquois maintained their position of importance on the continent by observing a policy of neutrality between the English and the French; (5) Dispersion, many of the Iroquois migrating, after the close of the Revolutionary War, to Canada where they reestablished the Longhouse on the banks of the Grand River,³ while others remained in scattered reservations in the United States.

There is no documentary record of the founding of the Confederacy, that event having taken place before the coming of the white man, probably about the middle of the fifteenth century.⁴ But the founding is described in a legend that has been transmitted orally among the Iroquois.

² Certain of the main movements in Iroquois history have been individually treated in excellent analytical studies, such as the following: Charles Howard McIlwain's "Introduction" to Wraxall's Abridgement of Indian Affairs (Cambridge, Mass., 1915); George T. Hunt's Wars of the Iroquois (Madison, Wis., 1940); William N. Fenton's "Problems Arising from the Historic Northeastern Position of the Iroquois," Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 100 (Washington, 1940); Anthony F. C. Wallace's "The Grand Settlement of 1701" (forthcoming).

³ A number of Mohawks settled also at Deseronto on the Bay of Quinte.

⁴ For a summary of the evidence on which this conclusion is based, see P. A. W. Wallace, "The Return of Hiawatha," New York History, October, 1948.
This legend, though undoubtedly in part a product of popular imagination and rationalizing, is important to us here both for the core of truth contained in it and for the influence it exerted in its elaborated form upon subsequent Iroquois history. It provided a patriotic incentive that helped to hold the Iroquois together, and gave to their wars something of the complexion of religious crusades.

Underneath the embroidery of myth, symbolism, and folk-tale, there is a foundation of honest historical broadcloth. The essential facts are there: the drawing together of five independent nations by slow degrees, through an intermediate process of local confederation, and against strong opposition, until under the influence of two great men, Deganawidah and Hiawatha, the union was completed and the Tree of Peace was planted on the shore of Onondaga Lake. The legend itself, with its wisdom and its poetry, seized the imagination of the Iroquois people, who took to heart the message it conveyed and derived from it a sense of national mission: to make the Tree of Peace prevail.

The Iroquois believed in the divine origin of the League. As the legend tells us, Deganawidah's mother was a virgin through whom the Great Spirit, in compassion for man, the victim of recurrent wars, incarnated his message of "Peace and Power." He converted Hiawatha to his ideal, and with the help of this disciple persuaded the Five Nations to organize effectively for peace. He left his people a body of laws which form the Constitution of the Confederacy.

The legend is full of vivid, unforgettable images, expressing man's perennial hope for a world in which, as a later Iroquois spokesman expressed it, "The land shall be beautiful, the river shall have no more waves, one may go everywhere without fear." The Tree of Peace was not easily forgotten: a great white pine rising toward the sun for all men to see, with branches to shelter the war-weary, and white, healthy roots extending to the four corners of the earth.

What the Iroquois might have made of themselves if they had been given time to develop naturally under Deganawidah's laws, it is impossible to say. The coming of the European changed their whole mode of life and put them on the defensive. At first contact,
the Iroquois recognized the superiority of the white man's manufactured implements over his own stone-age tools and weapons. A brisk trade sprang up between the two races. Soon the Indian found himself dependent on the white man's goods, not for comfort only but for survival.

The Iroquois were an agricultural people and good farmers. Their cornfields were rich. But the white trader would not accept corn in exchange for the guns, powder, broadcloth, hoes and axes that the Indian now relied on for subsistence and defense. The trader demanded furs, especially beaver, for the European market. The Indian, in order to buy what he needed, found it necessary to devote his best energies to hunting and the marketing of hides.

The change in the end affected all Indians adversely. To the Iroquois it brought almost immediately near-disaster. Though their population was not large—never more than about twelve thousand men, women, and children—intensive hunting on a national scale soon exhausted their hunting grounds. By 1640 scarcely a beaver was to be found between the Hudson River and the Genesee. The Iroquois, to save themselves, had either to find new hunting grounds or to capture a position as middlemen (like the Hurons, whose country was also denuded of beaver) in the trade between the white man and the far Indians in the north and west, where the best hunting lay.

These were not pleasant alternatives. The Susquehanna Valley and the rich hunting territories westward to the valleys of the Allegheny River and the Ohio, with which the name of the Iroquois has been associated from Pennsylvania's earliest colonial days, were not in 1640 accessible to them. The Longhouse was hemmed in by powerful and suspicious neighbors. The Mahicans on the Hudson were pressing them hard. To the south were the formidable Susquehannocks, jealous of their trade with the Dutch and Swedes at the mouth of the Schuylkill River. To the north were the Hurons, a large and powerful people, the greatest Indian merchants on the continent, through whose activities as middlemen the French at Montreal held a monopoly of the trade with the Indians north of the Great Lakes. The Neutral Nation, immediately west of the Senecas, was allied with the Hurons. This was the tough market the Iroquois had to break into or perish.

The greatest obstacle was New France. For political as well as
economic reasons, the French were determined to suffer no breach of their monopoly of the northern fur trade. It brought wealth to the colony, and at the same time kept France's Indian allies dependent on her. As long as she held the monopoly, she could control her allies by the threat of denying them trade goods. Repeatedly the Iroquois sought to make a commercial treaty with the Hurons. The Hurons themselves were not averse to it, but the French intervened and put a stop to it.

Desperate, the Iroquois took to piracy, as the English had done on the Spanish Main. They raided French trade routes on the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers, ambushing Huron fur fleets. So successful were these raids that the French in alarm reconsidered their policy. In 1645 they, with their Huron allies, made peace with the Iroquois.

It was just such a treaty as the Iroquois had hoped for, containing the right commercial terms. Deganawidah in his laws had laid down the principle that friends eat out of the same bowl. Kiotsaeton, Mohawk spokesman at the treaty, made this explicit: the Hurons were now to trade with the Iroquois.

Next summer a Huron fur fleet of more than eighty canoes—"the greatest fur fleet in the history of New France"—came out of the north-west and, unmolested by the Iroquois, descended to Montreal. The Iroquois were allowed no part in the trade, though the high prices paid for furs at Albany might have made it worth the Hurons' while to give Iroquois traders a middleman's cut. Twelve bales of furs which the French did not have merchandise enough to purchase, went back to Huronia. The Mohawks, enraged at this open breach of the commercial terms of the Treaty, sent war belts to the Senecas and Onondagas.7

Vis à vis the French, the Iroquois were in a strong military position. The Longhouse flanked French trade routes to the west, and, in case of French attack, they had at their backs a range of wooded mountains into which they might retire by paths inaccessible to the enemy. Within easy reach of them, too, were the Dutch (later the English) to supply them with guns and powder. But the French made up by diplomacy whatever disadvantage they

7 See Hunt's *Wars of the Iroquois* for a full description of this affair.
might have had in the matter of terrain. They tightened their hold on the nations surrounding the Iroquois.

In 1647 the Hurons made an aggressive alliance with the Susquehannocks, who agreed to lift the hatchet when the Hurons gave the word. It seemed to the Iroquois as if a trap had been closed about them. The Hurons went a step further. Taking advantage of the looseness of the political bond that held the Five Nations together, they sent an embassy to negotiate a separate peace with the Onondagas and Cayugas. Such a peace, if concluded, would have split the Confederacy apart, leaving the Mohawks and Senecas, at opposite ends of the Longhouse, to shift for themselves.

Thoroughly alarmed, the Mohawks and Senecas despatched forces to break Huron communications with the Onondagas and Susquehannocks, and together concerted further plans which took a little time to mature. The year 1648 passed with only inconclusive fighting. In the summer a large Huron trading fleet was brought successfully through the Mohawk blockade, with severe loss to the Mohawks.

In the autumn of that year, the Mohawks and Senecas quietly sent a thousand hunters up into the woods of Ontario. Some months later the hunters rendezvoused. At early dawn on March 16, 1649, they appeared suddenly out of the snowy woods before the Huron town of St. Ignace, stormed and took the place, and set it afire. Three of the inhabitants escaped, making their way to St. Louis, three miles away, where they gave the alarm. But by sunrise the Iroquois were before St. Louis, and by nine o’clock it, too, was in flames. A spirited Huron counter-attack decided the Iroquois not to press on against the principal Huron stronghold, Ste Marie. Instead, they returned to their own country.

But their work had been accomplished. Behind them, panic had overtaken the Huron people. They fled, burning fifteen of their villages as they went. Some spent a winter of near-starvation on Christian Island in the Georgian Bay. Others took refuge among the Petuns (Tobacco Nation), near neighbors to the south-west, or among the Neutrals about Niagara. A large number made their way to the country of the Eries. Some found shelter under the Tree of Peace, a whole village seating itself among the Senecas. Still another band made its way north to mingle with the Ottawas.
on Manitoulin Island. It was this last group, as we shall see, that in the end robbed the Iroquois of the expected fruits of victory.

The attack on Huronia was but the beginning. In the War for Survival, the Iroquois disposed of whole nations at a blow—not by massacring their people but by destroying their main centers of resistance and causing their dispersion. In this way the Petuns were destroyed in December, 1649, the Neutrals in 1650-51, and the Eries in 1654.

The wars with the Mahicans and Susquehannocks were a different matter. The Mahicans were good for the long pull. As early as 1626 they had driven the Mohawks from their lower Castle on the Mohawk River east of Schoharie Creek. The last great battle, at Hoffman's Ferry, in which the Mohawks defeated the Mahicans, did not come until 1669. Peace was not concluded until 1673.

The war with the Susquehannocks dragged on for many years. Living in populous towns, well fortified, they seemed to be inexpugnable. They had a fort on the Lower Susquehanna River equipped with bastions and mounted artillery. Supported as they were with guns and powder from Maryland, and possessed of a strong military tradition, they were not to be destroyed with one blow. In 1663 they turned back a Seneca force of eight hundred men. They repeatedly raided the Iroquois country, and for years had the best of this desolating war. It was not until the Marylanders had turned against them that the Susquehannocks were at last dislodged from their riverbank stronghold. No adequate records have been preserved of this last Iroquois conquest. But we know with certainty about the dispersion, which was complete. Some of the Susquehannocks went south, only to suffer further humiliation at the hands of Maryland and Virginia. Others went north and were incorporated by the Iroquois, as some of the Hurons had been. A few were later allowed to settle in the Susquehanna Valley again, at Conestoga, near the present city of Lancaster.

The Beaver Wars, as we have seen, grew out of a struggle over the fur trade, but soon passed beyond that. As wars for survival, they were successful and decisive. The Iroquois emerged in 1675 as the strongest military power on the continent. They had won

---

8 Also known as Conestogas or Minquas—White Minquas, the Eries being the Black Minquas.
title to a vast territory, including most of what are now the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, as well as much of Maryland and Virginia. The Delaware Indians, formerly subject to the Susquehannocks, were now inherited as “props to the Longhouse.”

As commercial ventures, however, the Beaver Wars as a whole were a failure. In particular, the dispersion of the Hurons did not give the Iroquois the expected middleman’s share in the fur trade. The explanation is to be found in the activities of the Hurons who joined the Ottawas on Manitoulin Island and later moved with them to Michilimackinac. Hurons and Ottawas carried on as vigorous a trade as ever with the French, from a more distant and less vulnerable base.

Failing in their northern commercial objectives, the Senecas, after the defeat of the Neutrals and Eries, spread out into the west and developed a profitable trade in the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. Whereupon the Susquehannocks, as yet unsubdued, raided Seneca trading routes, forcing the Senecas to despatch a large part of their warriors—as many as six hundred at a time—to escort their traders home.

The expulsion of the Susquehannocks in 1675 rid the Iroquois of certain dangers only to expose them to others. The opening of the Susquehanna Valley brought them into close contact with advancing English settlements in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, and confronted them with several difficult problems.

To begin with, there was the problem of the Virginia, or as it was sometimes called, the Carolina Road. The Virginia Road was a warpath extending from the Five Nations country, through Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, to the country of the Conoys (Piscataways), Tuscaroras, Catawbas, Cherokees, and other tribes with whom the Iroquois were associated in matters of peace or war. Warriors travelled it to punish those who had harbored the Susquehannocks. Sometimes these war parties fell into conflict with the settlers. It was a maxim among the Iroquois that their warriors, when passing through friendly country, should “eat out of the same bowl” with the inhabitants. In other words, they expected to find victuals in Virginia. The settlers near whose farms the path ran, not understanding this point in international etiquette, refused food to passing war parties.
When the warriors helped themselves from the barnyard, the settlers took down their guns. At that point the natural law of reprisals took over.

To avoid such encounters, which the Five Nations deprecated as well as the Virginians and Marylanders, it was agreed in 1685 that the Virginia Road should be rerouted farther west, to the foot of the Blue Ridge. For a time all was well. Virginia discouraged settlement of the Piedmont in order to prevent trespass on the Indian highway. But, the path being still on the east side of the mountain, the westward thrust of population soon overran it, and the troubles began all over again.

Further negotiation resulted in the agreement of 1722, by which the Virginia Road was moved west of the mountain into the Shenandoah Valley, the Blue Ridge being accepted as the boundary between the English and the Iroquois. A similar problem beset the Pennsylvania frontier, where the Virginia Road, which for a time had run south through the lower Susquehanna Valley, was deflected ever farther west to avoid just such troubles as Virginia had had.

A more delicate problem for the Iroquois lay in the defenseless condition of the Susquehanna Valley after its former masters had been driven out. The crux of the problem was how to fill that vacuum before the English did, and to do it without bloodshed. The solution hit upon was to fill the valley with Indian refugee populations. It had long been a policy of the Iroquois, following Deganawidah's injunction to take strangers by the hand and welcome them under the Tree of Peace, to care for defeated peoples who appealed to them for sanctuary. We have seen them doing this with the Hurons and Susquehannocks. Now, in their time of triumph, the Iroquois had commiseration for Indians in the south who were having a rough time: the Shawnees and Conoys, for instance, whom the Iroquois themselves had been mauling; the Tuscaroras after the severe defeat administered to them by North Carolina in 1712; the Delawares driven by the Walking Purchase out of their homes in the Forks of the Delaware; the Nanticokes, who found themselves unwanted in Maryland. To all these dispossessed people the Iroquois offered asylum in the Susquehanna Valley. Colonies of them were placed at strategic points, usually at the junction of important trails or canoe routes. To superintend
these "displaced persons," vice-regents or "half kings" were appointed, men like Shickellamy at the Forks of the Susquehanna (Sunbury) and Tenacharisson at the Forks of the Ohio. Sometimes—as when in 1766 a large band of Tuscaroras, with their sick and aged, came up from North Carolina to the Big Bend of the Susquehanna—the Iroquois despatched special agents to organize the removal and see to it that proper food and transportation were provided along the way.⁹

These little colonies or protectorates were moved up the river as the white settlements caught up with them, for the last thing the Iroquois wanted was a war with Pennsylvania or New York. Nevertheless these rearguard actions, though they were for the most part bloodless, were a reminder that the English colonies (whom the Iroquois, as they liked to tell them, had nursed through their infancy) had grown up to be dangerously acquisitive and importunate adults.

The Montreal Treaty of 1701, which marked a turning point in Iroquois history, came about as a result of the uneasiness felt by the Five Nations at the phenomenal growth and expansion of their English allies. They saw the need of a counter-balancing weight on the international scales.

We must go back a little in order to see more clearly the motivation of this treaty. In the year 1666 New France, in order to punish the Iroquois for their raids on her fur fleets, launched two expeditions under Courcelles and Tracy. The first was a failure; but the second, though it encountered few Mohawks (they having wisely vanished into the woods) burned villages and destroyed quantities of stored corn. Peace was made the following year, but it was soon broken. In 1687 Denonville's invasion of the Seneca country again caused little loss of manpower to the Iroquois, but the destruction of some 1,200,000 bushels of corn was crippling. In reprisal, two years later, the Iroquois secretly penetrated New

⁹See letter from the Moravian missionary, John Jacob Schmick, at Wyalusing: "On the 18th [November, 1766] two chiefs, Newollike and Aehkolunty ... brought a message from the Six Nations for our Indian Brethren to this effect: The Six Nations have received news by a Tuscarora messenger that a number of their people are on their way, but they do not know how they are to make out and provide for themselves. The Six Nations, therefore, request the Indians everywhere along the Susquehanna to receive these poor Indians, send canoes from place to place for them, and provide them with corn...." Bethlehem Diary, Archives of the Moravian Church, Bethlehem, Pa.
France to the gates of Montreal and emerged from the woods to devastate the country for many leagues about. The expedition goes down in Canadian history as the Massacre of Lachine, because the Indians, unable to reach and destroy the enemy's stores of food, as the French had done, killed or captured the crop producers, which came to the same thing in the end—-injury to the enemy's economy. A few years later the French launched another punitive expedition into the Iroquois country; and so the pendulum swung, from reprisal to reprisal, each side continually getting hurt, though never mortally.

What the Iroquois wanted was not war but a better share of the fur trade. "In fine," wrote Lamberville of their war with the Miamis in the West, "they do not wage war save but to secure a good peace." What the French wanted was freedom from Iroquois terror. "An extraordinary thing," wrote La Potherie, "that three or four thousand people should be able to make a whole new world tremble." The Lachine affair had so frightened the Hurons and Ottawas that the French thereafter found them impossible to control. By this time the situation had reached a stalemate. The French had learned that they could not destroy the Iroquois. The Iroquois had learned that it would be unwise to destroy the French: they were a good counter-weight to the English. It was becoming apparent to both sides, French and Iroquois, that an accommodation was to be desired.

The English, getting wind of this rapprochement, did everything they could to stop it. They reminded the Iroquois that they were "subjects" of the King of England. The merchants of Albany were apprehensive of losing their monopoly of Iroquois trade. The Province of New York feared losing Iroquois protection of the northern border. "Those Five Nations," wrote Governor Dongan, "are very brave & the awe & Dread of all ye Indyans in these parts of America, and are a better defence to us, than if they were so

12 There seems to have been an honest misunderstanding here. The Iroquois, when they "gave" their country to the Governor of New York, meant only that they placed themselves under English protection in case of a French invasion, not that they had surrendered either their sovereignty or title to their lands.
many Christians.” The middle colonies, fearing war with France, did not want to lose the support of Iroquois manpower. “If we lose the Iroquois, we are gone,” wrote James Logan, Secretary of Pennsylvania, in 1702.

In the summer of 1701 what the English feared came to pass. At Montreal the Five Nations made peace with the French and their Indian allies. The French invited the Iroquois to trade with them at Detroit. In return the Iroquois promised, in case of a Franco-British war, to remain neutral. But the Iroquois were not deserting the English. While one embassy was on its way to treat with the French in Montreal, another was, quite honestly, renewing the chain of friendship at Albany. At Montreal, in return for the promise of their neutrality, the Iroquois stipulated that the French should respect that neutrality and, in case of a war with the English should, as far as the Iroquois were concerned, “sit on their mats” (i.e., not breach the Iroquois borders).

During the early years of the eighteenth century, Conrad Weiser in Pennsylvania and William Johnson in New York did much to confirm the “Antient Union” of the Iroquois and the English. The Joncaires, father and sons, strove to preserve Iroquois neutrality. When at last the French and Indian War broke out, the Five Nations, true to their treaty with France, remained neutral. There were, it is true, some scattered acts of partisanship, as when Senecas took part in raids on the English settlements, or when Mohawks danced the war dance and accepted the hatchet from William Johnson. But officially Iroquois neutrality was maintained, and, on the whole, it worked to the advantage of the English colonies. The Iroquois exerted judicious pressure on their wards, Delawares and Shawnees, who had joined the French and struck the English. The chastisement administered to Teedyuscung, leader of the pro-French Delawares, at the Easton Treaty of 1758, was decisive. That treaty ended the Indian War in Pennsylvania and made Fort Duquesne untenable by the French.

After the fall of New France in 1763, the Iroquois quickly learned how sound their policy of keeping the balance of power had been. The English, freed of the French menace on their

---

A full discussion of this episode is found in Anthony F. C. Wallace's forthcoming “The Grand Settlement of 1701.”
borders, ceased to court the Iroquois or to right their wrongs. Gross land scandals were imposed upon them without redress. "The Indians need not to expect even moderate Justice in this Country," wrote Sir William Johnson.\textsuperscript{15} They had to submit to hard treaties, whittling away their territories, like the Fort Stanwyx Treaty of 1768.

The American Revolution found the Iroquois divided. After a period of neutrality, the Oneidas and many of the Tuscaroras sided with the "Thirteen Fires," while the Mohawks, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas, under the leadership of Joseph Brant, sided with the British. After the war came their dispersion. Many of them followed Joseph Brant to Canada. Their descendants may still be found on the Six Nations Reserve (the Tuscarora being the sixth nation) near Brantford, Ontario. There are between seven and eight thousand of them, representing all the nations of the Confederacy, with a good sprinkling of Delawares and others who came into the Longhouse on the cradleboard. Many have remained in New York and Pennsylvania: at Onondaga, St. Regis, Tonawanda, Cattaraugus, Tuscarora, Cornplanter. Still others have moved to reservations in the West. Many of the Oneidas are now in Wisconsin.

The last decades of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth were the unhappiest years in the history of the Longhouse. Some of their fires had been put out and others had been scattered. Power in international affairs was gone from them. Their horizons had suddenly contracted. People accustomed to think in continental terms were overwhelmed by the nagging frustrations of reservation life. There was widespread collapse of morale.

Then came Handsome Lake, the Seneca prophet, with his visions. He had walked the Sky Road, he said, and had talked with three messengers from the Creator. The Creator was displeased with his Ongwe-honwe (Real People) for neglecting their Indian heritage and sinking so far below the spirit of their ancestors. Handsome Lake's words touched a chord among all the Iroquois, the vibrations of which have not ceased to this day. He had started a national religious movement that is still strong.

Under these and other influences the Iroquois pulled themselves together and set their shoulders to the long task ahead: without relinquishing their identity as Kanonsionni, People of the Longhouse, to join the rest of the world in clearing the path of brambles and briars for the advancement of all mankind. Their success is attested by notable contributions they have made in industry, the professions, scientific research, and the arts. They are the best structural steel workers in America, and for soldiering there are none to surpass them. Though their population today is little more than it was in the seventeenth century, they contributed to the armies of the United States and Canada during the Second World War more than twice as many men as they had assembled in their greatest days to crush the Hurons. The white man may well be proud to eat out of the same bowl with them.

The design on the title-page is made up of symbols of the Five Nations Confederacy. The geometrical figures are from the Hiawatha Belt (a piece of archival wampum now in custody of the New York State Museum at Albany), which the Indians believe to be a contemporary record of the founding of the Five Nations. The Tree of Peace, tended by the Onondaga nation, is in the center with the other four nations beside it. The open ends of the chain that binds them indicates, according to Indian interpretation, that the chain of friendship is not closed, the Five Nations hoping to bring other nations into the Confederacy. The Tree of Peace has four roots, extending to the four corners of the earth. Above the Tree is the Eagle That Sees Afar, placed there by Deganawidah to warn of approaching danger—a symbol of military preparedness. The men with clasped hands represent the Five Nations in so firm a union that even if a tree should fall on them it could not break them apart.

Intermingled with the text of the Livingston Indian Records in the following pages, is a picture version of the Legend of the Founding, done by Ray Fadden (Aren Akweks) of the St. Regis Mohawks. As far as possible the artist has depended on conventional Indian pictographs. When, however, he has had something to express for which no ancient symbols were available, he has tried to imagine what the old-time picture-writers would have done, and in that light made up his own characters.