

# Amerindian - Colonial Wars

This period that we are studying is supposed to be characterized by relative peace and a time when the Amerindians and the European colonists were co existing in a sort of reciprocal relationship of mutual benefit.

However, to leave it at that would be lacking in many significant details~

During the first two hundred years of European contact, Canada was the setting for two of the longest wars in the colonial history of North America.

- The Five Nations and New France fought the “Iroquois War” from **1609 to 1701**
- The “Mi’kmaq War” [part of the Abenaki Wars] with the British ran from about **1613 to 1761**



# The Iroquois War (1609-1701)

- the Haudenosaunee Confederation and New France (who were allied with Hurons) were at war
  - the war was hard on both sides as hostilities raged on and off
  - In 1626 the Iroquois numbered 12 000 with 2 200 warriors they defeat the Mohicans and imposed a tribute on all groups living in the Valley of the Hudson and New England
- Around 1645 there are only about 350 settlers in New France
- In 1647 there was a botched attempt at a peace accord
- However, the raids continued,
  - the Iroquois methods of fighting was *Guerilla warfare* which was feared and viewed as a disgraceful manner of fighting by the French
  - this leads the French to propose that the Iroquois be exterminated ~

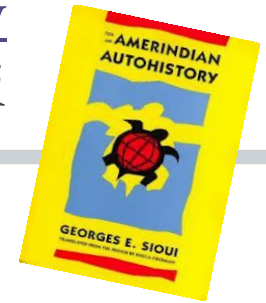
# Huronias Falls

- In 1648 The Iroquois attack Huronia trying to have the Christianized Hurons and French expelled
- By 1649 the Huron (Wendat Confederacy) is destroyed, dispersed – and absorbed essentially by the Iroquois
- In 1653 The French accept a peace accord even though it did not include their Amerindian allies
- *According to the French, it was the control of the fur trade that motivated the Iroquois to fight...*



*this is not necessarily true...*

For an Amerindian Autohistory  
by Georges E. Sioui



- Sioui proposes that what was actually going on was **a fight to save the Amerindian people as a whole by the Iroquois**
- based on readings from Jesuit priests of the day Sioui contends that the Iroquois essentially had to **fight their own by fighting the Huron to weaken the position of New France** which was unfortunately allied with the Huron
- to fight the French meant that the Huron were **collateral damage** to avoid the whole Amerindian population being impacted by a strengthening New France~



[continue to slide 7](#)

# Autohistory

- As a new historical **methodology** that would have historians **revise** the history of Amerindians in North America, more from their own oral histories and understandings than those recorded by Europeans. Sioui encourages historians to take a more circular approach to understanding Amerindian history, culture and so on, than linear – as it is more in keeping with the group that is being studied. His own book pulls from oral histories, poets, elders and the writings of Jesuit priests and other Europeans. [back](#)

Between 1000 – 1500 anthropologists note there are no drastic population shifts among the Amerindians

From 1500 onward, the numbers plummet

In 1640 a Jesuit priest notes...

“**disease, war and famine** are the three scourges (that God has hit the Amerindians with) ...

these events have so greatly thinned the numbers of our Savages' that where eight years ago one could see 80 or 100 cabins barely 5 or 6 now can be seen ...

800 warriors now number 30 or 40...fleets of 300-400 canoes are now 20 or 30”

*Sioui points out that the war waged by the Iroquois has on some level been exaggerated as the Huron were being defeated by microbes and not warfare ~*

what do you think?



# Groups – 5 minutes

1. Genie Allyson Morgan Cassandra blue / facilitator
2. Brandon C Des Christina Kayla green / recorder
3. Maria Mary Heather purple / sharer
4. Katie Danielle Katie Brandon J
5. Ryan M Noah Ben Mandie black / timer
6. Ryan P Hayley P Laura Rylea
7. Hayley S Connor Tyler Danielle

# the saga continues...

- In 1671 the French take possession of the West and shortly after the Iroquois make peace with the Odawa (Ottawa Ojibwa)
- by the late 1690s the French seem to have the upper hand – and the English who were ‘allies’ with the Iroquois weren’t the best at warning the Mohawk of pending attack while arming themselves for defense
- 1697 the French and English sign a peace treaty which does not include the Five Nations
- In 1701 the Five Nations sign a peace agreement with the French in Montreal – ending a century long war~

# where does that leave everyone?

- The **balance of power** is now with the **Five Nations** and not the Huron
- However, the **Iroquois (Five Nations)** come out of this war period having **suffered severe population losses** despite adoptions and war captives losing half their force between 1689 and 1698
- Collateral damages from the century long war – paradoxically (ironically) set up the **English** in a strong position in the Hudson's Bay area
  - *the English were happy to have had the **Iroquois** fighting the French and knocking out Huronia and its strong hold on the trade~*

# The Mi'kmaq and the British (1713 – 1761)

- Mi'kmaq pitch into the colonial wars to reaffirm sovereignty over the land and to defend it
- They do so by land and **by sea**
- Between **1713 and 1760** they capture over **100 vessels**, cruising in their captured ships before abandoning them and forcing their prisoners to serve as crew~



- this activity peaks in 1722 when the **English Indian** war broke out, again in the 1750s after **Halifax** was established and the **French Acadians** were expelled in 1755
- many Acadians had blood ties with the **Mi'kmaq**, all their homes were burned to the ground and many died of shipwreck or disease
- **7 Years War 1756-1763** between France & England begins



# where do the Mi'kmaq fit in?

- In **1725** the **Abenaki** and **British** were signing a peace agreement, some **Mi'kmaq** were encouraged to sign
  - Mascarene's Treaty detailed how the Amerindians were to act as British subjects
- Meanwhile, the **French** are trying to prevent this peace
  - They up the ante by increasing "gift distributions"
- When the **British** 'found' **Halifax (1750s)** they don't consult the Amerindians who are using that land
  - The **Mi'kmaq** formally declare war on the **British** resulting in requests for more arms for the colonists "at the present 10 000 colonists are being awed by 200 savages" the governor commands the colonists to "annoy, distress, take or destroy the Savages commonly called **Mi'kmaqs** where they are found"

- During this period both the French and English paid bounties for scalps at escalating rates with no question asked
  - meanwhile they encourage marriage to Amerindian women
  - and continue to up the “gift distributions”
- The Abenaki and Waustukwiuk ratify the Mascarene Treaty of 1725 with the English in response
  - they gain hunting & fishing rights and gift distributions which would later be annuity payments for surrendered lands
- When the British take over Louisbourg in 1758 they refuse to include Amerindians in the terms of surrender
  - This is a concern for the Mi’kmaq, Abenaki and Wuastukwiuk
  - The Amerindians had been using the French Fort Louisbourg as a headquarters to launch guerrilla attacks



# how does it all end?

- The Mi'kmaq role in these wars had essentially been to keep the colonial powers off balance as they struggle for their own survival
- When the French are defeated at the end of the **7 Years War**, all three Amerindian groups finally acknowledge the British as sovereign and settlers continue to arrive en masse



Death of  
General  
Wolfe