



Native Americans in the Great Lakes Region and Presque Isle State Park

Regional Science Consortium

Introduction

The Iroquois Nation

- “Iroquois” is a French variant on the term for “snake”
- Originally, and currently, called the Haudenosaunee
 - Also known as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy
- Their culture is dynamic and has changed over time

The Six Nations

- Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, Onondaga, and Tuscarora
- Each has own language similar to all Haudenosaunee
- Many traditional terminology provided through presentation in Seneca Nation pronunciation



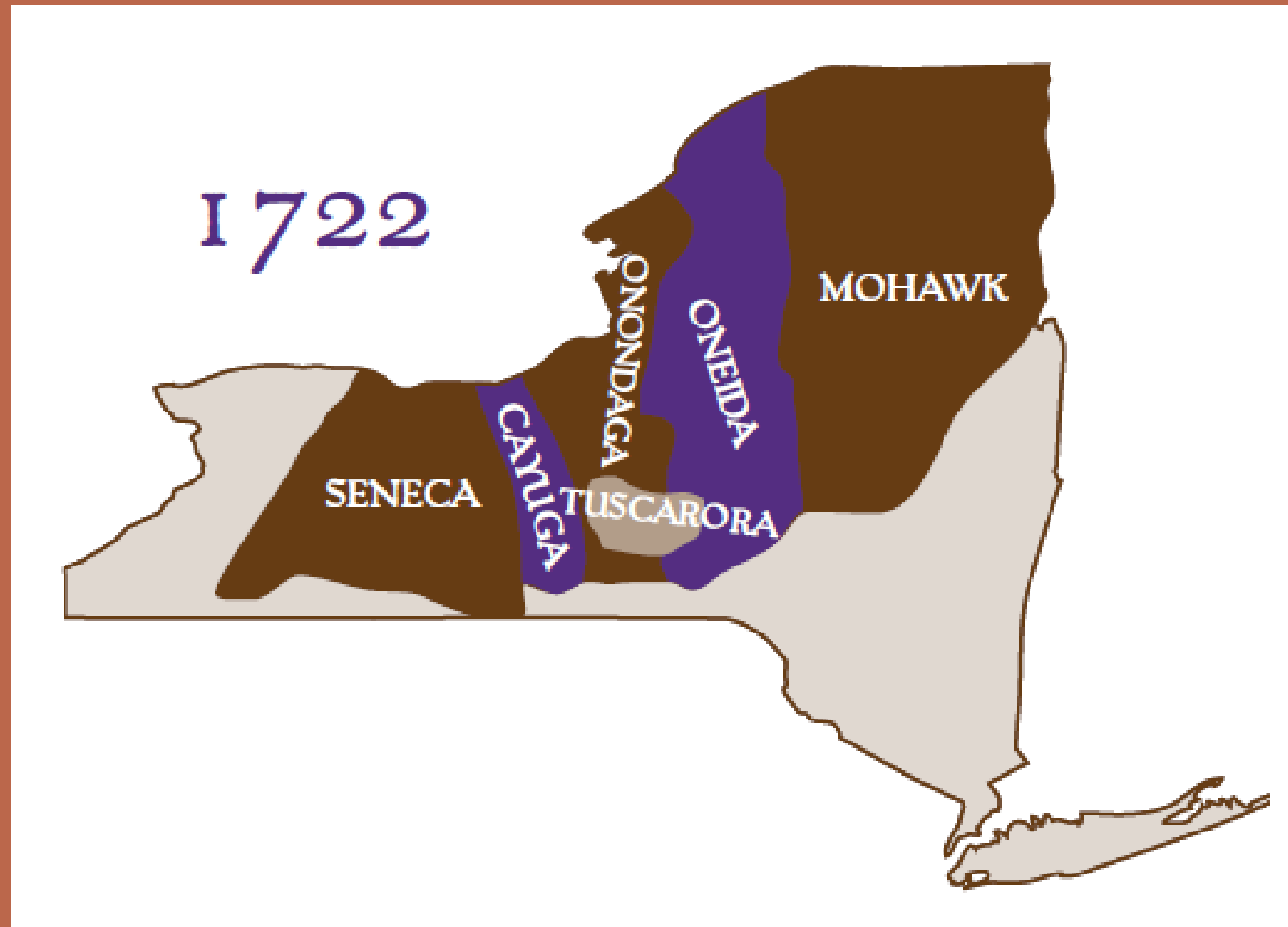
NMAI illustration by Mary Ahenakew



The Six Nations

MOHAWK (MO-hawk) or
Kanien'kehaka

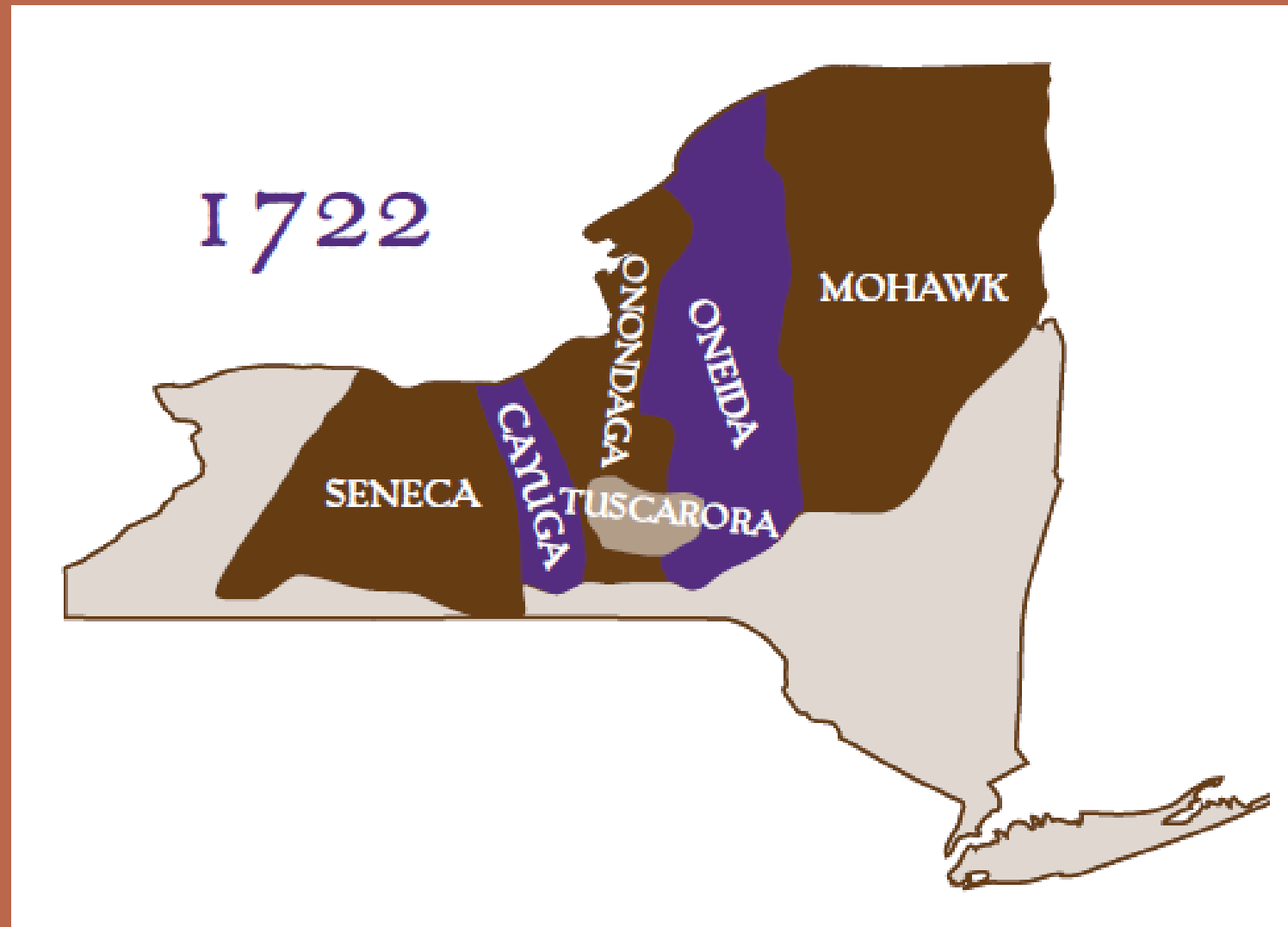
- "People of the Flint."
- "Keepers of the Eastern Door" since they are the easternmost nation in Haudenosaunee territory.
- Responsible for protecting and defending the eastern boundaries of Haudenosaunee territory.



The Six Nations

ONEIDA (o-NY-da) or
Onayotekaono

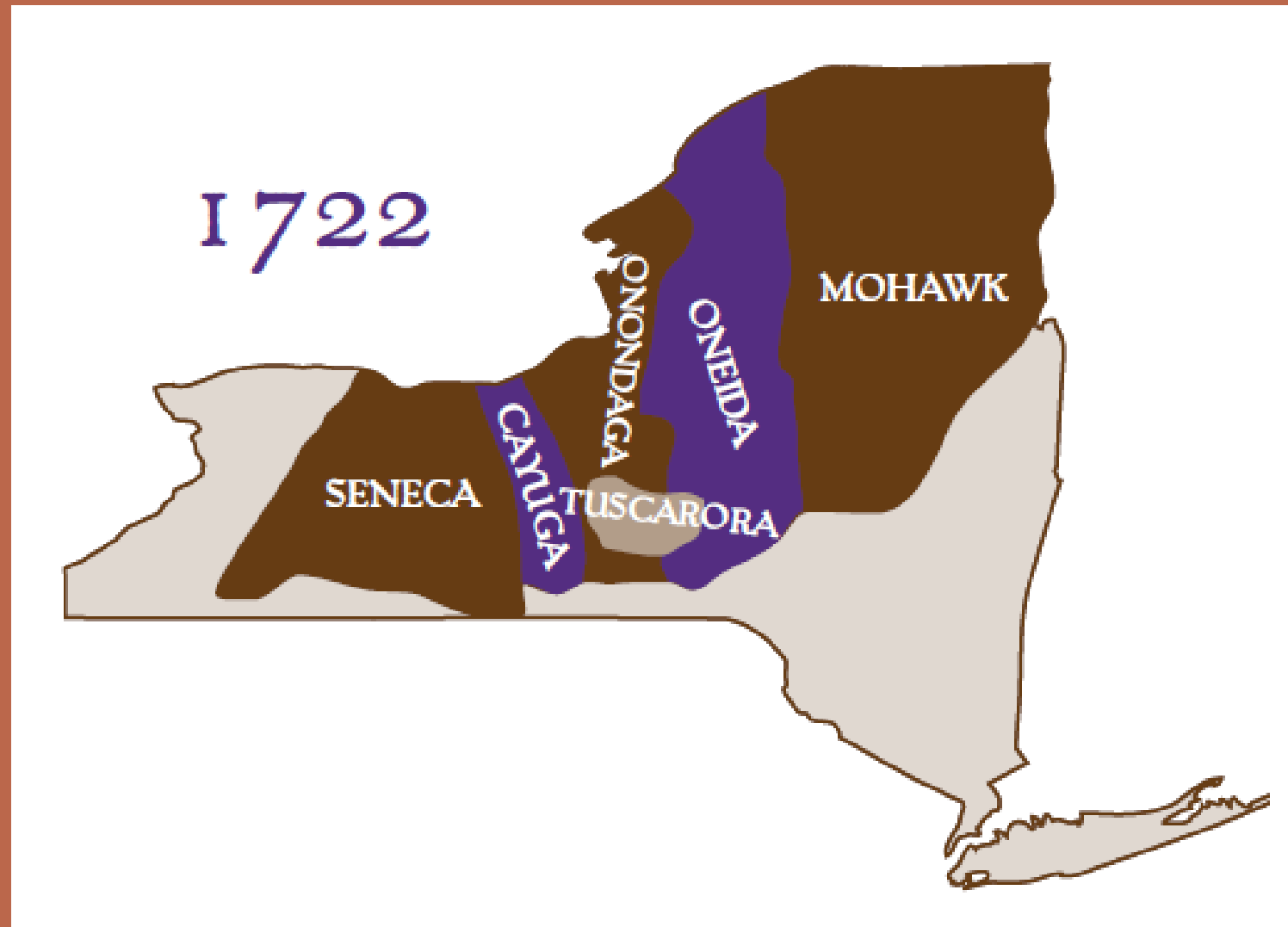
- "People of the Standing Stone."



The Six Nations

ONONDAGA (on-nen-DA-ga) or Onundagaono

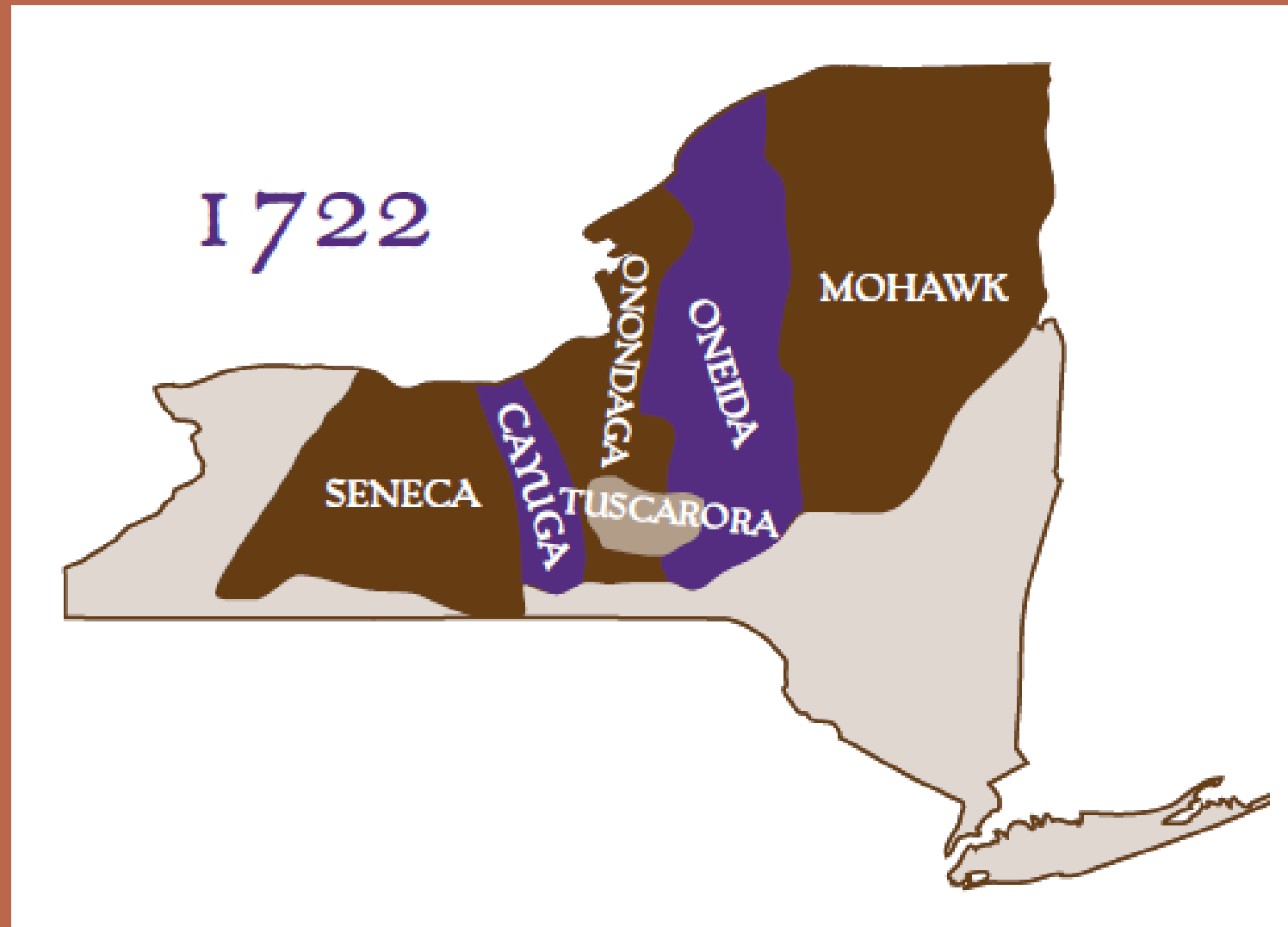
- "People of the Hills."
- Also called "Keepers of the Central Fire" since the Onondaga Nation is considered the capital of the Confederacy.



The Six Nations

CAYUGA (ka-YOO-ga) or
Guyohkohnyoh

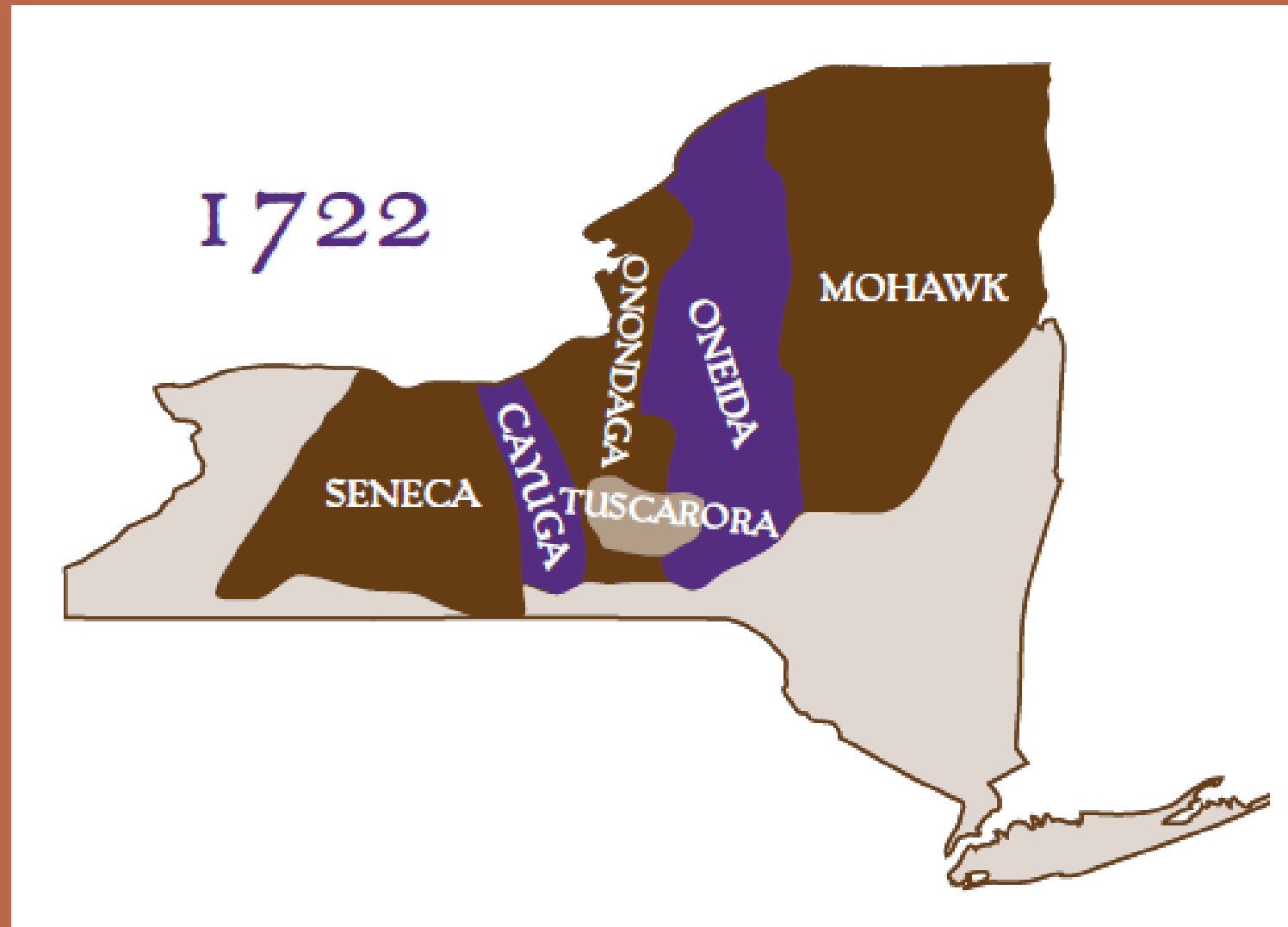
- "People of the Great Swamp."



The Six Nations

SENECA (SEN-i-ka), or
Onondowahgah

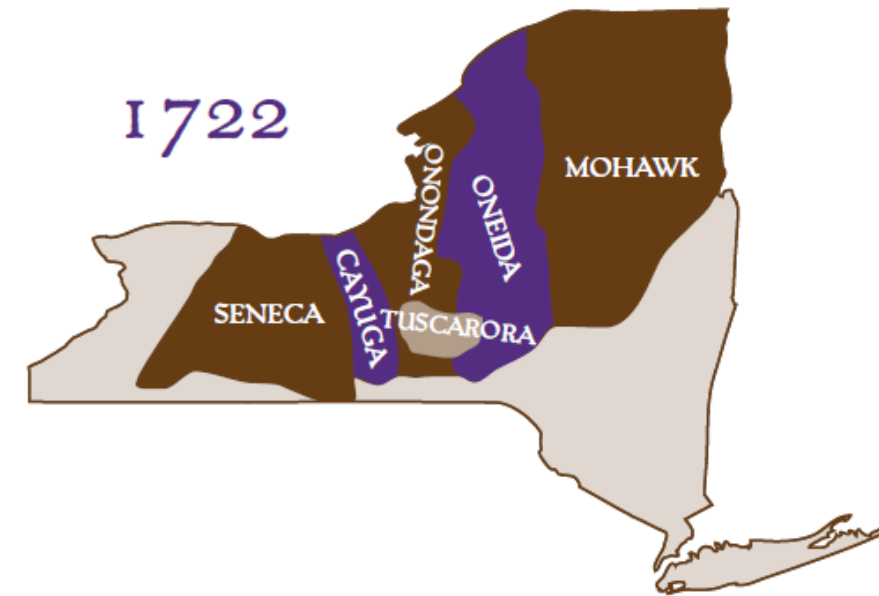
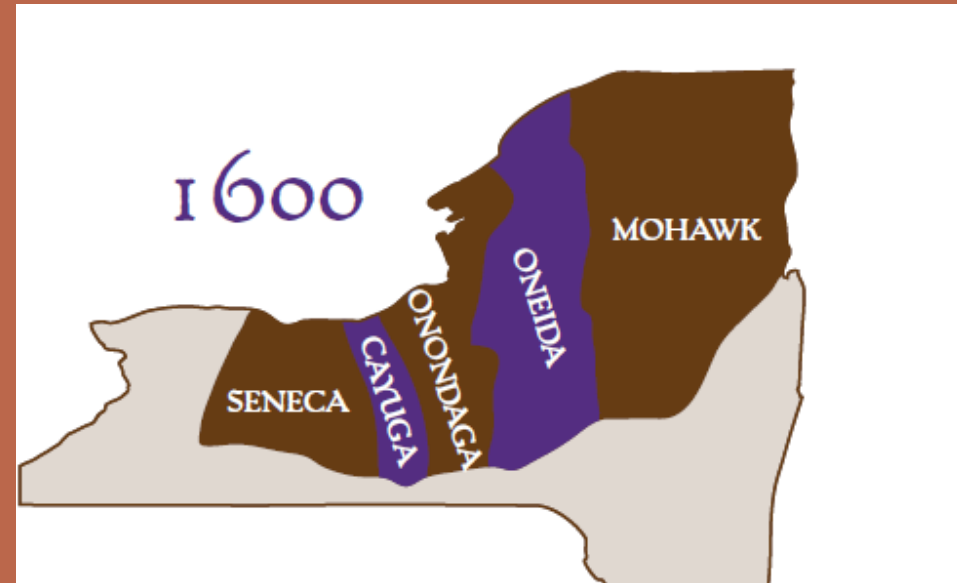
- “People of the Great Hill”
- Also known as “Keepers of the Western Door” because they are the westernmost nation in Haudenosaunee territory.
- They were responsible for protecting and defending the western boundaries of Haudenosaunee territory.



The Six Nations

TUSCARORA (tus-ka-ROR-a) or Skaruhreh

- "The Shirt Wearing People"
- In 1722, members of the Tuscarora Nation, who were living in what is now North Carolina, traveled north to seek refuge among the Haudenosaunee.
- They were invited to join the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, becoming its sixth nation.
- Since that time, the Confederacy has also been known as the Six Nations.



Ongweh'onweh *(ongk-way-HON-way)*

The Haudenosaunee define themselves as the Ongweh'onweh (ongk-way-HON-way) or "real human being"

Although many cultural similarities and family connections unite the six nations, each one is also unique and has its own distinct language.

Haudenosaunee Flag



Haudenosaunee Clan System

Each of the six nations of Haudenosaunee is comprised of extended family groups called CLANS. A CLAN MOTHER heads each clan.

- In the past, a clan mother was usually the oldest woman of the clan.
- Today, clan mothers are chosen for their cultural wisdom and dedication to the Haudenosaunee people.

Clan mothers have been given the honor of their duties because of a woman who lived long ago called the Mother of Nations.

- Clans are extended families. Haudenosaunee clans are MATRILINEAL. This means they follow the line of descent of the mother. Children belong to their mother's clan.

The clan mother has an important role. Some of her responsibilities are to:

- Make all the major decisions that affect the clan.
- Assign names to people in her clan.
- Nominate the male leader of the clan. The male leader is called the HOYANEH meaning "Caretaker of the Peace"
- Help ensure that all members of her clan are fed.



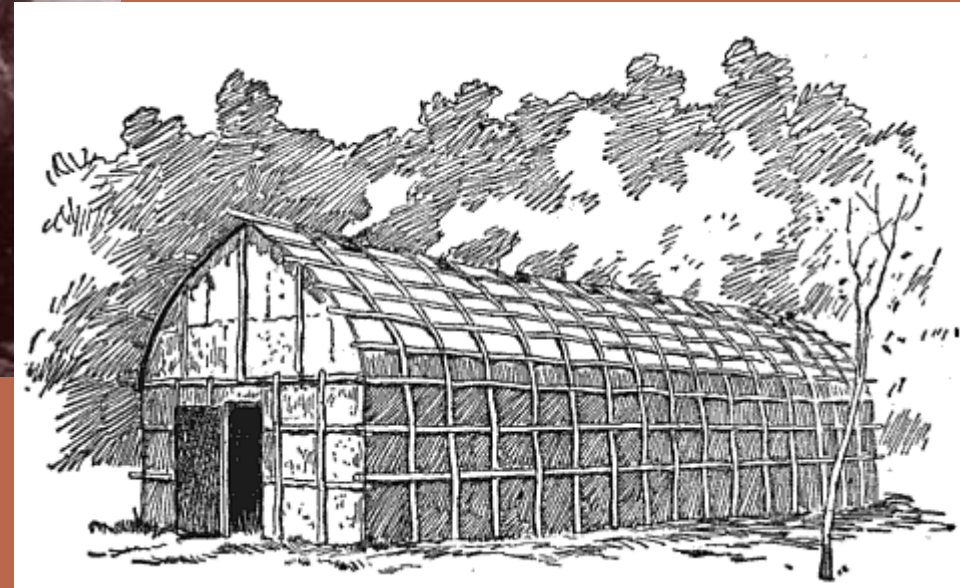


Oneida Family Portrait Ontario

The Oneida family pictured on a
Canadian reserve in 1907.

Traditional Longhouse Sketch

Longhouses were traditional homes of the Haudenosaunee. They are long, narrow, single room buildings. As many as five families would share longhouses made from timber and thatching.



Thanksgiving Address

Gano:nyok (ga-NYO-nyok)

The Haudenosaunee give thanks daily, not just once a year. They give thanks for all things, from the water and sun to the insects and animals.

The Gano:nyok serves as a reminder to appreciate and acknowledge all things. The words express thanks for fellow human beings, Mother Earth, the moon, stars, sun, water, air, winds, animals, and more.

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so. Now our minds are one.

With one mind, we turn to honor and thank all the Plant Foods we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans, and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them, too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and send them a greeting of thanks. Now our minds are one.

From the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address

Lacrosse

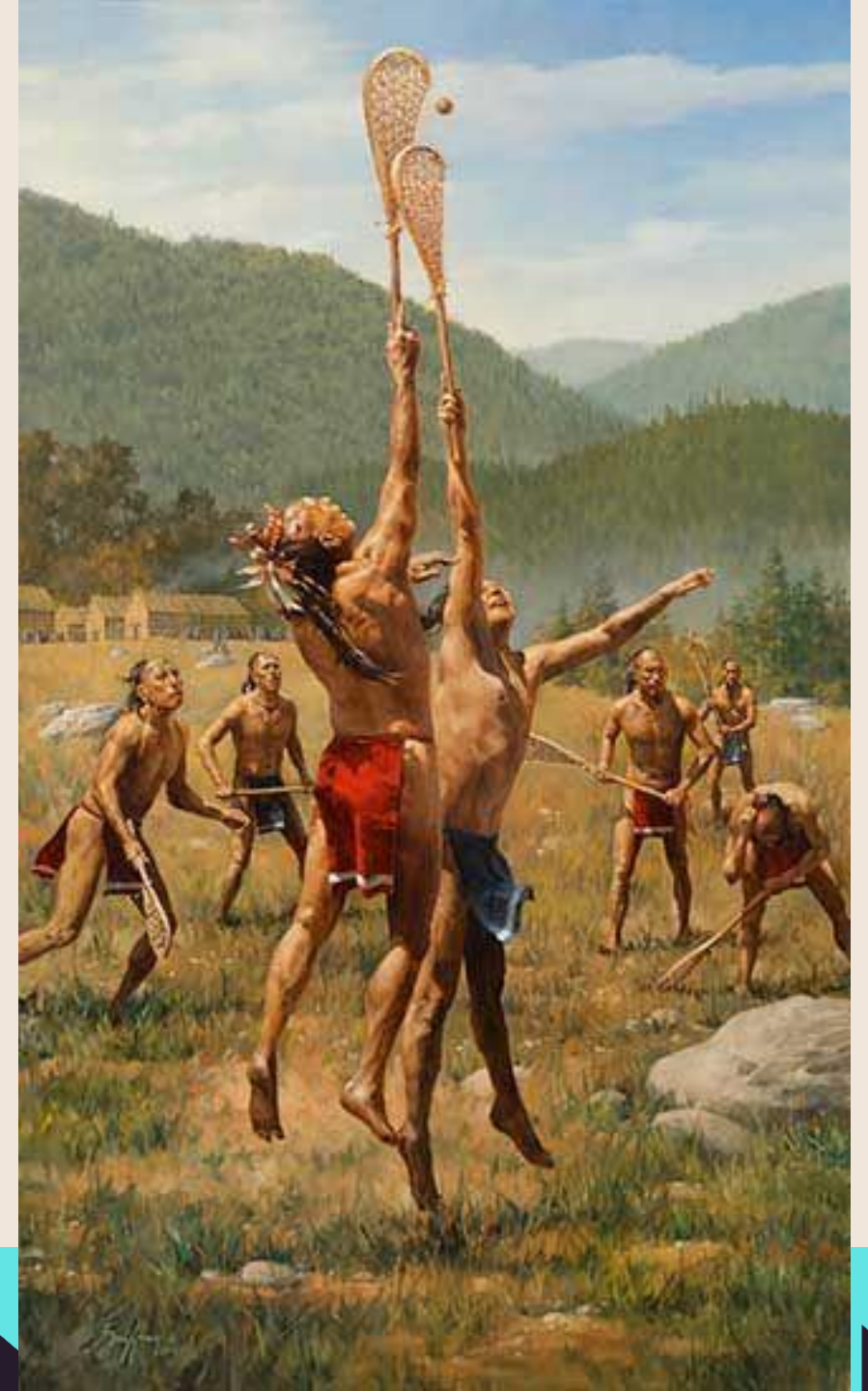
Tewaarathon

Today, lacrosse is an international team sport played competitively all over the world. This modern game originated with the Haudenosaunee.

Four hundred years ago, explorers to Haudenosaunee territory saw the game of lacrosse being played.

- The French Jesuits called the game "la crosse" because it was played with a long stick, which they called a crosse.

Among the Haudenosaunee the game is called *Tewaarathon*, which means "they bump hips."



Native American and European Timeline

Below is a brief timeline of important Native American and European interactions

The Beaver Wars	The Five-Year War	French Settlement of Erie	Seven Years' War	American Revolutionary War	The Sullivan Expedition
1650-1700	1653-1658	1753	1756-1763	1775-1783	1779-1780
War between Native American Nations over hunting and trapping territory	War between the Eriehonian and the Haudenosaunee	Building of Fort Presque-isle to prevent encroaching English forces	Struggle for global primacy between Britain and France; British forces occupy Fort Presque-isle	American forces pitted against British Loyalist; Native American nations choose sides	Cherry Valley and Wyoming Massacres were won by Haudenosaunee and British Loyalists; Gen. George Washington launched massive retaliation

Erielhonan (The Erie People)

Were a Native American people historically living on the south shore of Lake Erie.

- A Haudenosaunee group, they lived in what is now western New York, northwestern Pennsylvania, and northern Ohio before 1658

Accepting members of Huron Nation after they were decimated by the Haudenosaunee

Beginning in 1653 the Erie launched a preemptive attack on western tribes of the Haudenosaunee

- Did well in the first year of a five-year war
- In following years, their villages were burned as a lesson to those who dared oppose the Haudenosaunee



The End of the Erielhonan

Haudenosaunee warred against Erie and neighboring tribes of The Neutrals and The Tobacco People in 1654

By the mid-1650s, the Erie had become a broken tribe.

- Dispersed groups survived a few more decades before being absorbed into the Haudenosaunee, especially the westernmost Seneca nation

Descendants?

- Anthropologist Marvin T. Smith theorized that some Erie fled to Virginia, where they were known as Rechahecrian and then South Carolina, where they became known as the Westo.
- Some were said to flee to Canada.
- Members of other tribes claimed later to be descended from refugees of this defunct culture, who intermarried with other peoples. Among those are members of the Seneca people in Oklahoma and Kansas



A Mysterious People

Because the Erie were located further from the coastal areas of early European exploration, they had little direct contact with Europeans.

- Jesuit missionaries in Canada referred to them in historic records after learning more about them during the Beaver Wars
- What little is known about them has been derived from oral history of other Native American tribes, archaeology, and comparisons with other Haudenosaunee peoples



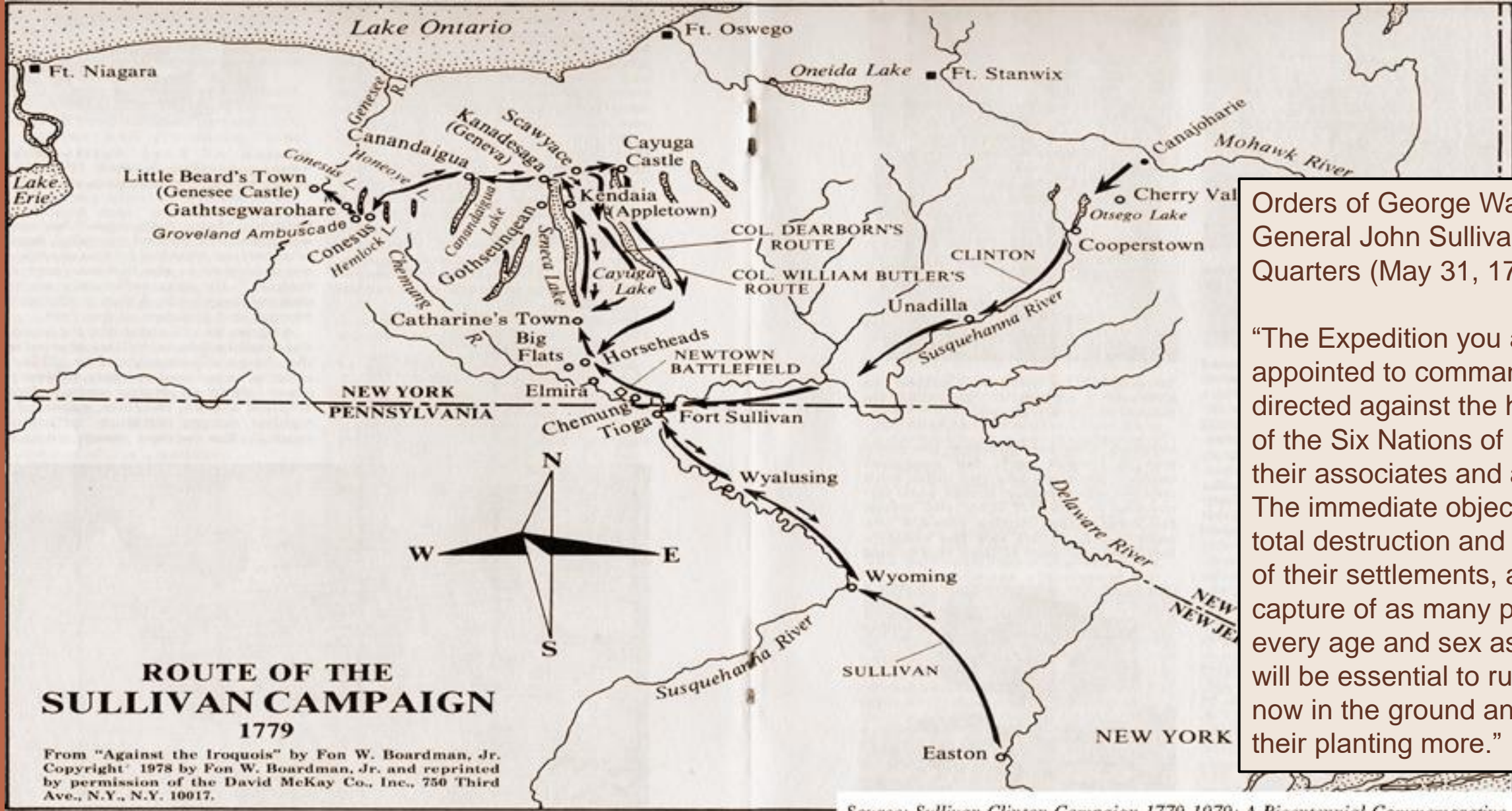
The Sullivan Expedition

An extended systematic military campaign conducted by the United States during the American Revolutionary War against Loyalists and the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee which had sided with the British.

It has been described by some historians as a genocide due to the magnitude and totality of its violence towards and destruction of the Haudenosaunee.

Destroyed more than 40 Haudenosaunee villages and stores of winter crops, breaking the power of the six nations in New York all the way to the Great Lakes.





Orders of George Washington to General John Sullivan, at Head-Quarters (May 31, 1779)

"The Expedition you are appointed to command is to be directed against the hostile tribes of the Six Nations of Indians, with their associates and adherents. The immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements, and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more."

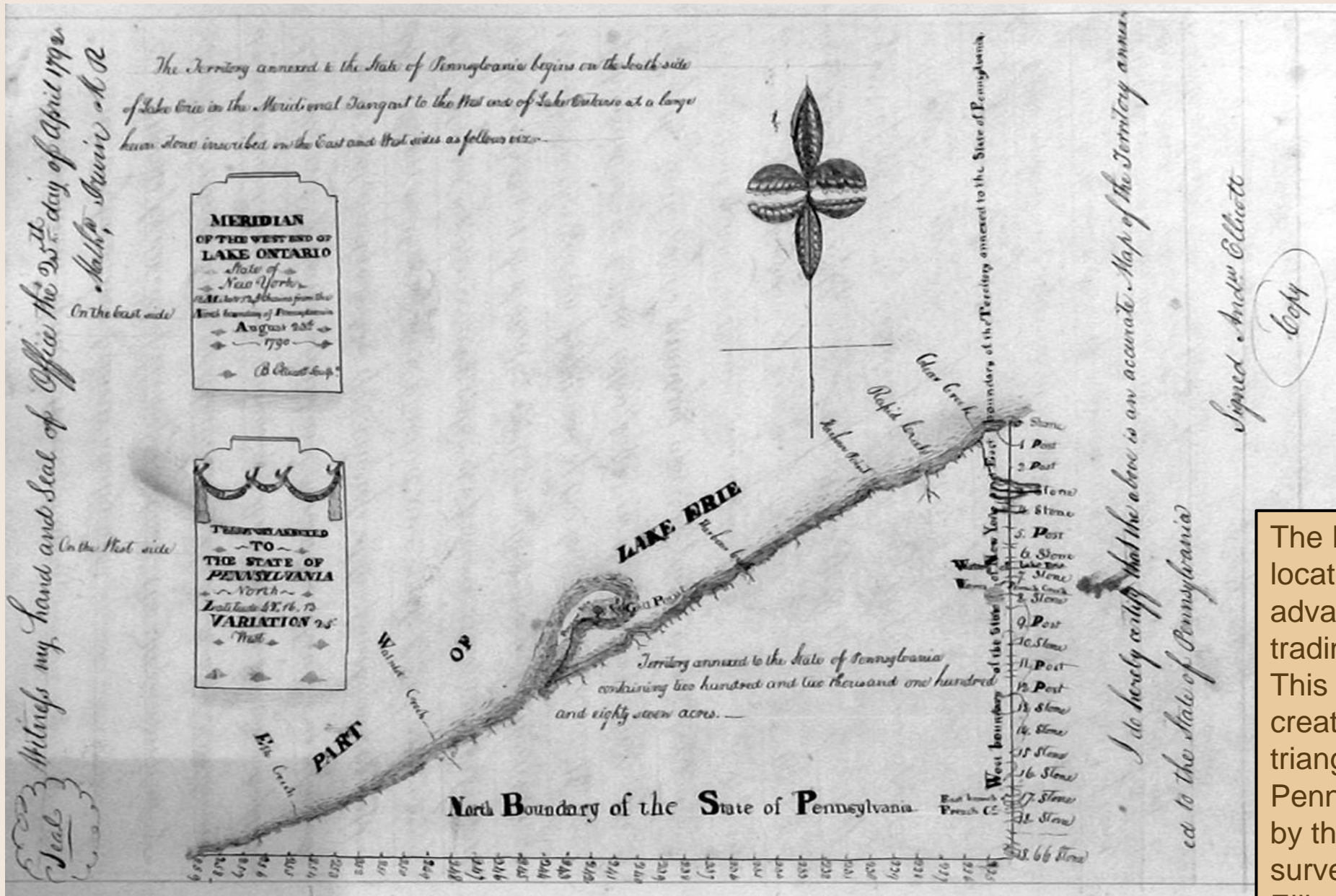
Source: Sullivan Clinton Campaign 1779-1779; A Bicentennial Commemorative. Courtesy of Chemung County Historical Society, Inc., Elmira, NY. pub. 1979.

The Erie Triangle Dispute

Present day Erie would have been situated in a disputed triangle of land that was claimed by the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts.

- The Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee released the land to Pennsylvania in January 1789 for payments of \$2,000 from Pennsylvania and \$1,200 from the federal government.
- The Seneca Nation separately settled land claims against Pennsylvania in February 1791 for the sum of \$800
- Officially became part of Pennsylvania on 3 March 1792, after Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York released their claims to the federal government
 - Sold the land to Pennsylvania for \$151,600 in Continental certificates.





The Erie Triangle is located at an advantageous trading position. This map was created after the triangle became Pennsylvanian land by the famous land surveyor Andrew Ellicott.

The Story of Cornplanter, Seneca Chief (*Gyantwahia*)

His mother was of the Seneca Nation and his father a Dutch trader

- Became a leader in the Seneca Nation

Believed in maintaining neutrality during American Revolution, but when Haudenosaunee voted to side with British Loyalists, he became a prominent War Chief

Helped win Cherry Hill and Wyoming Massacres

Gen. Washington decimated Haudenosaunee in response with the Sullivan Expedition

Became negotiator between US government and Haudenosaunee

Was awarded a land grant in Warren County near the Allegheny River for his negotiations

Abolished Quaker ways after treatment of Native people became too grotesque

Disputed sale of Erie Triangle

Buried on his land; remains and monument moved to higher ground when Kinzua Dam was built



Where are the Haudenosaunee Today?

Traditional culture changed forever by European contact

Ways of obtaining food and clothing have changed, but maintain rich ceremonial and community life

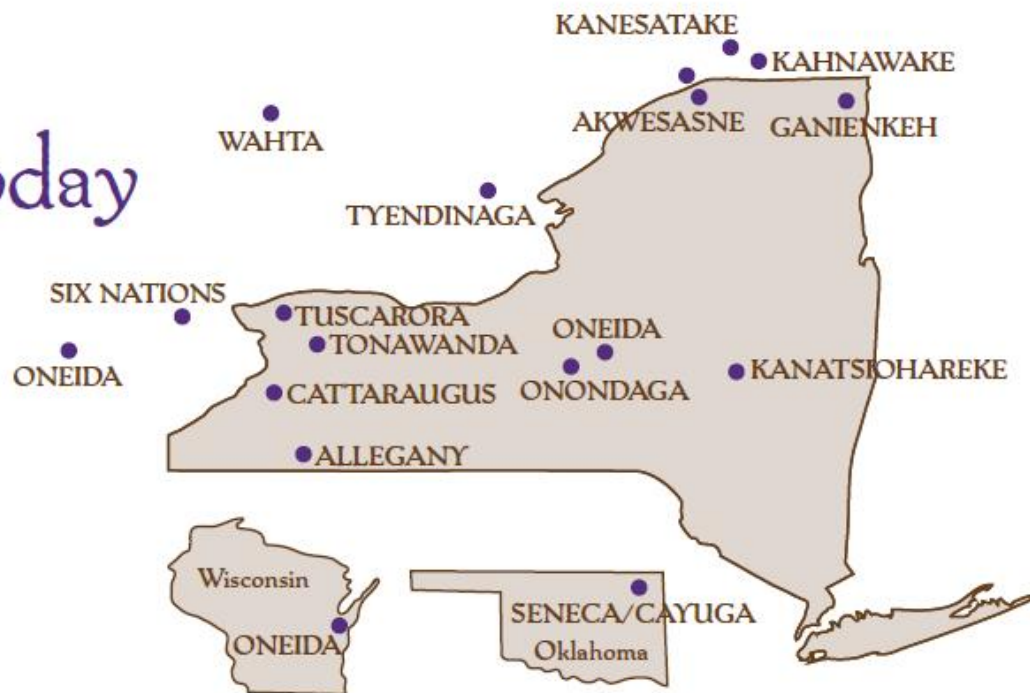
Have been able to live and thrive as a unified people on territories, reservations, and reserves in upstate New York, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Ontario, and Quebec

Native lands hold cultural and religious significance for Native people

- Approximately two-thirds of Native people in the United States lived off reservation lands in rural areas, towns, and cities



Today



Historical Cultural Sites and Artifacts



This longhouse is located at
Ganondagan State Historic Site
in Victor, New York.



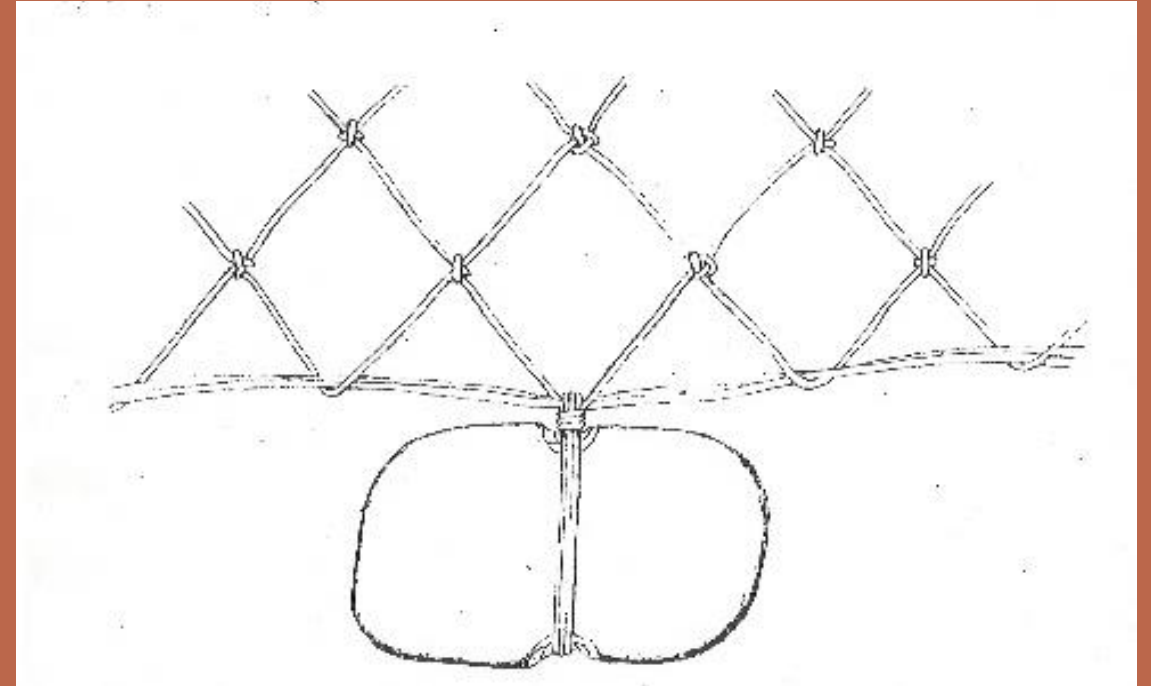
Historical Cultural Sites and Artifacts

Net sinkers or "sinker-stones" found on Presque Isle in 1936-1938 along a beach known as "Hidden Beach"

- 1/4 mile west of waterworks ponds
- Nets made from animal tissues and vegetal fibers have long since degraded
- Finding shows evidence of Erielhonan and/or Haudenosaunee located in Erie, PA and on Presque Isle

Erie, Penna. Illustrated, 1888 states:

"part of a war-like tribe of Seneca lived at the head of PIB; they were the last of the "children of the forest" remaining on the lake shore in the vicinity of Erie"



Conclusion

"We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring Teachers. Now our minds are one."

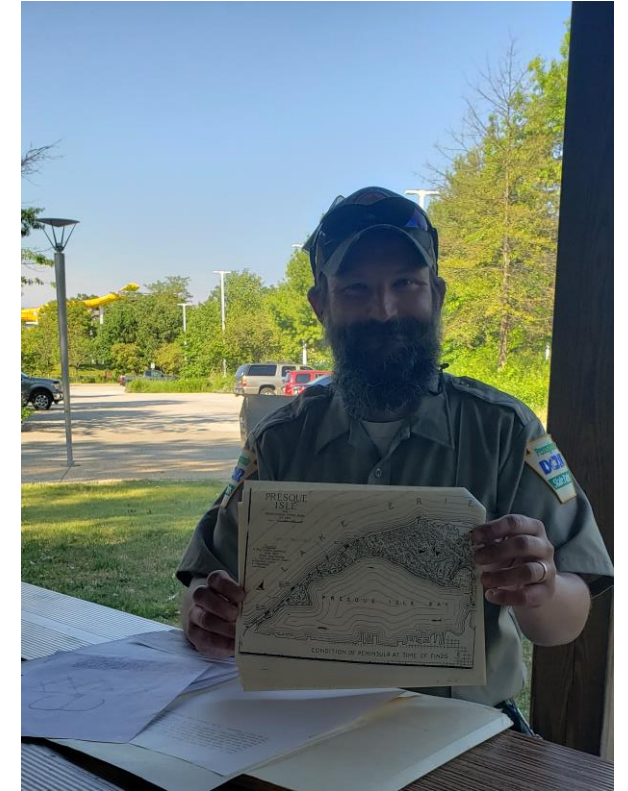
~From the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address

Researchers



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Resources:

[Haudenosaunee Guide for Educators](#)

[Cornplanter Cemetery, Warren, PA](#)

[Cornplanter, Seneca War Chief](#)

[Iroquois Longhouses](#)

[Early Localization of Native Americans in NY](#)

[The Native Erie People](#)

[Ohio History Central: Beaver Wars](#)

[Wampum Chronicles](#)

[Pre Colonial Americas: Erielhonan](#)

[Iroquois Confederacy Flag](#)

[The Iroquois Confederacy](#)

[Erie, Penna. Illustrated, 1888](#)

[DCNR Catalogs](#)

[Seven Years War](#)

[Ohio History Central: Iroquois Native Americans](#)

[Ohio History Central: Lake Erie History](#)

[Sullivan Expedition](#)

[Pennsylvania Heritage: Geography Shapes History](#)

[Erie Yesterday: Settlement of the Erie Triangle](#)

[Erie Reader: The Story of the Erie Triangle](#)

[Native Americans and the Great Lakes](#)

[Great Lakes Native Peoples](#)

[Milwaukee Public Library: Great Lakes Tribes](#)

