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Rhetorical Use of
the Great Law of Peace at Kahnawake:
A Measure of Political Legitimacy
in a Mohawk Community

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ABSTRACT

The past is often used by political figures in the present in order to achieve political goals by manipulating a feeling of identity, based upon a shared history, among their followers . The extent to which a political leader may alter narratives of the past to meet his or her own needs is governed by certain constraints and laws of structure, as Appadurai and Sahlins have argued (Appadurai 1981; Sahlins 1985). However, the credibility of a leader is affected by such factors as how well that leader fills the cultural construct of a leader's role and adheres to the community's expectations. At Kahnawake, a Mohawk community near Montreal, I found that the amount of authority granted to individual factional leaders in their interpretation of the Iroquois Confederacy's Great Law of Peace reflected the degree to which each leader behaved as a Confederacy chief or orator should, and also reflected the degree to which the leader obeyed social norms, particularly that of not advocating violence against fellow Mohawks. My findings add to the growing body of anthropological literature on the uses of the past by demonstrating in a specific case study how interpersonal relationships between leaders and a community affect the leaders' credibility and authority over the past.

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ABSTRAIT

Souvent les figures politiques du présent se servent du passé
pour atteindre des objectifs politiques. En manipulant les
sentiments d'identité et d'histoire, ils font appel à une base
d'histoire commune avec leurs constituents. Certaines structures et
contraintes portent sur la capacité des leaders de modifier les
narratifs du passé pour satisfaire leurs propres besoins (Appadurai
1981; Sahlins 1985). Cependant, la credibilité d'un leader est en
partie déterminée par sa capacité de répondre à la conception locale
de leader, et aux attentes de la communauté vis à vis ce rôle. A
Kahnawake, une communauté Mohawk près de Montréal, l'autorité
accordée aux leaders des différentes factions politiques dans
l'interprétation de La Grand Loi de la Paix de la Confédération des
Iroquois est rélative à leur capacité de jouer le rôle du "bon" chef ou
locuteur. Cette autorité est aussi accordée en fonction du respect
que le leader manifeste pour les valeurs du groupe, en particulier
celles qui découragent la violence entre les Mohawks. Les résultats
de cette recherche accompagnent d'autres études récentes en
anthropologie qui prennant comme sujet les usages du passé par les
figures politiques. La présentation d'un cas d'étude nous permet de
mieux comprendre les relations entre communauté et leader et de
voir la crédibilité et l'autorité que ce dernier possède sur le passé.

INTRODUCTION

The past often appears in the present. Sometimes tales of the past serve to promote group unity, or identity; more interestingly, the past is sometimes used to guide the future. One of the ways the past affects the future is through the rhetoric of politicians and political actors. Anthropologists have taken up the question of how this process occurs and how individuals are able to sway others through use of the past.

When anthropologists began to study the past in the present, they saw it as a structural phenomenon, entirely open to invention according to rules of cultural logic, to be exploited by cultural innovators. As Arjun Appadurai (1981) has pointed out, the past is not so malleable; every culture has its own rules about how the past may be interpreted, a set of norms which regulates the inherent debatability of the past. These rules vary from culture to culture, but the one constant is that they do exist. Without these constraints, the past would be a giant free-for-all, "infinitely susceptible to the whims of contemporary interest and the distortions of contemporary ideology" (Appadurai 1981:201).

Despite these cultural controls surrounding historical narrative, the past does have an active role in the politics of the present, with political actors appropriating bits of the past for their own interests. The relative success of a political faction partially reflects the degree to which they have adhered to the cultural rules about the past. By subverting the past to their own

interests, political actors intend to sway others to their position by virtue of appearing to embody the culmination of the events of the past or a particular moment in a culture's past, and by appealing to a shared experience, the basis for identity.

The community of Kahnawake, a reserve of approximately 6,000 Mohawks located near Montreal, illustrates this political use of the past. Certain periods of the past, especially those periods during which Kahnawake was a participant in the Iroquois Confederacy, are given emphasis in the rhetorical strategies of several different factions on the reserve. This rhetorical usage of the past is a prerequisite for a faction's political credibility. Not every faction is equally successful in promoting its own political interests, however. One can partially explain this through using Appadurai's model of cultural constraints, but one difficulty remains.

Appadurai's theoretical framework does not take into account the role of individual authority granted by the community. As Keesing has pointed out (Keesing 1987:162-64), cultural knowledge is not equally distributed among members of a society. Some individuals are regarded as experts, while others, who may nevertheless attempt to be recognized as such, are not accorded that status. Thus to fully understand the success of a particular faction one must examine whether or not the individuals of that faction are likely to be afforded the personal authority to make statements about history.

Thus the political use of the past in the present is not only governed by cultural, institutional constraints restricting political

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actors in their statements, but also by the current circumstances surrounding those actors. Those circumstances affect the actor's credibility within the community in a particular political climate. An examination of individual credibility is necessary to explain the relative effectiveness of the rhetorical use of the past as it is practiced by different individuals and factions at Kahnawake.

The credibility given to individuals and factions by the community was judged by which individuals and factions were held to be responsible for the well-being of the community. I arrived at these judgments through evaluation of The Eastern Door's reports of Kahnawake's politics and through statements made by several Mohawks, including both those who consider themselves the representatives of a particular faction and those with no stated personal interest or membership in any faction. The well-being of the community refers to both regular community maintenance such as repairing roads or providing law and order and also to the negotiation of various affairs with external governments. Therefore a faction with much credibility is not only expected to take care of people's immediate needs, but also to be capable of protecting Kahnawake's future interests. Of course, successful performance of these tasks serves to increase credibility, and in this case I regard the faction as successful in Kahnawake's political arena.

At Kahnawake, factionalism and its rhetoric are made more complex by the attention that outsiders give to Kahnawake's politics. Factionalism provides sensational news, and some Mohawks have found ready outlets for their political statements in the press. Arguably, factionalism may represent no more than

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ordinary political process distorted by the internal pressure of overcrowded conditions on the two-mile-square reserve and the external pressures brought about by the Mohawks' and the Canadian government's disagreements over sovereignty issues. I believe, however, that some precedent for Kahnawake's factionalism may be found within the Confederacy itself, so that factionalism in and of itself is nothing new. Thus the very same historical narrative that is being contested at Kahnawake is to some degree being reproduced in the factions which seek to legitimize themselves through the Great Law of Peace.

The Great Law of Peace figures prominently in the rhetoric of each faction. This law, brought to the Iroquois by Tekanawita the Peacemaker[1], orders the relationships among the five nations of the Iroquois, which includes the Mohawk. The Great Law has three essential messages: righteousness, health, and power. Each message has two parts or branches. Righteousness refers to both the actual justice practiced between men and nations, and also the desire to see justice prevail. The message of health calls for soundness of mind and body, and also the state that a human being achieves when mind and body are sound. Power refers to the authority of law and custom, backed by the necessary force to make justice prevail, and also to the power of religion to help attain all these goals (Wallace 1946:13-14).

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[1]Tooker places the founding of the Iroquois Confederacy at sometime between 1400 and 1600 A.D. (Tooker 1978a:420); as discussed in the Appendix to this thesis, Mohawks tend to be less concerned with the date of the founding, or assume it to have taken place thousands of years ago.

The Great Law of Peace contains all of the instructions as to the structure of the Confederacy[2], and details the responsibilities and duties of the chiefs. However, it is far more than a political manifesto. It is a philosophical statement of being. It is a commitment to living peaceably, without anger and hatred. Those who live by the Great Law are said to have clear minds or straight minds; those who undertake actions not sanctioned by the Great Law are said to have twisted minds or sometimes evil minds. Thus there is a strong religious or spiritual dimension to following the Great Law: "spiritualism is the highest form of political consciousness," according to many Iroquois (*Akwesasne Notes* 1977:3).

Since the 1970s, Iroquois writers and speakers have stressed the potential of the Great Law of Peace to unite other groups, from building a pan-Indian Confederacy to bringing together the world super powers through the process of negotiation and compromise. The Great Law has the power to bring peace to those who study it. The greatness of the Great Law lies in its rationality; the Great Law

> is the very idea of the Hodenosaunee [Iroquois Confederacy]: all human beings possess the power of rational thought; all human beings can think; all human beings have the same kinds of needs; all human beings want what is good for society; all human beings want Peace ... Out of that idea will come the power ... that will make the people of the Five Nations among the most influential thinkers in the history of human thought ... The basic fundamental truth contained in that idea is that so long as we believe that everybody in the world has the power to think rationally, we can negotiate with them to a position of Peace (John Mohawk, Seneca historian, quoted in Sioui 1992:47-48).

The concrete benefit of the Great Law is that it provides the moral and legal blueprint for the Iroquois Confederacy. The Great Law is a great source of pride for Mohawks and other Iroquois; they

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[2]Following current Iroquois usage, I use the term "Confederacy" rather than "League."

refer to it as the world's first democracy, and sometimes the world's only true democracy. There is a quite conscious comparison of Iroquois at the time of contact with Europeans. The Iroquois were democratic, peace-loving, morally strong and existing in a rational yet spiritual balance with nature, while the Europeans were ruled by tyrants, constantly warring with one another, were morally bankrupt and out of balance with nature.

The Confederacy originally consisted of five nations: the Onondaga, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, and Mohawk. The grand meetings of the Confederacy consisted of a council made up of the chiefs of the component tribes, for a total of fifty chiefs (Tooker 1978a:424). The selection of these chiefs was based on a matrilineal clan system, which predates the Confederacy but was incorporated into its structure(Ibid.:426). At the death or replacement of a chief, the clan mother of that chiefly position's clan consulted with the other women of her clan (within her own village) to choose the man who would become chief and rename him with the name associated with the empty position. The system was flexible enough that if no suitable man could be found within her own clan, the position could be 'loaned' to another clan; no position was ever left unfilled. If a man proved unsatisfactory as a chief, the clan mother could take away his name, or 'dehorn' him, a reference to the deer antlers that symbolized a chief's position (Ibid.:426). The Iroquois are often cited in popular literature as having been a true matriarchy (see Landsman 1992 for an excellent discussion of feminist appropriation of images of Iroquois women), but Mohawk themselves are aware of the limited nature of the clan mothers' power (see Beauvais

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1985:110 for a discussion of this topic; I have heard statements to the same effect from other Mohawks).

Chiefs are chosen for their ability to reach compromise and unanimity. Ideally, a chief is mild and dignified, and morally upright. He should be a careful judge, and be capable of withstanding criticism-- essentially, he should display the characteristics expected of any adult, but more strongly (Ricciardelli 1961:78-79). The prestige of the chief lies in the peoples' acceptance of his authority, rather than in the prestige of the position itself. The clan mother continually evaluates the chief, according to these factors (Ibid.:84). This picture of a chief is the ideal for a Mohawk chief at Kahnawake today.

While the chief is not expected to have strong opinions on issues, those who do hold strong opinions are called orators, or sometimes Pine Tree or merit chiefs (Tooker 1978a:429). The orator is a speechmaker, well-known for his or occasionally her wisdom and eloquence. The orator seeks to influence the will of the people, which in turn influences the will of the chiefs (if the chiefs want to keep their positions). The orator must be confident yet restrained, wise, persuasive, and community-oriented. The orator must be able to speak his mind without jeopardizing interpersonal relationships or appearing to antagonize unnecessarily other community members. This is difficult, and not all would-be orators are successful. The orator generally speaks on secular subjects, often addressing council meetings (Ricciardelli 1961:86-90). I see the orators as having served the following functions: one, pursuing their own interests, possibly for prestige or profit; two, speaking on the

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behalf of a chief who may not speak out himself without jeopardizing his position[3]; and three, bringing social concerns out into an arena where they will receive discussion and debate.

Today, Kahnawake, located approximately ten miles south of Montreal, contains approximately six thousand people on five thousand hectares of land. The reserve is administered by a Mohawk Council of one chief and eleven councilors, all elected. The reserve has its own schools, with a curriculum that is largely controlled by the Mohawks (*Quebec Indian Community Guide* 1990:84). There are Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals, and traditional Longhouse followers, divided into two separate Longhouses.

The research for this thesis was begun in August 1993, and cannot really be said to have ended, due to the close proximity of Kahnawake to Montreal. I conducted formal interviews with six Mohawks from various factions[4], and have had continuing casual contact with Mohawks who are not outspoken proponents of any particular faction. Kahnawake's award-winning community newspaper, *The Eastern Door*, provided invaluable insights into the

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[3]Wallace (1946:4) has said that Tekanawita, whose name means "double row of teeth" and is thus assumed to have had a speech impediment, appointed Haionwatha to do much of his speaking for him. In my opinion, this may represent instead a hereditary chief/Pine Tree chief kind of relationship.

[4]I did not tape interviews, and generally took few notes during the interview itself. While this may seem unorthodox, it was my feeling that it would be in the best interests of data collection to avoid some stereotypes about anthropologists. I believe that I was correct in this feeling, both on the basis of the interview experience and the accounts of other ethnographers who have recently worked with Mohawks (Katzer 1972: 76, note 12; Landsman 1988: 6). While I cannot claim to remember everything that was said during these interviews, the average duration of which was two hours, I believe that the more conversational tone of the interviews aided in eliciting honest, spontaneous responses.

community's politics. My research also included many hours spent at Kahnawake's Kanien'keha:ka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center, poring over pamphlets, booklets, and articles written by Mohawks from Kahnawake and Akwesasne. It should be made clear that I did not engage in any kind of participant observation fieldwork, nor did I live at the reserve for any period of time. My involvement with and impact on reserve life was negligible. Observations about Mohawks politics are based on the research described above; my observations should not be taken as sweeping generalizations of what "all Mohawks think."

It should be noted that *Seven Generations*, the textbook used in the Kahnawake Survival School and frequently cited by myself as representative of Mohawk views, was officially written by a non-Mohawk anthropologist, David Blanchard. However, many Mohawks had significant input into its writing, and it has been used since 1980 at the Survival School to educate Mohawk youth about their culture. Thus, I consider it a 'Mohawk' text due to its acceptance by the community and the fact that many students who used it are now adults in the community.

Throughout this thesis, where pieces of information are not documented, they were obtained by me in interviews or through casual conversation with Kahnawakehró:non. I have generally refrained from using individual Mohawks' names to respect their privacy and avoid making my own contribution to the tensions between factions (obviously in the case of published materials this was not necessary), but I suspect that any well-informed reader

will have no difficulty in guessing who may have said what about whom.

The first chapter of this thesis deals with the anthropological literature on Kahnawake, a literature that is set mostly in theoretical studies of acculturation and assimilation (Voget 1951; Katzer 1972) and examinations of Mohawk high steelworkers (Blanchard 1983; Katzer 1988; Freilich 1958). These studies all share a focus on the interactions between Mohawks and non-Mohawk society; however, Blanchard's and Frielich's steelwork studies also argue that the new occupation of steelworker reflects a continuity with the former occupations of Mohawk men, in that steelwork requires a residency pattern much like that of the lumberman, voyageur, or warrior. Voget's and Katzer's assimilation studies similarly concluded that while Kahnawake extensively participated in non-Mohawk society, displaying a high degree of acculturation, the Mohawk were by no means assimilated into non-Mohawk society. Thus, these studies also share an affirmation of particularly Mohawk features of Kahnawake society, and demonstrate Mohawk innovation in the incorporation and adaptation of non-Mohawk features into Kahnawake.

The second chapter details the recent history of Kahnawake, with events selected by Mohawks both in interviews and in publications as being the most formative events of the twentieth century for Kahnawake. This provides a context for Kahnawake's political issues and the expectations placed upon leaders today. The general theme of these events is that they have all tested the bounds

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of Mohawk sovereignty, with mixed results. Additionally, many of these events became cause for the factional division which exists today.

Chapter Three elucidates the theoretical framework of this study. After Sahlins (1985) and Hastrup (1990), I see history as inextricably linked to a sense of identity or ethnicity. If identity is accepted as a basis for behavior (Keesing 1987), then it follows that an individual who wishes to influence group behavior may do so by asserting historical narratives which affect identity. While the construction of the narrative is constrained by certain cultural rules (Appadurai 1981), its influence may be particularly effective if the narrator can portray a unified identity in "an otherwise fragmented field of meaning and power" (White 1991:240). At Kahnawake, this fragmentation occurs in the form of factionalism, groups of individual Mohawks competing for authority and credibility within the reserve. Each faction seeks to create a unified identity through its own reading of the Great Law of Peace, readings which tend to deny the authority of other factions. In spite of this apparently disruptive state of affairs, I argue that factionalism at Kahnawake is a part of normal political process and is in fact an adaptation of the Confederacy structure the band council system.

Chapter Four discusses the individual factions and their rhetorical strategies in attempting to gain influence and authority in the community as the direct heirs of the Confederacy's legacy. Here I evaluate the relative success of each faction in terms of the authority granted to each by the community (which is indicated by

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the expectations that the community places upon each faction) and explain why some factions are more successful than others.

In my Conclusion, I demonstrate that my research at Kahnawake adds to the theories of Appadurai, Sahlins and Keesing the dimension of individual and community interactions. An individual may tell a historical narrative that fits the cultural constraints of how a historical narrative may be told, and may be able to relate current events to that narrative in an attempt to guide the course of events. Yet if that individual does not fulfill the community's expectations of a leader, then the community will deny him or her the authority to have an effect upon events as they unfold. The simple telling of an identity-effecting history does not guarantee the participation of the audience; the individual must demonstrate to the audience that he or she can behave as he or she speaks.

Notes on terminology:

Kahnawake means 'by the rapids'; before the construction of the Saint Lawrence Seaway, it was next to the Lachine Rapids. Prior to 1984-85, Kahnawake was known as Caughnawaga, a name which is still used in some anthropological literature (for example, Katzer 1988); unless making a direct quotation, I refer to "Kahnawake" throughout. Kahnawakehró:non refers to the inhabitants of Kahnawake, and I have used this term where more than one group of Mohawk are under discussion to avoid confusion. Kanien'keha:ka, 'people of the land of flint,' is the Mohawk name for themselves, and

it includes all Mohawk, from Kahnawake to Six Nations. My spelling
follows that of *The Eastern Door.*

CHAPTER ONE
WARRIORS IN THE SKY:
ANTHROPOLOGY AND KAHNAWAKE

Academic considerations of Kahnawake were essentially non-existent until the mid-twentieth century. Iroquois ethnography, a field long separate from the mainstream of anthropology, was in a "salvage ethnography" phase from the years of 1880 to 1940 (Voget 1984:343), and it may have appeared to ethnographers seeking to preserve Iroquois knowledge and practices before they were lost that a reserve which had been Catholic for well over two centuries in the hands of the Jesuits may not have had anything of "real Iroquois culture" left to salvage. Even Fenton and Tooker's relatively recent chapter on the Mohawk in *The Handbook of North American Indians* (Fenton and Tooker 1978) pays only brief attention to Kahnawake from the time of 1762 to 1924, when the community became "anthropological" again with the reintroduction of the Longhouse religion; even then Kahnawake merits scant mention. In this chapter I will review what anthropological literature there is about Kahnawake.

Most studies of Kahnawake are about issues of acculturation and assimilation. Since Voget's 1951 study of acculturation at Kahnawake, anthropologists largely focused on the interactions between Mohawks and the non-Iroquois societies that surround them. Voget looked at Kahnawake's sociocultural landscape to identify groups with differing degrees of acculturation. He found three large groupings: a native-modified group, which were nativistic in their

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orientation but supported modifications to native institutions to make them "up to date"; a Euroamerican-modified group, which thought of itself as being Indian and maintained contact with the native-modified group, but were essentially integrated into the dominant Euroamerican society; and a Euroamerican-marginal group, which fully identified with the dominant society and culture (Voget 1951:221-222). Voget limited his attention to the first group, who were Longhouse adherents[5] and supporters of Mohawk autonomy based on the traditional organization of the Confederacy. These Mohawks, like traditionalists today, did not participate in Mohawk Council elections because to do so is to admit a sovereignty other than that of the Mohawk Nation on Kahnawake (Voget 1951:222-224). Voget also observed that political and religious institutions were inextricably linked for the followers of Handsome Lake, a Seneca prophet of the 1800s[6], but the members of the native-modified group who were politically active in opposing the Catholic Church's role in Kahnawake's politics did not officially recognize the integration of the Handsome Lake Code and traditional government (Ibid.:228).

Voget's final conclusion about Kahnawake's growing nativistic tendencies was that the basic values of the community determined the type of social structure by which the community could live. The basic values were such that Euroamerican political institutions could not be incorporated. The imposition of the original Indian Act in 1890 disrupted the system of hereditary chiefs, and "within a

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[5]which, at the time, meant followers of Handsome Lake.
[6]See Wallace 1969 for a detailed treatment of the Handsome Lake movement.

generation" nativistic tendencies emerged in reaction. These tendencies grew into a movement as Mohawks felt their social and cultural identity increasingly threatened by governmental and religious programs. The movement culminated in the establishment of political and religious organizations separate from the Mohawk Council and the Catholic Church (Voget 1951:230).

About twenty years later, Katzer studied the rate of assimilation at Kahnawake (Katzer 1972). His main objective was to determine the rate at which individuals originating from Kahnawake were breaking ties with it and to isolate some of the factors that might explain this phenomenon (Katzer 1972:6). According to Katzer, Kahnawake had been in a dependence relationship with the larger Canadian society for more than two centuries. In this type of relationship, all conflicts are controlled by the dominant group. However, some members of the subordinate group may gain access to status in the dominant group, and both groups maintain their population levels within ranges that assure the continuance of the relationship (Ibid.:19). Katzer encountered difficulties in defining group membership at Kahnawake, where the legal requirements for membership do not necessarily correspond with a socially meaningful definition. Katzer based his criterion for active group membership on the maintenance of contact with the native community (Ibid.:20-21).

Katzer found that although Kahnawake may have appeared highly assimilated, the community was not about to disappear into the Canadian-American social system. He identified four important ideological tenets held by the majority of the community which

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would prevent any disappearance. The first is that the perpetuation of the community as a social group was a highly desirable end. The second tenet was that the preservation of the community's land base is a necessary condition for the perpetuation of the community. The third was that outsiders, including government officials, are seen as constantly looking for ways to gain control over the community's land resources. The final tenet was that elected Mohawk Council officers are potential collaborators with the enemies of the community either through malice or ignorance. These propositions were often mentioned and affirmed in everyday discourse, and served as routine questions with which to test community loyalty (Katzer 1972:74-75)[7].

Katzer concluded that the strength of the community's beliefs would decline, and observed this happening in the increased rate of assimilation of individuals (Ibid:244). However, he strongly cautioned against equating the assimilation of individuals with the assimilation of the entire community. Katzer felt that the community as a whole has never entered an assimilation phase, and did not find it likely that Kahnawake ever would (Ibid.:250).

While Katzer and Voget attempted studies of the entire community, others have focused on the occupation of steel worker among Mohawk men, from the late 1800s to the current time of their publications. As early as 1836, Mohawks worked on railroad bridges, and this experience enabled them to find employment with the Grand Trunk System and Canadian Railways, building railroad bridges from

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[7]These are all sentiments which I heard another twenty years later, although the Band Council is somewhat less suspect today.

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Ottawa to Quebec City (Blanchard 1983:43-44). Their first experience with high steel occurred in the late 1850s and early 1860s, with the construction of the Victoria Bridge. Mohawks were contracted to supply stone for the piers of the bridge from a quarry located at Kahnawake, and also contracted as river pilots to deliver the stone and timbers from the Ottawa River Valley to the bridge site (Blanchard 1983:42-43; Beauvais 1985:50). The river pilots, while waiting for their boats to be unloaded, became curious about the bridge and explored it, climbing up into the beams and girders. Their apparent lack of fear impressed the bridge's engineer, who hired a crew of Mohawks (Beauvais 1985:50-57; Blanchard 1983:44). This began the involvement of Mohawk men in high steel, an involvement which was further cemented when in 1886 the Canadian Pacific railway hired Mohawks to work on a railway bridge which had its southern terminus in Kahnawake (Blanchard 1983:45).

The first anthropological study of ironwork was done by Morris Freilich (1958). Freilich hypothesized that specific cultural factors made it "necessary" for Mohawk men to work in structural steel, and that furthermore once they had begun this work, specific cultural factors kept them in this occupation (Ibid.:31). Essentially, Freilich argued that steel work allowed Mohawks to duplicate as closely as possible their pre-reservation social structure. Steel work, with its glorious aura of danger, gave Mohawk men a means to regain the status of warrior, and continue a pattern of spending long periods of time away from the reserve, while the women managed the village (Ibid.:477-478). The foreman or pusher is like a war chief who leads a party or work gang of younger Mohawks to mutual prestige

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and benefit (Ibid.:479). As the warriors once did, they all come home with the status of "conquering hero[es]," which they require in order to feel like real men (Ibid.:475). Thus steel work was 'a new variation of a culturally accepted manner of achieving prestige, to wit, through acts of daring" (Ibid.:481).

Blanchard, in his 1983 consideration of steel work, took this argument farther, and with more sophistication, by stating that steel work was viewed by Mohawks, male and female, as part of the system of symbols and meanings that created a distinct Mohawk self-consciousness among Mohawk men. Unlike Freilich, Blanchard did not argue that the Mohawk men were essentially warriors, born to fight and be hailed as heroes. Blanchard found steel work to have three symbolic aspects: it served as a rite of passage in which Mohawk boys became men; it helped to interpret and express a sense of tradition, in that Mohawk men were following a historical tradition of traveling widely; and steel work functioned as a ritual which defined sex roles between men and women, who possess different kinds of internal power which should be kept separate during individuals' years of fertility and sexual potency (Blanchard 1983:52-57). Blanchard found the most role continuity in this relationship between men and women, and noted that "the preference of Mohawk men to work away from home tells us as much about Mohawk women as it does about the men" (Ibid.:59). While the men have retained a traditional pattern of traveling widely to provide subsistence for their families, the women have remained in control of the community and in control of much of its decision-making.

A cautionary note about reading too much into steel work has been sounded by Katzer (1988). He allowed that some evidence supports Freilich's interpretation of men's motivation for engaging in steel work, but called attention to the pragmatic factors that influenced Kahnawake's men: the choice of steel work as an occupation was a byproduct of the tendency of Mohawks to pursue the most economically rewarding work they could find (Ibid.:39). When the Canadian Pacific Railways bridge extending from Lachine to Kahnawake was planned in 1885, Kahnawake agreed to permit construction of one end of the bridge on the reserve on the condition that the builder, the Dominion Bridge Company, hire as many Mohawks as possible. The Company initially hired Mohawks as common laborers, but ended up training several crews for the more demanding steel work (Ibid.:41). Unemployment on the reserve was high at this time, and learning a skilled trade was seen as a way to steady income. The United States, with its turn of the century building boom, beckoned with the promise of regular work and far more jobs than were available in Canada, particularly after the steel workers expanded their expertise to skyscrapers as well as bridges (Ibid.:42-43). Additionally, the steel workers founded Mohawk communities in the cities where they worked, often bringing their families down to live with them, and this eased the separation from the reserve. One section of Brooklyn was even known as "downtown Caughnawaga" (Ibid.:45). All these factors made it possible to explain the popularity of steel work without invoking Freilich's culture continuity thesis (Ibid.:50). Katzer concluded that

> this [steel work] is not a cultural continuity that derives from an ideological commitment to an ancient way of life; it is an adaptation to the current distribution of work that would disappear if equally well-paid work became available locally (Katzer 1988:51-52).

In a way, these arguments about steel work have some bearing upon my argument that chiefly roles which originated in the Confederacy structure are operating in factionalism today at Kahnawake. Like Freilich and Blanchard, I feel that the actions of a particular segment of the community, the factional leaders, fulfill older cultural patterns. However, the factional leaders' actions and rhetoric reflect current needs and pressures in Kahnawake, and so there is innovative incorporation of the Mohawk Council system and other factions into the expectations that the Mohawk have of their chiefs. The following historical sketch of twentieth century events at Kahnawake will illustrate the current situation in which factional leaders must function.

CHAPTER TWO
KAHNAWAKE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY:
REBUILDING THE CONFEDERACY

In this chapter, I will provide a summary of events which occurred primarily during the twentieth century and are considered highly important by the Mohawk today. These events illustrate the rise of both traditionalism and factionalism at Kahnawake, and show the increasing importance of the Great Law of Peace in factional discourse. This will provide the immediate background to understand the current situation at Kahnawake, although of course the more distant past, particularly the events surrounding the founding of the Confederacy and those that provide a basis for Mohawk territorial claims, are also very important (see Appendix for a summary and discussion of the Confederacy and Kahnawake prior to the twentieth century).

During the period from 1762, when the new English governor of Montreal declared Mohawk lands to be retained by the Crown for the use of Mohawks [8], to the 1920s, Kahnawakehró:non farmed, learned trades, and practiced Catholicism. Beginning in the eighteenth century, Mohawks worked as raftsmen and lumberjacks, even traveling on an expedition up the Nile as expert canoeists (Jackson 1885), and created crafts for sale, particularly basketry and beadwork (Fenton and Tooker 1978:478; Beauvais 1985:5,136). Mohawks, along with other Iroquois, also became involved in the

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[8] This is known as Gage's Judgment, which was later slightly modified to return some land to the Jesuits.

entertainment industry, beginning with participation in the Buffalo Bill Cody Wild West Show in 1883, and continuing to the present (Beauvais 1985:136).

In the 1860s, with the construction of the Victoria Tubular Bridge, the first bridge to join Montreal to the south shore of the Saint Lawrence River, the Kahnawake Mohawk were introduced to the high steel work for which they have become legendary. Anthropologists and historians have written about high steel work (see Chapter One); often the work is compared to the role of a warrior in earlier days, in that the men leave the reserve for periods of time, engage in dangerous work, and return home with the rewards. Like Ciborski, I found this interpretation of steel work's popularity to be affirmed by Mohawks when the topic came up (Ciborski 1990:49).

Perhaps appropriately, it was ironwork that brought the Confederacy back to Kahnawake. Most Kanien'keha:ka went to New York City, Detroit, and Buffalo to find steel work, but by the 1920s United States immigration authorities were cracking down on these "Canadian" workers. In 1926, the Department of Immigration arrested a Mohawk man, Paul K. Diabo, to try as a test case against the Mohawk[9]. The first court case went against the Department of Immigration, as Diabo was successfully able to argue on the basis of the Jay Treaty of 1794 between the United States and Great Britain and on the basis of the Treaty of Ghent, also between the United States and Britain, that he was a citizen of the Mohawk Nation, a

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[9]Elsewhere, Blanchard has stated that Paul Diabo was chosen by a group of Mohawks to be a test case (Blanchard 1983: 49).

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country within a country, and that immigration laws directed at Canadians did not apply to Mohawks. The case was appealed to a higher court, and again the ruling was in favor of the Mohawk (Blanchard 1980:406-411).

The Diabo case attracted the attention of the entire Confederacy, since Diabo's arguments applied equally to its member nations north of the Canadian border. Support came from other Iroquois communities, and old ties were built back up. Within Kahnawake, Catholics and the growing number of Protestants put aside their religious differences, and worked together to build a Longhouse to host a meeting of the Iroquois Grand Council[10], its first meeting ever in Kahnawake. That meeting was followed by meetings of a Mohawk Nation Council, and Kahnawake's reintegration into the Confederacy was well underway (Blanchard 1980:412-416; Alfred 1992d:10).

Simultaneously, some Kahnawakehró:non began to practice the Longhouse religion as introduced by other members of the Confederacy (Fenton and Tooker 1978:478), which implied following the Handsome Lake Code. Handsome Lake was a prophet among the Seneca in the first years of the nineteenth century. He had been an alcoholic, but, while in a coma, experienced visions he believed to be from God, telling him how to save the Iroquois from certain destruction by alcohol and bad living. Handsome Lake himself died in 1815, but his disciples codified his teachings into their present form, combining them with other Iroquois ceremonies. The emphasis

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[10]The only other building large enough on the reserve was the Catholic church hall, permission for the use of which was denied by the Jesuit priest.

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was on four main points: stop drinking; no witchcraft; no love potions; and no abortion- or sterility- inducing medicines[11].

Voget reported that Kahnawake's Longhouse followed the Handsome Lake Code in 1951 (Voget 1951:226), but today the Longhouse religion at Kahnawake most decidedly does not follow the Handsome Lake Code, and many traditionalists are openly antagonistic towards the code. Based on information given to me by Mohawks, it seems reasonable that the growing numbers of adherents at Kahnawake, who were leaving Christianity, were sensitive to the Quaker influences that they perceived in the Handsome Lake Code[12]. In fact, considerable hostility, which is only now beginning to dissipate, was felt towards Handsome Lake's Code and its followers, and Kahnawakehró:non began following their own version of the Longhouse religion, one more strictly based on the Great Law of Peace and Iroquois ceremonial complexes. Given the increasing pressure that Kahnawake has experienced from the Canadian government to conform to Canada's political expectations, a rejection of perceived white influence in any realm is not that surprising.

This was and continues to be problematic for Kahnawake's relationships with other members of the Confederacy, because in most other Iroquois communities, there is a strong relationship between the Handsome Lake Code and the Confederacy. Usually, participants in the Confederacy are also followers of the Handsome

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[11]For a detailed account of the Handsome Lake movement, see Wallace 1969.
[12]It is also possible that their Catholic background made them suspicious of the Quakers, but by that time Methodist missionaries had been present on the reserve for several years, so the Mohawk had been exposed to more than one sect of Christianity.

Lake Code. In other Iroquois communities, the Code is seen as necessary to uphold the Confederacy; at Kahnawake, the Handsome Lake Code was seen as destructive of the Confederacy because of its Christian influence. It is only recently that Kahnawake has begun to examine its reaction to the Handsome Lake Code, and may slowly swing to a more moderate position on it.

Ciborski (1990:195) has argued that traditionalism at Akwesasne, Kahnawake's 'sister' community, was a form of "substantive resistance" to a series of encroachments on Akwesasne's land and resources and was also affected by paternalistic, unpredictable federal agencies on either side of its borders. From this viewpoint, the continued growth of traditionalism at Kahnawake could be predicted by the events which beset the reserve after the 1920s.

In 1946, the Indian Act came under review by a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons. The Indian Act, which had been instituted in various forms since the middle of the nineteenth century, dictated that all Indians must have an elective Mohawk Council system, among other restrictions. Traditionalists, who had grown into one of the two dominant factions on the reserve, saw this review as an opportunity to rid themselves of the elective system and bring the Canadian government to recognize the hereditary system as the legitimate government of Kahnawake (Alfred 1992d:10). The Kahnawake Mohawk Council had dissolved itself in 1942, and had joined with the Longhouse as local administrators, while the Longhouse governed the affairs of the Mohawk Nation at Kahnawake. The Mohawk Council and the Longhouse

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submitted a joint statement to the Review Committee, which stated their dissatisfaction with the Indian Act and Canada's interference in their internal affairs (Blanchard 1980: 433). Although traditional government was technically possible under the then-current version of the Indian Act, the other dominant faction on the reserve, who called themselves the "Intelligent Party," did not desire any kind of return to traditional government; they were Mohawks who saw themselves as more progressive, and were essentially assimilationist (Alfred 1992d:10). Both groups were heard by the Review Committee, and not surprisingly, the Review Committee recommended that the Indian Act be kept in place, maintaining the Indian Act's status quo, and incorporated many of the Intelligent Party's suggestions for Kahnawake (Ibid.).[13] This time period was characterized by Voget as one of "political dissensions of a high intensity" (Voget 1951:221).

Although the traditionalists appeared to have been defeated, they grew stronger in the 1950s after the St. Lawrence Seaway land expropriation. The St. Lawrence Seaway project was a joint venture undertaken by the governments of Canada and the United States to make the St. Lawrence River thoroughly navigable by large ships. The Privy Council of Canada passed an order in 1955 which permitted the expropriation of 1250 acres of Kahnawake's land. Mohawk opinions about the expropriation were divided at that time. While the traditionalists were opposed to any land loss, other

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[13]It is a measure of the traditionalists' ultimate success that by 1980, the faction which Alfred called the second of the two dominant factions on the reserve had become "a small group [which] did not represent the people of Kahnawake" in the Survival School textbook (Blanchard 1980:444).

Mohawk were willing to sell some of the reserve. The Mohawk Council, no longer so closely allied with the Longhouse after the Indian Act Review, protested the expropriation but also sought to bargain for monetary compensation from Canada (Blanchard 1980:451-52).

Ultimately, the 1250 acres were plowed under for the Seaway, including 900 acres of prime farmland, many homes, and an important community meeting place (*This is Indian Land* 1981:9). The Seaway Authority originally set compensation at three thousand dollars, but this was increased to one and a half million dollars in 1973, after years of bitter disputes. Half of the final compensation went towards the cost of landscaping the new canal (Morantz 1992:105). An effect of this long settlement process meant that the disputes between those who had advocated selling the land and those who had not remained fresh.

The Seaway today is a highly visible reminder of a painful episode for Kahnawake. The consensus in the community today is that even though some Mohawks were in favor of selling land, all felt the impact of the loss of land and the violation of the "sanctity" of the community once the Seaway had become fact. An elder recently stated,

> The river was part of our life. It changed and we changed, but it was
> always there. When we let the Seaway get put in, we let them take away
> part of our life(*This is Indian Land* 1981:9)

Kahnawake, 'by the rapids,' was no longer by the rapids (Blanchard 1980:457). Traditionalists were able to point out that even when Mohawks tried to work with Canada,

> the rules of the game were skewed against them; even with treaties in
> hand and armed with rational legal arguments, the community was ignored
> by the federal government and overrun with bulldozers and earthmovers
> which destroyed their land (Alfred 1992e:10).

Furthermore, to receive fair compensation for their land, the Mohawks were forced into years of legal battles. Playing the game had gotten Kahnawake nowhere; by insisting on Mohawk sovereignty and the implementation of the Great Law of Peace on the reserve, traditionalists offered a way to refuse to play.

The 1970s were a busy time for Kahnawake, as for many other Indian nations. In Kahnawake itself, there was internal dissension over the eviction of non-natives renting homes on the reserve[14]. Kahnawake is not a large territory, and some Mohawk families were forced to find housing in neighboring communities. Both the Mohawk Council and the Longhouse wanted the non-natives out, but disagreed over the manner of the evictions. Some Longhouse members took matters into their own hands by issuing eviction notices, and the Mohawk Council ordered Kahnawake's police force to stop them. However, Longhouse people and their supporters vastly outnumbered the police, who resigned en masse when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Quebec Provincial Police refused to come to their aid. After the resignations, the Mohawk Council called in the Q.P.P. to patrol Kahnawake temporarily (Blanchard 1980:466-67).

There were bad feelings all around after this affair. Even Mohawks who did not agree with the way the evictions were handled felt that the Mohawk Council should not have called in an outside police force against its own people (Ibid.:467). In a time-honored

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[14]Mohawks today view many of those non-natives as having lived on the reserve to receive tax advantages.

Iroquois pattern, the traditionalist dissenters left Kahnawake to form a new community. This was Ganienkeh, originally located in 1974 near Moss Lake, New York, and a few years later moved further north to Clinton County, New York.

The Ganienkeh settlement was marked by controversy on several fronts. Rural New Yorkers saw the Mohawks as receiving preferential treatment after committing acts that would be illegal for anybody else, and interpreted this as another piece of evidence that downstate New Yorkers had no understanding of upstate events (Landsman 1988:44-57). Mohawks at Ganienkeh were attempting to demonstrate and exercise Mohawk sovereignty, entirely circumventing the elective systems imposed by foreign governments (Landsman 1988:60). To traditionalists who did not join the encampment, the presence of guns at Ganienkeh was disturbing, and it was around this time that Kahnawake's Longhouse began a schism into two Longhouses (Harrison 1994). The original Longhouse, the 207 (named for the highway on which it is located), became associated with the Warrior Society, a society of men and women which has its roots in the Ganienkeh occupation; the Warrior Society maintains that the Great Law does not require the Iroquois to be pacifists (Hall n.d. a :12). The second Longhouse, the Mohawk Trail, is opposed to the use of violence, and also seems to have closer ties to the rest of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Meanwhile, those who stayed at Kahnawake, traditionalists, Mohawk Council, Protestants and Catholics alike, were increasingly dissatisfied with the education their children were receiving. Under their own initiative in the late 1960s, the Protestant and Catholic

school committees of Kahnawake combined, along with Longhouse representatives, to form the Kahnawake Combined School Committee. Children were no longer separated according to religion in the schools of Kahnawake, and high school students were all sent to a single English language school, Howard S. Billings Regional High School in Chateauguay, which previously served predominantly non-native students (Blanchard 1980:463-4).

While this was an improvement, parents and students were still unhappy with the portrayal of Iroquois and Mohawk at Billings, when they were discussed at all. In 1970, the students staged a walk-out from the school to demonstrate their desire for their own school. This was not possible at the time, but Billings did agree to provide some classes in Mohawk language and culture, and design an Indian Studies program (Blanchard 1980:465).

The passage of Bill 101 in Quebec in 1978 would have required Mohawk parents who wanted their children to be educated in English to apply for "Eligibility Certificates." Mohawks were afraid that if they did this, their action would be interpreted as a recognition of the right of Quebec to legislate their culture and education and an admission of Quebec's jurisdiction over Kahnawake, which, given growing Mohawk assertions of sovereignty, was unthinkable. Additionally, the education of children off-reserve was seen as contrary to the Two Row Wampum, which pledged non-interference between Iroquois and Europeans[15]. A referendum held that year resulted in an overwhelming vote to build a school on the reserve for

[15]The Two Row Wampum was a wampum belt decorated with two purple stripes, representing the paths of Europeans and Iroquois, existing side-by-side but never interfering with each other. See Appendix, p74.

the high school students (Kahnawake Survival School 1979:3). On September 6, 1978, the Mohawk students enrolled at Billings dramatically marched from Chateauguay back to Kahnawake, followed by approximately 800 supporters. By September 11, the Kahnawake Survival School opened to teach grades seven through eleven. Teachers were mostly community volunteers, with some outside teachers volunteering their time (Blanchard 1980:474-5). In the beginning, classes were held all over the reserve, but the school was later moved into a concentration of trailers, which are steadily being replaced by permanent buildings.

The return of most of Kahnawake's high school students marked the end of a long era of off-reserve education. The Mohawks in charge of the school saw themselves as preserving future generations from the assimilationist effect of leaving the reserve for school, and consequently placed much emphasis on Mohawk culture and language, throughout the curriculum. The name of the school, the Kahnawake Survival School, shows how important Mohawks felt (and feel) the education of their children is in maintaining the Mohawk Nation.

After Ganienkeh and the founding of the Survival School, the next event to have a profound impact upon Kahnawake was the so-called Oka Crisis of 1990, which involved the barricade of the Mercier Bridge to show solidarity with the Mohawks of Kanesatake's barricade of the Pines. On March 10 and 11, Kanesatake Mohawks barricaded an area including a Mohawk cemetery and a stand of pines in response to the plans of the town of Oka to expand a golf course onto that area. The Kanesatake barricade gradually grew in size and

intensity, until the Sûreté du Québec (formerly the Québec Provincial Police) were called in by the mayor of Oka to disband it on July 11, 1990. On that day, a group of militants associated with the Warrior Society blocked traffic over the Mercier Bridge, a bridge which terminates in Kahnawake and is a heavily-used commuter bridge between the island of Montreal and the south shore of the Montreal region. The militants threatened to blow it up if the Sûreté du Québec continued to attack the Mohawks in the Pines at Kanesatake. Other members of the Warrior Society joined them on the bridge almost immediately. After a long hot summer of negotiation, the Mohawks on the bridge agreed to dismantle their barricade on August 29, 1990, leaving the Kanesatake Mohawks, still manning their barricade in the Pines, feeling somewhat betrayed (Hornung 1991:281-286). Tensions are still high between Kahnawake Mohawk and Québec's police force, between the Mohawk and thousands of their neighbors whose daily commutes across the bridge were disrupted, and among Mohawks themselves.

Mohawk interpretations of the events of the summer of 1990 are quite varied. For some, it showed the strength of the Mohawk people, and pulled the community together. The bridge barricade was seen as a successful display of Mohawk sovereignty, serving as a wake-up call to Canada, Quebec, and other Indian nations. Others do not feel that those on the bridge were representative of all Mohawks, and resented the manner in which they were forced to support those who had taken over the bridge without their first consulting the community. Non-Warrior traditionalists, who appear to be the most involved in the Confederacy, felt that their voices had

been drowned out by the Warriors and the non-Mohawk media. Most agree that, initially, the barricade produced some solidarity among Kahnawake's inhabitants, and that some of the side effects of the barricade, like the quiet on the reserve when normally busy highways were deserted, were beneficial. However, under the stress of threatened invasions by the Canadian army, pressure from the federal and provincial governments, and a growing food and medical supply shortage, the community began to divide into three major positions, which are strongly entrenched today. There are Mohawks who accept violence as a valid way to achieve sovereignty (the Warrior Society). Conversely, there are Mohawks who advocate more peaceful means, such as negotiation, to achieve sovereignty (the Mohawk Trail Longhouse and to some extent the Mohawk Council are in this position, although the two are not necessarily in agreement on other issues, and usually in fact are not). Finally, there are those who occasionally appear to take up one position or the other, maintaining a separate political position based on their own readings of the Great Law of Peace (the group that has clustered around the Myiow family).

Other events and circumstances have occurred over the last several years that test the bounds of Mohawk sovereignty, and also both divide and unite Kahnawakehró:non. A prime example was the flourishing cigarette trade in Kahnawake, in which Mohawks brought Canadian cigarettes exported to the United States (purchased tax-free on reservations in the United States) back into Canada and undersold the highly taxed domestic cigarettes (a carton of cigarettes which sold for $40 or more in Canada sold for around $20

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at Kahnawake). "Smoke shops" lined the highways and main roads of Kahnawake. This was a highly lucrative business, and one that some Mohawks claimed was perfectly legal under the Jay Treaty[16].

Those who sold cigarettes tended to be involved in the Warrior Society. One informant claimed that the Warrior Society was invented largely to protect the cigarette trade, but the cigarette trade did not become big business in Kahnawake until the early 1980s (Deering 1993:19); Kahnawake's Warrior Society was born out of the events in Ganienkeh, in the mid-1970s (Hall n.d. b). Another informant stated that not all Warriors approved of the cigarette trade, either. It should be noted that those who disapproved of the cigarette trade did not feel that way because it was "illegal"; some felt that the Kahnawake economy should not be so dependent on a vice or on something so controversial. In my conversations with individual Mohawks from different factions and in statements printed in Mohawk publications, it is apparent that most Mohawks feel that it is none of Canada's or Quebec's concern if Kahnawake chooses to regulate its own trade as a sovereign nation. The issue became irrelevant when the cigarette business collapsed in February of 1994 as Canada and Quebec reduced their cigarette taxes to the point where it was no longer of great savings to buy cigarettes at Kahnawake.

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[16]One could also see precedent in the earlier trade between Montreal and Albany, also regarded by eighteenth century Canada and the United States as illegal. As mentioned in Chapter Two, under the Jay Treaty, negotiated bewteen the United States and Great Britain in 1794, Mohawks were citizens of the Mohawk Nation, a country within a country, and so not subject to the same immigration regulations as citizens of the United States or Canada(see Appendix). However, since this treaty was negotiated by Great Britain, before the modern state of Canada existed, Canada denies the applicability of the Jay Treaty within its borders.

One side effect of the cigarette trade was increased tension between the Mohawks on the one hand and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Sûreté du Québec on the other. The cigarette trade was regarded as illegal by Canada and Quebec, and raids were occasionally made upon the reserve by federal or provincial forces. After 1990, the R.C.M.P. and the S.Q. were explicitly forbidden to enter the reserve without first notifying the Mohawk Council, but they routinely hovered around the edges of the reserve, stopping the vehicles of Mohawks and non-Mohawks leaving the reserve and searching for cigarettes[17]. This was resented by Mohawks who sold cigarettes, because it was bad for business, and seen by most Mohawks as indicative of Canada and Quebec's desire to interfere with the cigarette trade, a violation of the spirit of the Two Row Wampum, and a visible reminder of both the federal and provincial governments' unwillingness to admit to Mohawk sovereignty.

These are the events which Mohawks perceived as among the most important of the twentieth century. A common thread which ran throughout Mohawks' accounts of these events was a growing awareness of the Great Law of Peace, increasingly so after the founding of the Kahnawake Survival School, the first high school on the reserve, strongly dedicated to Mohawk course content and the teaching of the Mohawk language. One Mohawk commented that prior to that time, the Confederacy was never mentioned at Mohawk Council meetings; today, the Confederacy and the Great Law are both part of the regular rhetoric of Mohawk Council meetings and

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[17]This anthropologist was stopped by the R.C.M.P. once and followed by the S.Q. on another occasion after leaving the reserve.

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statements. As Kahnawake became stronger in its quest for sovereignty, those things which prove that they have a means of governing themselves became more important, and are a significant part of Mohawk identity today. The next chapters will discuss first a theoretical framework for viewing the interrelationship of history and identity, and the rhetoric used by faction leaders as they attempt to influence the political atmosphere at Kahnawake.

CHAPTER THREE
HISTORY, IDENTITY, AND FACTIONALISM

In the anthropological literature about history, it has been long accepted that historical narratives are culturally constructed (Appadurai 1981; Bloch 1989; Evans-Pritchard 1969 [1940]; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Sahlins 1981,1985). In other words, the events and patterns identified in a particular history by the people who have experienced it are selected on the basis of cultural criteria. Even events participated in by two or more societies may be endowed with quite different degrees of importance by each society involved. This point is somewhat obvious, but it is significant because history provides a basis for identity, by providing a sense of shared experience among members of a society. This sense of shared experience contributes to the political unity of a society, and thus can be an important tool in the hands and words of a society's leaders. Yet my work at Kahnawake has shown me that appeals to shared experience, to history, by political leaders are not automatically successful in unifying or directing society. To gain followers, each of Kahnawake's leaders appeals to the Great Law of Peace and a time when all Mohawks were supposedly united, but some leaders are notably more successful at attracting followers and garnering the respect of the community than are others.

I was thus drawn to look for additional factors in the relative success of a faction leader's rhetoric. Since the rhetoric of each

faction is very similar, I looked beyond words to actions. Kahnawake, I feel, is to some extent tired of factionalism -- not tired of political challenges, but of the factionalism that prevents anything from being achieved. The leaders who have more followers and more respect in the community are those whose actions are not divisive, who do not use the Great Law of Peace as a means of excommunicating other Mohawks or practice violence against other Mohawks. Based on my findings, I have added to current anthropological theory about the construction of history the dimension of individual and community interaction: that is, the community's judgment about the interactions between the individual political leader and the rest of the community.

In this chapter I will explicate my theoretical framework in examining history and its relationship to politics. At the end of the chapter, I will briefly discuss the nature of factionalism at Kahnawake. I feel that this is necessary because the term 'factionalism' is used to refer to many different situations cross-culturally, and also because it has negative connotations which are not entirely warranted at Kahnawake. Factionalism can be seen as a normal part of Mohawk political process when viewed in ethnographic perspective.

History is constructed by its tellers. This has been accepted in anthropology for some time, but the degree to which history may be "invented" by its tellers is disputed. An anthropological tendency has been to see the past as being without bounds, that the past is a "limitless and plastic symbolic resource, infinitely susceptible to the whims of contemporary interest and the distortions of

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contemporary ideology" (Appadurai 1981:201). In this view, there is in a sense no such thing as history, only narratives of events which confirm a particular group or society's viewpoint. This view of history was articulated by Malinowski in his examination of historical mythology among the Trobriand Islanders: "to the native mind immediate history, semi-historic legend, and unmixed myth flow into one another, form a continuous sequence, and fulfill really the same sociological function" (Malinowski 1954 [1925]:126). That function is to provide a charter for society, "a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom" (Ibid.:101). Thus history is subject to the same forces of construction as myth, and will be constructed in such a way as to agree with the society's vision of itself-- as the current buzzword says, their identity. Although Malinowski does not expressly state it, the implication of his conclusions about the equating of history and myth is that there are no limits on how much history may be stretched to serve the interests of society.

Structuralism, with its emphasis on rules, brought some discipline to the construction of history. Levi-Strauss recognized rules in how history was made, but he saw those rules as an innate part of the structure of a given society, rather than as a set of narrative strictures. Levi-Strauss' original distinction between "hot" societies, in which events happen in rapid succession and history appears busy, and "cold" societies, in which events hardly ever happen and history takes the form of timeless myth, has been rejected in favor of a universal structure of history, a means by which history is constructed, organized, and used in all societies.

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Appadurai has argued that there are four basic constraints on how the past may be retold, constraints which exist to some degree in every culture. There must be some regulation of the kinds of authority accepted for the source of the past. For a particular story about the past to be credible, its source must be credible (Appadurai 1981:203). For example, at Kahnawake, Mohawks from various factions told me that the first thing they would do in researching any historical matter is consult the elders for any oral traditions which might exist about that matter. Historical accounts written by non-natives are given less credibility than those oral traditions, and if there is no oral tradition about something asserted by non-natives, it may not be believed. The disagreement over the Hochelagans is a case in point (see Appendix).

Appadurai's second constraint is that of continuity. Continuity is the linkage between the present and the source of the authority of a story about the past. An example given by Appadurai is that of African [sic] political genealogies, in which any missing information or break in its continuity would cast doubt on the later sections of the genealogy (Ibid.). Kahnawake's neglect by Iroquois ethnographers after its long period of Christianity (see Chapter One) could be seen as the ethnographers' own doubt of continuity within Mohawk history, with "true" Iroquois culture broken by centuries of Christianity.

Depth of time plays an important role in the selection of which portions of the past will be valued over others. The events from a particular period may be considered more important than others. One society might value more distant events, while another might

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value more recent ones, and yet another might value some combination. At Kahnawake, clearly the events that surround the founding of the Iroquois Confederacy and those shortly afterwards are very important, as are the events of the last ninety years, while events that date from the long uniformly Catholic period are not mentioned as often.

Appadurai's final constraint is that of interdependence, the degree to which any story about the past must be interdependent with other stories about the past to ensure minimal credibility. Thus at Kahnawake, those who compete with stories of the past all use the same elements of the past in their stories. Their interpretation of those elements (the Great Law of Peace, the Two Row Wampum) varies, but the elements themselves are solidly anchored in the past to provide credibility, which is furthered by their commonality in all factional rhetoric.

Together, these constraints comprise a "minimal universal structure" for cultural constructions of the past (Appadurai 1981: 203). The constraints are usually not explicit in a society, but are revealed as shared assumptions among members of a society, observable through ethnographic experience (Ibid.:205). They fulfill a dual function in society: they provide a set of rules within which the past is debated; and they provide a space for the symbolic negotiation between idealized pasts and the pragmatic present. This allows cultures to regulate social change while retaining a sense of continuity with the present, and setting a course for the future.

This is similar to the points made by Sahlins in *Islands of History* (Sahlins 1985). According to Sahlins, history is culturally

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ordered, according to a particular culture's idea of what is meaningful. History is the result of culture in action, in which culture both reproduces itself through application of structure in new situations and is altered by the contingencies of new situations (Ibid.: vii).

Sahlins distinguishes between two types of historicity. There is a performative sense of history, which tends to assimilate itself to circumstances. The other sense of history is the prescriptive, in which nothing is new, and events are valued for their similarity to the system as constituted. Both of these structures are ideal types, and can be found within the same society (Ibid: xii-xiii). Kahnawake's Mohawks, in their emphasis on the Great Law of Peace and the Confederacy, are closer to a prescriptive view.

Thus the event is a relation between a happening and a structure, as it only acquires significance when it is brought within a cultural scheme, whether that scheme is prescriptive or performative. What this means for understanding history is that one can see history working through the selection of events by interested parties from the numerous logical possibilities of selection and interpretation that are available in any cultural order (Ibid: xvii). People embed their present in their past, by applying the "conceptually familiar" to the "existentially unique" (Ibid.:146). The selection of events, of course, is further governed by Appadurai's four constraints, but, as Sahlins observes, if history is the carrying forth of structures as well as the alteration of structures through events, then "the final form of cosmic myth is current event" (Ibid.:57). The reverse would be true as well, if it were not for the

fact that each current event changes structure to a differing degree. Therefore, while there are constraints on history, as per Appadurai, those constraints are governed in turn by structure.

History is important because it serves a role in the present as a place where people can read their identity or ethnicity. Hastrup (1990:80) speaks of identity as stored first in action and then stored in a common history, emphasizing a people's shared experience. Identity becomes firmly linked to ethnicity, because others are excluded from the shared experience of a history. In fact, according to Hastrup, the idea of a shared history is the ultimate prerequisite of ethnicity (Ibid.: 81). Ethnicity is defined as the self-definition of a people, with a more or less explicit center of gravity in shared history, a certain vision of a common past (Ibid.:124).

One can see why the invention of tradition[18] is quite important to its participants in establishing an identity. "Tradition" implies the grounding of a cultural attribute in the past, perhaps the ancient past. The very longevity of a tradition is validating in and of itself because it increases the number of people who have lived by it, with the implication that so many other people, the ancestors, could not have been wrong (Valeri 1990:162).

If history is the basis for ethnicity and identity, then the individuals or groups who can control history, who can regulate it, have a degree of control over identity. Political actors (in Kahnawake's case, the faction leaders) may try to use control over

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[18]By invention of tradition I mean not only practices which are made up and did not previously exist in a given culture, but also the invention of the idea of tradition in a culture, the development of a desire to see practices, material objects, etc., as being "traditional."

identity to affect their agendas and goals, through their claims of authority on the subject of the past. In almost any culture, there are those regarded as experts in any realm of knowledge,[19] and the realm of history is no exception. Keesing has commented on the ability of these experts, through the disguise and mystification of human contingencies as eternal inevitabilities, to enforce their own pragmatic interests on others who share a cultural set of ideological meanings with them (Keesing 1987:166). More simply put, if an expert can control identity, the source of people's self-view and basis for behavior, then the expert can control their behavior, often for his or her own benefit. There is much political potential in the role of an individual who can represent a unified cultural identity in an "otherwise fragmented field of meaning and power" (White 1991:240)[20].

One becomes a convincing expert on history in part by adhering to the constraints which govern the construction of history. Yet I have found at Kahnawake that there are people who adhere to those rules as well as any others do, and are still not accorded the same authority as is given to other leaders by the community. To Appadurai's constraints, one must add the behavior of the narrator, which will be judged by the society before that individual may become an expert. Thus it is not always necessary, as Keesing

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[19]Interestingly, I found that academically inclined Mohawks were referred to as historians by other Mohawks, regardless of their actual discipline or interests.
[20]For other analyses of how different political groups attempt to use history to consolidate and advance their own positions, see Paine 1989, Davis 1992, and Herzfeld 1992.

implies, that a community will blindly follow any expert who is able to "celestialize" human rules and roles (Keesing 1987:166).[21]

At Kahnawake, the faction leaders are the experts, seeking to guide identity. The issue over which they contend is the reinstatement of traditional government at Kahnawake. Despite their common goal, the factions have not united because of ideological differences. In the following chapter, I will discuss the rhetoric about traditional government[22] and some of the strategies used by factional leaders to advance their own cause and discredit that of the others. Finally, I will explore why some factions are more successful in attracting followers and gaining community respect than others, both on the basis of following Kahnawake's cultural constraints about history and on the basis of individual credibility.

Since the topic of "factionalism" covers a wide variety of situations and circumstances, the term factionalism should not be used without qualification and clarification. Before discussing what it is that the factions say and do, I will attempt here to situate the state of factionalism at Kahnawake. In my opinion, factionalism at

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[21] I do not intend to denigrate here Keesing's observations that many ideologies enforced by experts do cause great harm to some members of a society, nor can I deny that "most symbolic anthropologists, in the name of cultural relativism or interpretive detachment, have been strangely blind to the political consequences of cultures as ideologies, their situatedness as justifications and mystifications of a local historically cumulated status quo" (Keesing 1987: 166). There have been societies which are founded upon what appear to be injustices. I only wish to add that the pool of non-experts may sometimes exercise a right or have the power to reject the experts, if their behavior or purposes do not meet with cultural approval.

[22] Of all the factions, only members of the Warrior Society have presented any sort of concrete plan for converting to traditional government, and that plan was only for an interim government (Williams 1992: 1). The Great Law of Peace does provide detailed instructions for selecting leaders, but there are certainly issues with which the Mohawks must contend today which were not explicitly dealt with in the Great Law.

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Kahnawake is not abnormal or unique to this time period, and I believe current patterns of factionalism can be linked to the past structure of the Confederacy. Furthermore, factionalism is an important part of the political process at Kahnawake, and not always an obstruction to it.

Anthropologists only began to study factionalism as a phenomenon in the 1960s and 1970s. Prior to that, political systems were seen as a tool for maintaining the status quo, particularly in the structural-functionalist emphasis on enduring structure. As anthropologists admitted process to theories of culture, factionalism could be reinterpreted as part of political systems, rather than their antithesis. By 1965, a new theory of factionalism defined it simply as non-corporate groupings, involved in conflicts and recruited by leaders on the basis of diverse principles (Salisbury and Silverman 1977:4). Implicit in this definition was the assumption that factionalism was a result of the upheavals and turbulence caused by colonialism (Ibid.:5) or the poisonous contact of Western civilization, which disrupted native harmony (Ricciardelli 1961:217). Precontact dynamics or traditions of change and conflict were neglected (Ibid.), and parallels between factionalism in small communities and political parties in larger bodies were not discussed, since political parties were seen as ideologically based while factions were based on self-interest.

There are three more recent approaches to factionalism that I found useful in looking at Kahnawake's factions. One is that of Ricciardelli, who in his 1961 dissertation about factionalism at the Oneida community near London, Ontario was able to link the patterns

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of (then) current Oneida factionalism with the political patterns of the Confederacy system itself. The chiefs, although operating as a Mohawk Council, were still expected to live up to the pre-Mohawk Council ideals, particularly in having the ability to reconcile numerous points of view through suggestion and persuasion (Ricciardelli 1961: 261). The faction leaders kept important issues in the forefront, forced the chiefs to deliver on their promises, and provided alternative sources of information for the community. They also constantly reminded people of the basic values of the community, provided a political alternative for those unhappy with the chiefs, and served as training grounds for new leaders who would be able to take over in a crisis situation if the people should withdraw their support from those in power (Ricciardelli 1961:270). The faction leaders performed like the orators did in the Confederacy, like the politicians who, unlike the chiefs, are expected to speak their minds and attempt to influence people (a directive leader). This does not imply that those filling this role were necessarily Confederacy supporters; the point is that there was a pre-existing pattern which 'normalized' factionalism. Factionalism only becomes abnormal when a crisis situation affects the community. In Ricciardelli's opinion, the long term crisis which has caused intense factionalism in the Oneida community was the constant stress of having to deal with White influence (Ibid.:236). The crisis made each faction believe that its own agenda was essential, and not open to negotiation. Hence, the traditional pattern of negotiation and compromise broke down at Oneida.

Shimony also found traditional patterns repeated in her analysis of the 1959 uprising of hereditary chiefs at Six Nations Reserve. She (after Fenton 1955) noted that there is a certain degree of inequality built into the Confederacy system. While all chiefs are theoretically equal, some do claim special prerogatives, particularly the chiefs who hold the seats of Atotarho and the other Onondaga chiefs (these chiefs hold the final say in most matters and hold the power of the tie-breaking vote). There is also a rivalry between the Peace Chiefs as a body and the Pine Tree chiefs and the War Chiefs. Shimony attributes the leading cause of Iroquois factionalism, past and present, to the allegiance of one segment of the population to one or another of the Pine Tree or War Chiefs rather than to the council of Peace Chiefs (Shimony 1984:153-155).

The second approach to factionalism is that of Weaver, who studied factionalism among the Six Nations Iroquois at Grand River. Weaver questioned the literature on factionalism which saw factions as quasi-groups without ideologies, and by nature temporary (Weaver 1975:380). She also disagreed with the model of self-interest for factional motivation. Weaver found factions at Grand River to be ideologically based, formalized groups sustained by a commitment to a cause but which had and maintained all the trappings of the political dialectic which characterizes factional contests (Ibid.). By the time of Weaver's writing, the political arena as a whole had become organized on a factional basis, with constant competition and frequent confrontations between the two factions (Ibid.:386-87). Thus Weaver is able to argue for expanding the

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definition of factionalism to include ideologically-based factions and more formally established factions.

My third approach is that advocated by Salisbury and Silverman, in which factionalism is viewed as part of the regular political process in a community, characterized by the interaction and confrontation of multiple groupings[23]. This approach places emphasis on the process of factionalism and its inherent dynamism[24] (Salisbury and Silverman 1977:6). The conflicts between factions are never between balanced powers; thus the outcome of each conflict will determine the terms of the next one. This contributes a net movement to the whole society, even if, as Salisbury and Silverman observe, that movement is in a direction in which no faction intended it to go (Salisbury and Silverman 1977:6-7).

The combination of these approaches provides a means to see past the drama of Kahnawake's factional politics, and recognize that factionalism there is: 1) part of a long-standing Iroquois pattern, and built into the Confederacy; 2) an important part of political process, serving a useful function; and 3) likely to guide the future of Kahnawake's politics, since each factional contest provides movement to the system as a whole. Factionalism is thus normalized. We also have a basis for the community's judgments

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[23]Salisbury and Silverman called the groupings "non-corporate," but as should be clear from my reading of Weaver's work, I feel that factions may be formally organized, like the Warrior Society or the Band Council.

[24]A similar point was made by Fowler (1987) in her work on the Gros Ventre, a Plains Indian group. She points out that anthropologists have often seized upon any differences in interpretation or point of view as representing factionalism and social conflict, blowing those differences out of proportion and obscuring the cultural dynamics of political disagreement (Fowler 1987: 4-5).

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about how well the behavior of the faction leaders conforms to certain structural roles, such as the roles of Peace Chief or Pine Tree Chief. In the following chapter, the actual words and actions of the faction leaders will be discussed, and the reasons for the relative success or failure of each faction will be analyzed.

CHAPTER FOUR
CLEAR MINDS AND TWISTED MINDS:
FACTIONAL RHETORIC AND CREDIBILITY

Kahnawake, like many Indian communities, has many factions, from large, relatively permanent ones to smaller, single-issue, less enduring factions[25]. Many Mohawks expressed the hope that after the summer of 1990, the Oka crisis, and the events following the bridge barricade, the factions could pull together and provide a united front against external threats to their sovereignty. Unfortunately, it appears that any unity achieved was only temporary, and may even have dug some of the trenches between factions even deeper. Still, the experience of that temporary unity has given some renewed hope for the cessation of squabbling among factions. The Eastern Door often runs columns and letters to the editor calling for the end of factionalism, and one of the (unsuccessful) candidates for Grand Chief in the 1994 elections based his platform on bringing the factions closer together[26].

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[25]One recent example of this were the group of gas station owners who banded together after Quebec revoked their operating licenses over the issue of taxes. These individuals formed a loose association to present their concerns to the Mohawk Council and develop strategy to regain their operating licenses. As of the time of this writing, a resolution to the tax problem has not been achieved; however, the gas stations have been allowed to re-open for business.

[26]Don Martin, who says he is "from the Longhouse," without specifying which one, called for identification of the factions, commitment to long-term dialogue, procedural agreements, mutual respect for each faction's internal processes, and establishment of relationships with the existing government for each group, all as part of his plan to bring about a stable political environment in Kahnawake (Advertisement, Eastern Door Vol. 3 no. 9 June 3 1994: 12). His bid for Grand Chief was met with some skepticism, however, as he had been involved in a political scandal as a Council member years before.

The factions at Kahnawake do not appear to be fighting for material gain or even explicit control of the community; all their rhetoric is couched in terms of what is best for the Mohawk Nation. Their differences are purely ideological, and they can be subtle differences at that. Some of the factions are well-established; the 207 Longhouse has existed since the 1920s, as a Warrior Society Longhouse for at least twenty-five years, and the Mohawk Trail Longhouse has existed for nearly that long. The 207 has a formal organization in the Warrior Society, and the Mohawk Trail is part of a larger corporate body, the Confederacy. Thus at Kahnawake the Longhouse factions demonstrate that factions may be ideologically based, and formally organized, and still speak in the rhetoric of factionalism.

This rhetoric centers on the Great Law of Peace when dealing with matters internal to Kahnawake, and the Two Row Wampum when dealing with external matters. The issue on which each faction bases its existence (with the exception of the Mohawk Council, which by law must exist as a structure) is the return of traditional government to Kahnawake. Traditional government, all agree, should be based on the Great Law of Peace, but each faction has a different vision of how this should be achieved, and that vision usually negates the vision of other factions.

Only one of the four groups has any concrete plan for converting Kahnawake's current political system into a traditional system; that plan, put forth by the Mohawk Nation Office (the office attached to the 207), in March of 1992, was only for an interim government, although it was fairly detailed (Williams 1992b:1).

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Even Chief Norton has said that the Mohawk Council has no plan for instituting traditional government; traditional government is seen more as an ultimate goal (Harrison, interview notes1994). To a certain extent, a plan for traditional government can be found in the Great Law itself, but each faction is speaking essentially at the level of rhetoric when it calls for a return to traditional government.

In Chapter One, we have seen the historical issues and authorities that are credible to the Mohawk. Since all the factions base their positions on the same historical charter and the same set of events, their statements about history command essentially the same degrees of authority (in Appadurai's sense of coming from an authoritative source), continuity, depth, and interdependence. In fact, they must, in order to be accepted by the rest of community. Not all factions have equal political success at Kahnawake, however, and one must therefore look for reasons beyond the manipulation of identity based on effective use of history.

What follows in this chapter is a presentation of the factions' ideological positions, particularly with respect to the Great Law of Peace, and some analysis of particular confrontations, either in print or face to face, between factions. This analysis will show how the community's judgment of a particular faction leader's behavior affects that leader's credibility in attempting to use the shared experience of history to guide the opinions of the community.

Unlike those in other native communities, the factions at Kahnawake are not easily divisible into categories of traditionalist and progressive. There are at least three factions whose members

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refer to themselves as traditionalist, and even the Mohawk Council has an avowed goal of returning Kahnawake to a traditional form of government. Each faction claims traditionalist status by its adherence to the Great Law.

The two Longhouse factions have been introduced in the historical overview of Kahnawake (Chapter Two). Originally, they were a single group, but divided over the means used to achieve the goal of returning Kahnawake to traditional government and attaining sovereignty for the Mohawks. The group associated with the Warrior Society retained possession of the Longhouse, located on Highway 207 and hence called 'the 207.' The second group, at ideological odds with the Warrior Society over the use of violence, relocated to a new Longhouse located on the Mohawk Trail, hence known as 'the Mohawk Trail.'

The guiding figure of the 207 was Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall, and his ʾ .itings and artwork continue to have influence even after his death in late 1993. He is credited with founding the present Warrior Society in the 1970s, and certainly has provided its ideological force. Hall considered himself a Mohawk nationalist; under his leadership the main agenda publicized by the Warrior Society was to force Canada and the United States to accept the Mohawk Nation's sovereign status. Hall was one of the Warriors involved in the founding of Ganienkeh, and several of his influential essays stem from that time (see Hall n.d. a and Hall n.d. b).

Hall had a vision of a great Confederacy, consisting of many sovereign nations across North America. He argued that the original Confederacy had misinterpreted the Great Law when the five

founding nations insisted that any other nations who came to them were only to be allowed into the Confederacy "on the cradleboard," to be treated like children and not as equal participants in the Confederacy. There were twenty-eight such nations, and the French were able to use their dissatisfaction with the Iroquois to weaken the Confederacy. Hall criticized the current Grand Council of the Iroquois for its narrow vision in treating other nations the same way today (Hall n.d. a:2-3).

Hall was able to reject the authority of the Grand Council because of its ties to the Handsome Lake religion. Hall wrote of Handsome Lake that he had his visions in a fit of alcohol-induced delirium tremens, and that his nephew convinced him that he had seen angels. Hall accused Handsome Lake of being a murderer who kept butchered bodies in the Onondaga Longhouse, and died of "all the venerable diseases they ["the houses of joy in Syracuse"] had to offer" (Hall n.d. a:7)[27]. The Handsome Lake Code itself was a violation of the Great Law for a number of reasons. For one thing, Hall said it was a violation of the Two Row Wampum, because of its Christian influence. Hall also claimed that the Handsome Lake Code violated certain Wampums, or sections, of the Great Law, because the promoters of the religion will not allow their followers to read the Great Law, yet they do not keep up with the oral re-telling of the Great Law which is supposed to occur every five years[28]. This is done, according to Hall, to keep their followers in ignorance of the

[27]The spelling of "venereal" is a deliberate misspelling, a play on words. Hall's rhetorical style made frequent use of puns and word play.

[28]A recital by Jake Thomas did occur from June 25 to July 6, 1994, on the Six Nations Reserve, so this criticism is no longer entirely valid. The recital was given in English, so that people from all nations would be able to understand.

true laws, and represents the development of a separate jurisdiction over the Iroquois, something forbidden by the Great Law (Wampum 25). Furthermore, since there is strong Christian influence reflected in the Handsome Lake Code, it violates the dictate of Wampum 57, which states that persons who submit to foreign laws lose their birthrights and claims to membership in the Confederacy (Hall n.d. a:9-10)[29]. To Hall, "It looks like a conspiracy to do away with all traces of the Peacemaker [Tekanawita] and his works" (Ibid.:11).

Ultimately, Hall called for the abolition of the Handsome Lake Code. This would entail restoring all ceremonies to their pre-Christian state, and discarding the repentance ritual[30]. It would also mean unburying the weapons of war. In Hall's opinion, when Tekanawita buried the weapons of the Iroquois nations, it did not mean that the Iroquois were to become pacifists. It merely symbolized their internal peace (Ibid:17).

The main point of contention about the Great Law between Hall and his followers on the one side and other factions of Mohawk on the other is Hall's interpretation of the Great Law as calling for a Warrior Society. Hall interpreted the Great Law's mention of the War Chief and his men as referring to an organized group of warriors, charged with the defense and protection of the people and with other duties, including "keeping the peace, teaching, public speaking, repossessing lost lands and human rights, taking care of confrontations, settling dangerous disputes and international

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[29]This Wampum is also cited as justification for refusing to vote in Band Council elections.

[30]Hall referred to this ritual as nothing but "periodic boasting" (Hall n.d. b: 20).

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negotiations and doing all kinds of work to protect the welfare of the people" (Ibid:35). The Warrior Society should be trained to respond to all emergencies, "from invasion to childbirth" (Ibid.:37).

Hall openly acknowledged some of his critics; there are those who say that since the Mohawks are not actually at war, they do not need a Warrior Society. Hall cited the constant psychological warfare of the European occupation as proof of the need for a Warrior Society. Without a nation's fighting spirit, he wrote, a people will succumb to assimilation and eventually extermination. The Warrior Society serves as a visible reminder of that spirit and keeps it alive in the hearts of the people (Hall n.d. a:37-38).

The Warrior Society today has much visible support at Kahnawake[31]. They maintain their own office, the Mohawk Nation Office[32], and manage a bookstore, the Mohawk Nation Bookstore, which is the finest source for books on native peoples in the Montreal area. The Warrior flag, designed by Louis Hall, flies over many homes and at some of the checkpoint entrances to the reserve, which are voluntarily manned by Warriors. Louis Hall passed away in late 1993, but the Warrior Society has existed for long enough that it may continue on without his guidance.

Apparently, there is a smaller faction of so-called militants within the Warrior Society. These are the men and women who first seized the Mercier Bridge in 1990. As of 1991, the militants were still a readily identifiable group (in June of that year they traveled to Tripoli to receive a gift of money from Colonel Moammar Qaddafi)

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[31]Actual membership numbers would be difficult to obtain.
[32]As of this writing, the office was closed indefinitely for repairs.

(Hornung 1991:276). If this group still exists cohesively at Kahnawake, they keep a very low profile and are not involved in the public discussions of traditional government and the Great Law.

The second Longhouse faction is the Mohawk Trail Longhouse. While the members of this faction are not Handsome Lake followers, they are not ideologically opposed to the Handsome Lake Code. Although they admit that there may be a Quaker slant to the code, Handsome Lake is seen as having done what needed to be done: he made the Iroquois sober and gave them pride. Therefore the Mohawk Trail adherents have much stronger ties to the Confederacy than the 207 has, since they do not have ideological objections to their religion. A member of this Longhouse serves as a Chief on the Grand Council, although he is not a Condoled Chief[33].

In an interview, a member of this longhouse stressed the importance of living a good life, keeping a clear mind. The emphasis is on straightening out internal matters and helping the 'bad-minded' people in the community see clearly, before attempting to solve the external ones, like Kahnawake's relationship with Canada. The implication is that once the whole community sees with a clear mind, the rest will fall into place. However, if there continue to be people on the reserve with twisted minds, specifically the Warrior Society and the cigarette merchants, the Mohawk will never get back the things that are theirs, particularly land. Violence will only cause mistrust and confusion, breeding more violence.

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[33]"Condoled" refers back to the wampum of Haionwatha (see Appendix). When a Chief is "raised up" or "condoled," he undergoes the condolence ceremony to clear his mind of all bad feelings which might interfere with his ability to be a Chief. See the Introduction for the attributes which characterize a Chief.

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The Mohawk Trail Longhouse adherents deny that there is a mandate for an organized Warrior Society in the Great Law of Peace. They say that the intent of the Great Law is to solve disagreements through negotiation and compromise, even with non-Iroquois. By doing this, they say, they will provide an example to non-Iroquois, and perhaps bring them to see the wisdom of the Great Law. They do not deny that the Mohawk have been fighters, and may even be proud of their martial abilities; but violence is considered a last resort solution to any problem.

In general, the Mohawk Trail Longhouse produces Mohawks who seek sovereignty through negotiation. Like the 207, they are staunch supporters of the Two Row Wampum and their right to ignore the Canada-United States border, guaranteed by the Jay Treaty but more ideologically supported by the Two Row Wampum, which stresses noninterference between Iroquois and other North American governments. They are opposed to smuggling, not on principle but because of the problems smuggled goods bring with them. These problems include the creation of Mohawk "millionaires" who do not return anything to the community that shelters them, and the bad habits that free and easy money generates.

The Mohawk Trail Longhouse, like the 207, does not participate in Mohawk Council elections. The imposition of the Mohawk Council system under the Indian Act is a violation of the Two Row Wampum, and is also argued against on the basis of the Great Law of Peace, which prohibits Iroquois acceptance of foreign authority. This does not prevent them from voicing criticisms of the council, since the council purports to represent them.

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The third traditionalist faction is the Myiow family and the people who cluster around them. The Myiows, led by Stuart Myiow Senior, believe that the Handsome Lake Code violates the Great Law, and like both Longhouse factions do not vote in Mohawk Council elections. They also maintain that the current Confederacy Grand Council is illegitimate, because there are two council fires, one at Six Nations in Ontario and one at Onondaga in New York. The Onondaga fire is the only true fire, and to support two fires is to commit treason.

The Myiows further maintain that all of the other factions have excommunicated themselves from the Confederacy, and that the Myiows are its only true representatives. The Mohawk Trail is rejected on the basis of its collaboration with the Six Nations council fire and tolerance of Handsome Lake. The Warrior Society is rejected for its alleged willingness to work along with the Mohawk Council. The Mohawk Council, as a complete violation of the Great Law, is considered a group of assimilationist collaborators. Since all these people have made themselves ineligible for membership in the Confederacy, the Myiows are "the only traditional people who have title to this land" (Williams 1992a:6). Thus, the Myiows and their followers consider themselves the legitimate government of Kahnawake.

The Myiows, like the Warrior Society, do not reject violence as a means of achieving sovereignty. In an interview with non-native press, they have warned that Canada is "on the brink of a bloody civil war" unless the Canadian government accepts traditional governments as the only true Native governments, and dismantles

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the Mohawk Council system (Lalonde 1994:3). They claim to have been the targets of numerous murder attempts carried out by the Mohawk Council and other groups on the reserve, and their home is described by other Mohawks as an armed encampment.

The Myiow faction is also opposed to cigarette smuggling, but not for the same reasons as the Mohawk Trail. The Myiows oppose the cigarette trade because they feel that the tobacco companies are using the Mohawks to make a greater profit. The Mohawks are the only ones to be convicted of any wrong-doing, while the tobacco companies are in a no-lose situation. The Myiows are also opposed to the building of a casino at Kahnawake, citing fears of organized crime and other social ills.

Finally, there is the Mohawk Council. While council members have differing platforms, the one factor they have in common, particularly in contrast to the other three factions, is that they all accept the band council system, at least for the time being. Joe Norton, who has been Grand Chief since 1978, is the central figure. The Mohawk Council is an elected body which perceives itself as the voice of the community[34].

The oft stated objective of Kahnawake's Mohawk Council is the eventual escape from the Indian Act system to a traditional form of government:

> We have passed through a long dark era which saw the political entity
> known as the Mohawk Nation nearly destroyed, but the Mohawk people
> have steadfastly refused to become assimilated into the North American
> political culture. This fortitude, combined with a heightened perception

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[34]Despite the fact that many traditionalists do not vote, the Band Council may be justified in their assertion. The Council is aware of the criticisms voiced by traditionalists, and responds to them. On the other hand, the individuals who make up the Band Council are not chosen by the traditionalists to represent them. A study of the various influences and factors at work in elections would be most enlightening.

of traditional philosophy today characterizes mainstream Mohawk political views. It is the intention of the Mohawks of Kahnawake to divest themselves from the Indian Act and return to traditional structures of governance. The Indian Act elected council has been instructed to effect the transition to a traditional government representing the values embodied in the Great Law (*Institutions of Mohawk Government in Kahnawake* 1990:3).

The Mohawk Council presents itself as constantly pushing at the boundaries of the Indian Act, until the Canadian government will be forced to admit that traditional government does in fact rule in Kahnawake.

In practice, the Mohawk Council must deal with the prosaic issues that keep a community going. For example, issues like justice, policing, and matters of jurisdiction take precedence over the implementation of a new leadership selection process. However, this is also seen to bring Kahnawake closer to its goal, as the federal government will someday realize that Kahnawake is handling all of its internal affairs as a sovereign power. Additionally, the Mohawk Council increases its standing in the community by effectively providing community services.

The Mohawk Council, as an official body, has no opinion on the Handsome Lake Code. Cigarettes were clearly tolerated for the employment and revenue generated for the community. The Mohawk Council was one of the main proponents of building a huge casino in Kahnawake. They argued that fears of organized crime were groundless, because Kahnawake would maintain strict control over the operation, and the firm that they had chosen to develop the casino was a highly reputed one from the United States.

Chief Norton has stated that he emphatically considers himself part of the Confederacy movement across all Iroquois territories

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(Harrison 1994). Despite the philosophical differences between traditional governments and Mohawk Councils, the two need to have a working relationship until the Indian Act is phased out. As Chief Norton has said, he is trying to do away with his own job, and the implication is that this should make the traditionalists willing to work with his Mohawk Council.

Despite the fact that traditional government as such has not yet been implemented at Kahnawake, the pattern of Peace Chiefs and orators or Pine Tree Chiefs is visible. The Mohawk Council can certainly be seen as the equivalent of the council of Peace Chiefs, and the traditionalist faction leaders can be seen as the equivalent of the orators. A recent illustration of this interpretation of factional politics concerns the casino project. The Mohawk Council, in conjunction with a United States casino firm, developed plans for a large casino, to be located on the outskirts of the reserve. Such projects have caused serious social divisions on other Iroquois reserves, particularly at the Mohawk community of Akwesasne (see Ciborski 1990; also Hornung 1991). The Mohawk Council therefore proceeded cautiously, and conducted a thorough information campaign about the casino project by placing inserts in *The Eastern Door*, holding information fairs, and discussing the casino on Kahnawake's radio station. There was much debate about the casino, with all three groups of traditionalists generally opposed to it. Other people who were in favor of a casino had concerns about the firm the council had chosen. The Mohawk Council held a referendum, which, the council made clear, was not to be considered a regular election, and should not compromise the beliefs of traditional

people. The referendum resulted in a slight majority turning down the casino.

As soon as the results were in, Chief Norton declared the casino a dead issue, unless he was asked by the people to consider another proposal. Although consensus could not be reached on this issue, the Mohawk Council took a conciliatory position throughout the proceedings, and made all the information at the council's disposal available to the entire community. The emphasis was on the will of the people, not the political vision of any member of the council. Therefore, the council acted like peace chiefs should, and despite "losing" the casino battle, the council's willingness to drop the issue has probably increased its credibility as a body which is seeking a return to traditional government.

Like orators, factional leaders spoke up on the issues surrounding the casino. Stuart Myiow Senior led a protest march of approximately fifty people from his home to the Mohawk Council office to protest the casino, which he and his followers felt would bring crime and related social ills to Kahnawake. In what may have been veiled threats, marchers carried signs reading "Casinos on our land equals bloodshed" and "learn from two deaths at Akwesasne," a reference to the violence that accompanied factional disputes over gambling at Akwesasne (Jacobs 1994b:1). From the 207, Kahn-Tineta Horn, also a candidate for Grand Chief in the 1994 elections[35], also spoke out against gambling, with similar concerns

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[35]When asked about the apparent contradiction of running for a Band Council office when as a traditionalist she does not vote, Ms. Horn replied, "Sometimes you have to do what you have to do" (Jacobs 1994a: 5). Ms. Horn has been increasingly prominent in Kahnawake's politics, and it may be that she is trying to fill Louis Hall's place in the 207.

about crime. Their voices, and the voices of others, constantly reminded the Mohawk Council that there was no consensus on the casino issue, and reminded the rest of Kahnawake that the issue must be taken very seriously.

This example illustrates how factional opposition at Kahnawake can be seen as an adaptation of the Confederacy's political pattern to the Mohawk Council system. Although the titles may have changed, the roles are very similar. There is also a strong sense of community among Mohawks which so far has kept the peace. While the rhetoric of factionalism is occasionally violent[36], there has been little physical violence between factions. Chief Norton pointed out as one of Kahnawake's strengths that nobody has been killed by another Mohawk (Harrison, interview notes 1994). Despite the rhetoric, factionalism has not destroyed the community's "numen," the moral sense which enforces the values of the community (Bailey 1977:29). Killing a member of another faction is still killing a Mohawk.

The Myiows, however, have engaged in physical threats against other Mohawks, and have allegedly shot at Peacekeepers (members of Kahnawake's official police force) who approached their house. While the rhetoric of the Myiows is not that different in essence from that of Louis Hall, their perceived readiness to turn against other Mohawks has cost them support. They are widely regarded as a fringe element at Kahnawake, albeit a vocal one, which denies them a role in Kahnawake's politics. This is not to say that the Myiows do

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[36]Members of the three traditionalist factions have reported receiving death threats, and Stuart Myiow Senior has claimed that the Band Council wants to kill him or his followers (Williams 1992a).

not try to have a role. One Myiow, usually Keith Myiow, regularly attends Mohawk Council meetings and other public functions, in order to remonstrate with the Mohawk Council for its actions or sayings, usually on the basis of the Great Law.

The Myiows have further damaged their credibility by appearing to act inconsistently with their demands. According to one anecdote I heard about a particular Mohawk Council meeting[37], Keith Myiow reproached the council for acting outside of the Great Law and admitting to the authority of federal and provincial governments, but a council member, Chief Billy Two Rivers, stood up and announced that Keith Myiow himself had just served a subpoena against Two Rivers, and so was speaking hypocritically. The community's perception of the Myiows' inconsistency and propensity to use violence against other Mohawks prevents the Myiow faction from gaining a large following, despite the fact that much of what they say could appeal to many Mohawks.

So, the Mohawk Council has gained credibility and support by acting as a Mohawk council of chiefs should act, while the Myiows have lost credibility by breaking some of the rules about how responsible Mohawks should act towards one another. The two Longhouse factions appear to have roughly equal credibility in the community; although there is more visible support, in terms of expectations placed upon the society by the community, for the Warrior Society, a number of Mohawks prefer the less confrontational approach of the Mohawk Trail. Louis Hall had been

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[37]Non-residents of Kahnawake are banned from the meetings, so I was not able to observe meetings myself.

known to make threats of violence against "traitors" to the Confederacy-- i.e. those who collaborated with either the Mohawk Council or the Handsome Lake influenced Grand Council of the Confederacy-- but those threats were never carried out. My perception of the Warrior Society today is that many of its members see its future as providing the community services that Hall called for[38], and take a more reconciliatory stance towards the Mohawk Council[39]. If the Warrior Society continues to place more emphasis on providing community services, its political credibility at Kahnawake will be increased. However, without Louis Hall, they may not have leadership capable of carrying this out, or capable of gaining enough respect from all Warriors to hold the Society together. The Society was already showing signs of stress in 1990, when the militants acted on their own.

Finally, the Mohawk Trail Longhouse has a strong claim for legitimate authority because of its close ties to the rest of the Confederacy. The Handsome Lake issue has caused some loss of credibility, but as was remarked after a 1993 debate on historical issues held at Kahnawake, the community is now more open to calm discussion about the Handsome Lake Code than ever before (Deer 1993: 4), and it is possible that in the future the Mohawk Trail Longhouse will be admired for its tenacity in standing by the larger

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[38]To some extent, this is in response to finding a new reason for existence after the cigarette trade crashed, although as previously mentioned, not all Warriors approved of it.

[39]Similarly, the Band Council has been involved in the defense of those who barricaded the bridge in 1990, on the basis of Mohawk sovereignty. This has been interpreted by a member of the Mohawk Trail Longhouse as showing that the Band Council is in cahoots with the Warrior Society, but I think it is rather a sign that pan-factional unity is possible.

Iroquois Confederacy despite ideological differences about Handsome Lake. This Longhouse may take on increasing importance as Kahnawake comes nearer to its goal of sovereignty, because its members who function as Confederacy chiefs can help integrate Kahnawake into the Confederacy after so many years outside of it.

As can be seen from the discussion above, the content itself of the Great Law of Peace is not contested; that would be difficult, given that most Mohawks know the Great Law from one of its written versions and use those versions for consultation[40]. What is contested is the application of the Great Law to the current questions that the Mohawk face: whether any kind of violence is justified or not, whether working with the Mohawk Council is treacherous or not, whether profiting from the vices of non-natives is ethically sanctioned or not. As we have seen, the Great Law is used to support all of these positions. The effectiveness of the interpretation depends on the behavior of the leader and how well he or she adheres to community standards.

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[40]Side-by-side comparisons of the three versions (those of Seth Newhouse and the Council of Chiefs at Ohsweken, both published in Parker 1916, and the version published as The White Roots of Peace by Paul A. W. Wallace) were published in the first volume of the Eastern Door for the benefit of the community at large.

CONCLUSIONS

The example of Kahnawake has illustrated that the past is in fact not a scarce resource, as per Appadurai; it is plentiful, and there for the taking, as long as the teller adheres to the cultural rules of construction, the rules of authority, continuity, depth, and interdependence. What is scarce is the likelihood that a narrator will be granted the authority to tell history, to choose the events and meanings that bind a community together in a shared identity. This authority, the status of expert, must be earned by adhering to the cultural ideal of how an expert should behave.

My study of Kahnawake provides a model for determining how experts are made, in the sense of earning the respect of the community. One can determine the reasons for the relative success of a faction or its leaders in attracting followers on the basis of an appeal to history by examining the faction's behavior in the light of cultural ideals. This adds to theories like those of Appadurai and Sahlins (Appadurai 1981; Sahlins 1985) the dimension of individual and community interaction. An individual may tell of a past that fits the cultural constraints of authority, continuity, depth, and interdependence; an individual may be able to point out how certain current happenings are mirrored in cosmology or ideology, and consciously or unconsciously use other peoples' awareness of that mirroring to affect the outcome of current events. But if that individual does not adhere to other cultural constraints of expected

behavior for the role of one who seeks to lead a community, the past told by that individual will be less effective in guiding the community's sense of identity. In this way, political leaders can never escape that identity, but are constrained by the community just as much as it may be by them.

We have seen in the previous chapter that the relative success of a faction depends not only upon effective use of rhetoric about the Great Law of Peace but also upon the respect the community accords the factions based on their adherence to cultural ideals. The factions that break those ideals by advocating violence against fellow Mohawk are given far less respect, and each faction tries to show the behavior of the others in a light which would make them fall from the community's approval. Each faction does this on the authority of the Great Law of Peace, seen through the lens of the faction's own ideological slant. The factions that are successful in obtaining a larger role in guiding Kahnawake's future are those who promote unity and refrain from vitriolic attacks on other Mohawks.

It will be interesting to watch happenings unfold and become events on the Mohawk path towards sovereignty. I feel that it is a goal within Kahnawake's grasp, perhaps not despite the factionalism but in fact because of it, in that factionalism provides a dynamic for change. The constant challenges of the factional leaders prevent the maintenance of a status quo in which Kahnawake does not have full sovereignty[41].

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[41]It should be noted here that I am talking about Kahnawake achieving the internal cohesion necessary to be a sovereign power. Whether Kahnawake can negotiate Canada into accepting this sovereignty is something else entirely.

Factionalism also contributes to the goal of sovereignty in reinforcing the upkeep of "traditional" patterns of Mohawk government. As I have elucidated, the Mohawk Council under Chief Norton maintains its authority by acting in a manner appropriate to a council of peace chiefs. Their success at this is documented by the fact that the Mohawk Council is the effectual authority at Kahnawake today. Although traditionalists may decry the jurisdiction of the Mohawk Council as an agent of a foreign government (Canada), the Mohawk Council is still expected by all Mohawks to provide community services and look out for Kahnawake's best interests. Factional leaders provide public voices for segments of the community and ensure that the issues that Kahnawake finds important are not neglected in public debate, acting like the pine tree chiefs or orators of the Confederacy. Although factionalism may appear destructive on the surface, it may structurally aid in returning Kahnawake to a form of traditional government based on the clan system. Signs like the public discussion of the Handsome Lake Code promise that interfactional cooperation can be achieved at Kahnawake, as Mohawks explore the divisive aspects of their shared identity.

APPENDIX

PRE-TWENTIETH CENTURY HISTORY OF KAHNAWAKE

This Appendix contains a historical overview of the founding of the Iroquois Confederacy and the pre-twentieth century history of Kahnawake, with a particular emphasis on issues that Mohawks feel are important. This means frequently presenting two often radically different versions of the same events side by side. This is not done for the sake of determining which has a greater degree of "truth"; truth in history is, after all, a highly relative thing, with the same events endowed with different meanings from the perspectives of different cultural traditions (Fogelson 1989:135). I present the views of Mohawks alongside the sometimes differing or contradictory work of mainstream Iroquoian historians and anthropologists to develop an understanding of Mohawk perceptions of Kahnawake's historical context in today's political arena, particularly where issues of sovereignty are concerned.

Histories often start with origin stories. Most scholars accept the Bering Strait theory as an adequate explanation for the presence of the native inhabitants of the Americas, with some debate over the time frames involved. Mohawks, however, at least in statements for public consumption, often deny overseas origins, asserting their autochthonous origins in northeastern North America.[42] Their origin story serves the rhetorical purpose of reaffirming natives' inherent

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[42]In short, the Mohawk were created by the grandson of a woman who had fallen from the sky to the world, at that time covered with water. Birds broke her fall, a turtle provided a safe landing place, and a muskrat brought some dirt from the ocean floor so that she could create the earth. The rest, as they say, was history.

rights to the land, and reinforces the longevity and uniqueness of that claim, a strategy of which Mohawks are quite consciously aware. Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall, a Warrior Society traditionalist/activist, artist, and writer, wrote in *The Warriors' Handbook*, "The Bering Strait theory is a tongue in cheek propaganda to make the Onkwehonwe [the 'real people', the Iroquois] think that they, also, are aliens in their own land and that they, the Europeans, have just as much right to be in America" (Hall, n.d. b: iii). Gerald Alfred, a Mohawk political scientist, has spoken of the Bering Strait theory as myth, in terms of the way it is told to delegitimize native peoples' claims to land. The Seven Generations textbook used at Kahnawake's Survival School presents first the Iroquois origin story, followed by the Bering Strait theory, which is described as something that "can not be completely proven" (Blanchard 1980:35), and the textbook states that even if the theory is true, native people were not "immigrants" to North America, because there were no other people present in North America (Blanchard 1980:38).

Both Mohawks and anthropologists tend to portray pre-Confederacy days in a static manner. Mohawks and other Iroquois are described as hunters and horticulturists, frequently warring with one another and other neighboring tribes. Some Mohawks describe the time just before the coming of the Peacemaker as a kind of Mohawk dark ages (Blanchard 1980:60-61).

Then Tekanawita[43] came, bringing the Great Law of Peace (Kaianerekowa) with him. Born of a virgin, he was a Huron, thrown

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[43]I am following the spelling of Blanchard in Seven Generations (Blanchard 1980). The version of the founding of the Confederacy which follows is condensed from Seven

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out of his own village by bitter neighbors who could not understand why he did not love war. The first Iroquois group that he came to were the Mohawk, also the easternmost Iroquois. At first they were interested in his message, but somewhat skeptical. Tekanawita agreed to undergo a physical trial, which the Mohawk expected would kill him. He emerged unscathed, however, and this proved to the Mohawk that the Creator was on Tekanawita's side.

Meanwhile, among the Onondaga, there was an evil man, Atotarho, who kept the Onondaga in terror. He was a cannibal, a sorcerer, and his hair was full of snakes. Haionwatha[44], a man on the Onondaga council, was sent by the council to try to "clear the mind" of Atotarho and "straighten his crooked body" (Blanchard 1980: 61). Each time he tried to approach Atotarho, fierce storms forced him back. Another man in the village dreamed that there was a man among the Mohawk who could prevail against Atotarho, but Haionwatha must go to the land of the Mohawk to bring him back. Haionwatha, however, was unlikely to leave the village because of his love for his seven daughters. The people conspired behind his back to have a famous shaman kill the daughters, so that Haionwatha would leave Onondaga in his sorrow. The plan was successful. As Haionwatha wandered in the wilderness, he made the first strings of wampum, and created condolence ceremonies using the strings and beads. He traveled for twenty-three days, from village to village, always setting up his wampum strings on a pole and saying,

Generations, which follows Parker (Parker on the Iroquois, William Fenton, editor. Syracuse : Syracuse University Press, 1971).

[44]This is indeed the inspiration for the name of Longfellow's famous Hiawatha, but Longfellow transplanted the name to an Algonquian setting and a completely different story (Tooker 1978:422).

> Men boast what they would do in extremity but they do not do what they promise. If I should see any one in deep grief I would remove these shells from this pole and console him. The shells would become words and lift away the darkness with which they are covered. Moreover, I truly would do as I say (Blanchard 1980:67-68)

Nobody took him up on his offer, and on the twenty-third day, he arrived at the Mohawk village where Tekanawita was staying. Tekanawita took pity on Haionwatha in his great sorrow, and welcomed him into his home. Tekanawita took Haionwatha's shell strings and used them to console Haionwatha himself. Once Haionwatha's mind was cleared, he became as a younger brother to Tekanawita[45]. The two of them together planned the Confederacy and the role of its chiefs, who would wear deer horns as emblems of their position. They tried out their plan for a confederacy on the Mohawk council, who decided they would join such a confederacy if the other nations could be convinced to join it. Over five years Haionwatha and Tekanawita traveled to the Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and the Seneca, convincing them all to join the Confederacy. When the Mohawks heard this, they agreed to join too.

The only remaining obstacle was Atotarho, who hated peace. Tekanawita and Haionwatha spent the next year teaching people the Hymn of Peace and other songs like it, so that they had many magically strong men to go to Onondaga with them. It took Tekanawita's singing to do it, but they succeeded in straightening

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[45]The terminology of elder and younger brother was used by the Iroquois to indicate a relationship of essentially equality, with one party being slightly more equal than the other. For example, the Mohawk, Onondaga, and Seneca, the more powerful nations of the Confederacy, were called elder brothers to the Oneida and Cayuga, full members in the Confederacy but with less power than the other three nations (Jennings 1985:120).

Atotarho's mind and body, and combed the snakes from his hair[46]. Then the clan mothers selected the first Roianer, or council chiefs, of the Confederacy. Tekanawita renamed them all and instructed them in the rules of the Great Peace.

Tekanawita then planted a great white pine tree, which symbolizes law, shelter, and the extension of the Great Law to cover whoever should seek its shelter (Wallace 1946:7-8), and symbolizes the raising-up of a chief (Fenton 1975:142-143, in Tooker 1978a: 429). He placed an eagle in the top of the tree, which would be constantly watchful for any harm to the Confederacy, and scream a warning if need be. Finally, he collected all the weapons of war and cast them into a cavern under the tree's roots, to show that the people were no longer at war, to "bury the hatchet".

There is considerable dissent, both among scholars and between scholars and some Iroquois, over exactly when the Confederacy was founded. Most mainstream academic estimates for the date of the founding of the Confederacy range from around 1400 AD. to around 1600 AD (Tooker 1978a:420). There is no doubt that it was well established by the 1630s, when the French were told about the Confederacy by the Hurons (Ibid.:418). Some versions of the story of the founding of the Confederacy include mention of a total eclipse of the sun, which influenced the Senecas' decision to join. There was such an eclipse in 1451. However, this eclipse story is not part of the epic versions of the founding of the League, which seems to make it a bit suspect in Tooker's eyes (Ibid:420). There

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[46]Wallace (1946:4) assigns the meaning "He Who Combs" to the name Haionwatha, which refers not only to the combing of Atotarho's hair, but also to the process of combing the twists from men's minds.

also is an Iroquois tradition that the League was founded one, two, or three generations before the coming of Europeans, but debate over the length of a generation and the variations in the tradition itself do not allow for a firm conclusion (Ibid.:420-422).

Mohawks at Kahnawake are not concerned about the precise date of the founding of the Confederacy. At the settlement at Ganienkeh, a sign posted at the entry to the settlement announced that the settlement was founded in 50,000 BC.[47] A series of articles about the Great Law in *The Eastern Door* did not address the issue, and most articles, publications, and conversations focus far more on later events in the Confederacy then on when it was actually founded. One exception to this tendency is Johnny Beauvais' assertion that "every Iroquois knows this law was founded by Tekanawita centuries before Europeans became aware of our existence" (Beauvais 1985:110). It appears to be enough for the Mohawk that the Confederacy certainly predated European influence. Unlike their claim to the land, the previous and continued existence of the Confederacy is not denied or debated by non-Mohawks, and in fact the Confederacy has received considerable accolades from non-Mohawks, from Lewis Henry Morgan to the recent resolution passed by the U.S. Congress honoring the Iroquois Confederacy for its influence upon the Constitution of the United States (although the theory behind this resolution is not uncontroversial; see Ciborski 1990:225-228).

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[47] Ganienkeh was a highly controversial settlement of Mohawks, many from Kahnawake, in upstate New York. Founded in 1974 in the Moss Lake area, it was later moved to the Altona area, in Clinton County(Landsman 1988). Some Mohawks are still living there, but their numbers have dwindled.

Whenever the Confederacy was actually founded, the structure as described above is essentially what Europeans encountered in the early 1600s. Tooker (1978:430) observed that the establishment of the Confederacy did not mean that each nation ceased to pursue its own interests, particularly where the fur trade was concerned. The Mohawk, as the easternmost group of Iroquois, were able to make use of their proximity to European settlements to become middlemen in the fur trade. The Mohawk attempted to force the other nations to deal through them to trade with Europeans, but their dependency upon the western nations for fur placed them in a weaker bargaining position. Still, this freedom to pursue national interests on an individual basis did not overshadow allegiance to the Confederacy, or lessen the recognition that each nation's ultimate best interests lay with the strength of the Confederacy. (Tooker 1978a:430).

The Iroquois ability to play off European rivals against one another has become almost legendary. The Confederacy walked a careful line among the Dutch, English, and French, keeping each unsure of the Confederacy's actual allegiance. Since the French controlled the Saint Lawrence river region to the north of the Iroquois, other nations, especially the Huron with their access to higher quality northern furs, were able to establish trading networks with the French without Iroquois middlemen. For a time, there was nothing that the Iroquois could do about this, since the French sent soldiers armed with guns to aid their Huron allies against the Iroquois. When the Dutch arrived to trade on the Hudson River to the south, the Mohawk were able to seize control of Dutch trading alliances. The Iroquois and the Huron thus became the most

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important trading partners of the Dutch and the French, respectively. In general, the Iroquois saw their long-term interests as being with, first, the Dutch, and, later, the English, who had trade goods of better quality and lower price than the French offerings (Tooker 1978a:430).

According to the Mohawk, it was around th.s time that the Two Row Wampum was created to symbolize an agreement of mutual non-interference between the Mohawk and the Dutch. This wampum belt was white with two purple parallel stripes representing the Dutch in their ship and the Iroquois in their canoe, traveling side by side but never touching each other's affairs. Whether this belt ever existed as a treaty, as some Mohawk claim, or not, it is one of the most important and enduring symbols at Kahnawake today.

In the early 1640s the English and Dutch began to supply the Iroquois with guns (Fenton and Tooker 1978:468), and the Iroquois embarked upon a war with the Hurons. According to Tooker (1978a:430), the war was based entirely on economic factors and the Iroquois desire to control the entire fur trade, to maintain their roles as middlemen. It has also been argued that the Mohawk needed to replenish their population, reduced by disease and warfare, through the adoption of captives (Fenton and Tooker 1978:468). By 1649, the Huron had been defeated and dispersed, absorbed by other nations or surviving in groups so small as to be no economic threat.

An alternate explanation for the destruction of Huronia, shared by some Mohawks, has been put forth by Sioui, a scholar who is himself Huron. Sioui argues against "the myth of economic war" (Sioui 1992:40), arguing instead that "all Amerindians were waging

desperate cultural war on an invader whose pathogenic allies made his very presence a disaster" (Ibid.:40). He writes further that

> ...they [the Iroquois] were an extremely valorous people who, to enable the Amerindian race to survive, had to fight against the European powers, forcibly adopting nations that were already gravely decimated. For the Iroquois, the goal of this war was to extinguish the power of strangers in the way one extinguishes a raging fire. With extraordinary strength of character, they had to eliminate part of their own race so as to save it. (Sioui 1992:44)

Thus, the Iroquois were acting to preserve all Amerindians when they attacked the Hurons. Not only were the Hurons becoming culturally dangerous to Amerindian ideals, but their extensive involvement in trade would spread disease, the "pathogenic allies," to groups with no direct contact with the Europeans. Sioui neglects to discuss the Iroquois Confederacy's trading relationships with the Dutch at that time; it seems as though if the Huron had won, one could turn Sioui's argument around, interchanging the roles of Iroquois and Huron.

After the destruction of the Huron, the Iroquois made an uneasy peace with the French, and continued to trade with first the Dutch and later the English as New York was transferred to England in 1664. The Mohawk were the most hostile to the French, and in the face of their precarious position, the French "decided to humble the Mohawks" (Tooker 1978a:431). Their initial expedition in 1664 was not successful, but in 1666 a French expedition defeated the Mohawks and burnt their fields and villages on the Mohawk River. In

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1667 the Mohawk and the other Iroquois made peace with the French (Fenton and Tooker 1978:469).

Following the peace settlement, groups of Iroquois, but predominantly the Mohawk, left their territories to the south and east of the eastern Great Lakes and moved north to La Prairie on the St. Lawrence River, near Montreal. Some individuals came to hunt and trade; others had been converted to Catholicism and were convinced to move by the Jesuits. Once a sizable group was established, they were able to convince their kin in the Mohawk Valley to come and join them (Fenton and Tooker 1978:470). Every Mohawk that I have spoken to, and every article written by a Mohawk on this topic, asserts that the Saint Lawrence River had always marked the northern boundary of Mohawk territory, and that the Mohawk were simply relocating to another part of their lands, primarily to prevent further encroachment by whites or Algonquians. Desire to leave villages that were hosting regular drinking binges and the need for fresh hunting and farming lands are also given as reasons for the move north.

A controversial part of the Mohawk claim to the Montreal area concerns the Hochelagans, the 'lost Iroquois'. The Hochelagans were an Iroquoian-speaking people who lived on the island of Montreal. Cartier encountered them in his voyages of the 1530s. The village then contained some 1500 inhabitants. By 1603, however, the date at which further records concerning the indigenous inhabitants of the area become available, the Hochelagans had, in the word of Trigger and Pendergast, "vanished" (Trigger and Pendergast 1978:357). While nineteenth century theories favored the notion

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that the Hochelagans had either retreated south to become the Mohawk or west to become one of the Huron nations, Trigger and Pendergast argue that archaeological evidence demonstrates that the Mohawks and Hurons were already in their respective places before the disappearance. Linguistically, based on the evidence of word lists collected in Cartier's voyages, the Hochelagans had a distinctly separate language, although certainly an Iroquoian language (Trigger and Pendergast 1978:359-360). Trigger and Pendergast argue that the Hochelagans met essentially the same demise as the Hurons just a half-century later: war with and absorption by one of the Five Nations, in all probability the Mohawk, since they were the closest. As with the Hurons, the Hochelagans stood between the Mohawk and the European trade goods they desired at the trading post of Tadousac to the north. Since Iroquois patterns of warfare emphasized adoption of captives to replenish those lost in war, the majority of surviving Hochelagans were most likely adopted and assimilated by the Mohawks (Trigger and Pendergast 1978:361).

The Mohawk position on this appears in the *Seven Generations* textbook (Blanchard 1980:50), and has been published by Alfred in *The Eastern Door* (Alfred 1992a:9). In Alfred's account, Mohawk territory consisted of not only lands in the Mohawk Valley in present-day New York but also an area bounded by the Saint Lawrence River from present-day Trois Rivières to the Oswegatchie River near Prescott, Ontario, and also the Hudson River-Lake Champlain-Lake George waterway. He supports his claim with accounts from the oral traditions of the Mohawk, the Micmac, and

the Algonquin. Mohawk traditions include the Mohawk term for the island of Montreal, Kawennote Tiohtià:ke, meaning "island where the people divide". Alfred interprets this to mean a boundary between the territories of the Mohawk and other peoples. There are other oral accounts of their having lived in the Saint Lawrence River Valley. The Mohawk moved south, according to these traditions, partly to find better farmlands and also because relationships with neighboring Algonquians had soured due to Mohawk aggressiveness. Alfred also cites Micmac accounts of the Mohawk having lived farther north at Stadacona, the location of present-day Quebec City and another site of missing Iroquoians, and Algonquin beliefs that both Stadacona and Hochelaga were abandoned Mohawk settlements. Alfred does not deny that these other groups, as well as the Hurons, used the lands previously occupied by Mohawk, but draws a distinction between residential areas and "land-use" areas in a nation's territory. The island of Montreal represents a residential area to the Mohawks (a point which would also explain the seventeenth century Mohawks' willingness to go live there) and a land-use area to the Algonquins, Hurons, and other nations (Alfred 1992a:9).

Obviously there are irreconcilable differences in the Trigger and Pendergast account of the Hochelagans on the one hand and that of Alfred, and that of many Mohawks, on the other. It has been and probably will continue to be a sensitive issue between Mohawks and academics. The important point for the Mohawks is that according to their side of the story, the present location of Kahnawake has always been Mohawk territory, because the Hochelagans were

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Mohawks. Trigger and Pendergast do conclude that the Hochelagans were probably integrated into the Mohawk nation, so that the Mohawk probably do contain the descendants of the Hochelagans. However, if this is the case, the Mohawks would need to base their claim to the Saint Lawrence River Valley on the right of conquest, which could all too easily be turned against them.

At any rate, by 1673 the Jesuit Relations reported that there were more Mohawk warriors living at the settlement at La Prairie than were still living in New York (JR 63:179, cited in Fenton and Tooker 1978:470). Despite attempts to remain neutral in the tensions between the rest of the Confederacy and the French in the 1680s, the Kahnawakehró:non were drawn into the conflict on the French side. Feeling threatened (perhaps by French settlers as well as other Iroquois) after the Lachine Massacre in 1689, a massacre carried out by other Mohawks[48], the Kahnawakehró:non lived in Montreal for a year, then moved upriver two more times in the next seven years, due to soil conditions. During this time, prior to the end of King William's War in 1696, Kahnawake was subjected to raids by other Iroquois who fought on the English side in the war. However, the Kahnawake Mohawk were active in Queen Anne's War, raiding as far south as Deerfield and Groton, both in Massachusetts. They were also highly active in the trade that went on between Montreal and Albany throughout the war and after, a trade that the

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[48]According to Johnny Beauvais, the raiding Mohawks came because they believed the Kahnawakehro:non to be captives of the French. Beauvais says that the Kahnawakehro:non had already entered the city of Montreal when the other Mohawks arrived, so that the other Mohawks found an empty village. They assumed that the French had done away with their kin, and went to Lachine "to do some active 'reconnaissance' " (Beauvais 1985:62)

French and English both considered contraband. By 1716, Kahnawake was in its present position near Lake Saint Louis and the Lachine Rapids (Fenton and Tooker 1978:471).

During and after the American Revolutionary War, the Confederacy itself was shaken by divided loyalties. Beauvais says that Kahnawake still participated in the Confederacy, but became a "non-voting observer" in 1694 (Beauvais 1985:5). Alfred cites the mention of a "Caughnawaga Nation" during the adoption ceremony of one Scoouwa, or James Smith, around 1755 as proof that the Kahnawakehró:non, while still seeing themselves in terms of the Confederacy and the Mohawk nation as a whole, were coming to think of themselves as distinct in relation to the Confederacy and the rest of the Kanien'keha:ka (Alfred 1992b:11). Kahnawake remained neutral during the American Revolution, in part due to kin ties to adoptees' relatives in Massachusetts, but took the British-Canadian side in the War of 1812[49]. After the war, the Americans and British ceased their hostilities, and as the fur trade declined, Kahnawake faced the loss of its economic base: "thus the modern era was thrust upon Kahnawake with its loss of political and economic significance" (Alfred 1992c:10). The Kahnawakeró:non "turned inward and braced themselves as a community for the long struggle to adapt in a changing political reality" (Ibid.).

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[49]According to Katzer (1972:48), the Kahnawakehro:non were "coerced" into participation in this war.

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