

Nation to Nation

Early First Nation Peoples Relationships



Early Treaties

The Great Law of Peace

The Guswentah (Two Row Wampum) Treaty

The Thirteen Colonies

Early Relationships



- ❧ Before the arrival of the Europeans, First Nations had encountered other groups, through trade, exploration, or seasonal migrations
- ❧ Encounters generally led to a peaceful exchange of goods, ideas and values, but sometimes they led to conflict.
 - ❧ These interactions would sometimes lead to the development of a treaty

Treaties



☞ Definition...

☞ A formally concluded and ratified agreement between nations;

☞ An agreement - pact - contract - covenant - compact

☞ Some treaties ended war, some affirmed trading ties, and some promoted marriages among families of different nations.

❧ As in Europe, some treaties settled conflicts over land

❧ However, land disputes for First Nations revolved around the use of land and the resources and not the actual ownership of the land

❧ according to traditional First Nations world views land ownership was not even possible

❧ *Treaties sorted out how each nation would relate to each of the others and the resources.*

Pre European Treaties



- ☞ Treaties between First Nations worked well because the participants generally shared a similar world view
 - ☞ *mutual respect*
 - ☞ *independence*
 - ☞ *interdependence between sovereign groups and the land*
- ☞ *The principle of mutual respect governed all treaties where participants were valued as being members in a reciprocal relationship (one of give and take)*

The Great Law of Peace



Between 1000 and 1400, the Haudenosaunee nations of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca endured years of conflict: nation against nation, village against village and clan against clan.



Dekanawidah

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- ☞ According to Haudenosaunee oral history, a prophet named Dekanawidah (peacemaker) came across Lake Ontario from the north with a vision of peace and union.
 - ☞ Initially (for some 40 years) he was not able to convince any Haudenosaunee leaders
 - ☞ A woman named Jikonsahseh took him in, listened and gave encouragement
 - ☞ Hiawatha, a Mohawk-Onondaga leader also searching for a solution out of the conflicts listened to Dekanawidah and together they spread the message of peace and won over opponents at a great assembly of leaders
 - ☞ *The agreement resulted in **The Great Law of Peace** which became the founding constitution of North America's first democracy.*

Five Nations Confederacy



- ❧ The agreement resulted in the formation a **confederacy** in which each nation would live with the others in peace...
 - ❧ it defined the rights of individuals and member nations which were each considered as independent
 - ❧ the Grand Council of the Confederacy was established as a forum to deal with issues of common concern, disputes or for defense
 - ❧ leaders didn't vote, all issues were discussed until consensus was reached
 - ❧ this kept peace because there was never a dissenting minority
 - ❧ outside nations were seen as foreign but they could choose to join if they wished
 - ❧ In times of war, the confederacy had the right to self defense, to occupy the territory of an enemy, and to establish treaties of peace and friendship



This treaty belt is meant to be read, right to left, starting with the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga & Seneca



❧ The Great Law of Peace was recorded through a wampum belt.

❧ Wampum belts (made of Quahog shells) were used to record important events and agreements

❧ In 1722, the Tuscarora people joined the confederacy changing it to the Six Nations Confederacy.



The Constitution of the United States



- ☞ Today there are a number of historians who note that the *Haudenosaunee* government influenced the founding fathers of the United States.
 - ☞ concerning democratic thought
 - ☞ and the idea of **federalism** that led to what has become the Constitution of the United States
- ☞ Federalism is a political concept in which a group of members are bound together by a covenant with a governing representative head.

The Guswentah Treaty 1613

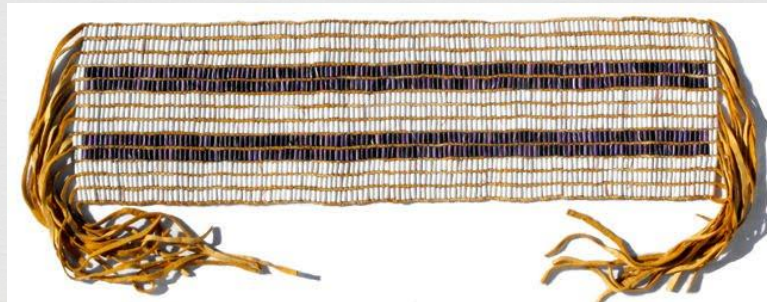
The Two Row Wampum Treaty



☞ One of the earliest known treaties between First Nations and Europeans was the **Guswentah (Two Row Wampum) Treaty**.

☞ it was between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch

☞ the Dutch wanted to establish a trading fort on lands the Haudenosaunee used, so the Confederacy proposed a treaty of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence



- ❧ The terms of the treaty were symbolized by two rows of purple beads on a wampum belt
 - ❧ these symbolized that the nations agreed not to interfere with each other's internal affairs, traditions, customs, values and ways of living
 - ❧ It established a relationship but allowed each to retain complete political, economic, and cultural independence
 - ❧ they could both deal with any other groups as they saw fit

❧ *This treaty became a model for all future treaties between the Haudenosaunee and European nations*

How did the Europeans regard these early treaties?



- ∞ The British accepted the treaty when they took over the Dutch colony in 1674.
- ∞ In 1701, the Haudenosaunee signed **the Treaty of Peace** in Montreal with the French, ending close to a hundred years of conflict.
- ∞ In 1768, **the Treaty of Fort Stanwix** was signed between the British and the Haudenosaunee.

The Thirteen Colonies



- ❧ Unfortunately, even though the British crown attempted to follow the idea of the treaty, they seemed unable to stop some settlers from seizing land.
- ❧ Britain was losing control of settlers in its Thirteen Colonies (now part of the United States).
- ❧ The Thirteen Colonies rebelled against British rule in 1775
 - ❧ some Haudenosaunee joined the Americans against the British
 - ❧ others side with the British
 - ❧ most decide it's not their fight & don't take sides
 - ❧ American rebels see the neutrality as support for the Crown & drive Haudenosaunee out of their homes
- ❧ After the War of Independence, the Americans signed the **Canandaigua Treaty** with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, agreeing to respect Haudenosaunee territory.