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Restoring the thin red line : British policy and the Indians of the Great Lakes, 1783-1812.

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RESTORING THE THIN RED LINE: BRITISH POLICY AND THE INDIANS OF THE GREAT LAKES, 1783-1812

A Dissertation Presented

by

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Dave and Claudette Willig.

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ABSTRACT

RESTORING THE THIN RED LINE: BRITISH POLICY AND THE INDIANS OF THE GREAT LAKES, 1783-1812

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This study examines British-Indian relations in the Great Lakes and Upper Canada between 1783 and 1812 and focuses on intercultural frontier relations and Native responses to Britain's actions and imperial Indian policies as Native Americans explored ways to preserve their lands and cultures while simultaneously attempting to redefine their relationship with their former British allies. Specifically, the project compares British-Indian interaction and diplomacy in three regions throughout Upper Canada and the Old Northwest. These three locales correspond roughly to the areas served by Britain's three principal Indian agencies in Upper Canada at the time –namely Fort St. Joseph, Fort Amherstburg, and Fort George. The Natives of each of these three areas developed unique relationships with the British, and as a result, Britain could not establish a single Indian policy that applied everywhere in its North American borderlands. Government leaders and Indian agents in Canada and the Great Lakes were forced to adapt Whitehall's policies to conditions and circumstances that were prevalent in each of the sectors in which British agents and leaders dealt with indigenous peoples. Several factors affected the evolution of British-Indian relations from region to region.

These included the fur trade, Indian relations and warfare with the United States, geographical position, the influence of British-Indian agents, intertribal relations between various Native groups, the degree of Indian acculturation with whites, Native cultural revitalization, and the constitutional issues of Native sovereignty and legal status. As a result, Britain was unable to preserve the unity among its confederated tribal allies that it had enjoyed during the American Revolution, and by the War of 1812, the old "Chain of Friendship" had devolved into a collection of smaller alliances.

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INTRODUCTION

The latter years of the eighteenth century marked a period of change and uncertainty in both Europe and North America. Nowhere was this more so than along the American frontier, where Native Americans struggled to preserve their lands and cultures against the rapidly expanding United States. The ongoing struggle in the West represented a continuing phase of the American Revolution that did not cease when Euro-American powers made peace at Paris in 1783. Consequently, Great Britain's frontier policy and the Crown's relations with its Native allies underwent several changes during these postwar years. This study focuses specifically on British Indian relations in the Great Lakes and Upper Canada (present-day Ontario) between 1783 and 1812. The period begins with Britain's involvement among the Indians of the Ohio Valley during the latter's attempt to retain possession of the Old Northwest,[1] and it ends at the outset of the final British-American war, a struggle which virtually ended Native resistance to American expansion in the Great Lakes.

This crucial twenty-nine-year period had three distinct phases. The first, 1783-1795, saw Britain enjoy its greatest influence over the confederated tribes of the Ohio Valley, as this quasi-alliance inflicted two significant defeats on American forces before suffering its own demise against Anthony Wayne's victorious United States Legion in 1794, followed by the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. Then, between 1796 and 1807 British-Indian policy was wholly transformed, and British officials, both in Canada and at Whitehall in London, implemented a policy of retrenchment in an effort to vastly reduce the government's financial obligations and diplomatic ties to their former allies,

particularly those Natives dwelling in United States territory. During this decade of relative calm, Anglo-American relations appeared stable, and the former British-Indian wartime coalition tended to fade. Finally, from 1807 to 1812 close British-Indian relations were in part revived as the United States expansionist policy continued to alarm and provoke the Natives and as Britain's relations with the Americans continued to deteriorate as a by-product of British maritime policies primarily aimed at crippling Napoleonic France. In other words, when Great Britain and the Natives of the Old Northwest again became allies, this restored relationship was formed more in the context of sharing a common enemy than out of a sense of devotion and respect for traditional allegiances. Thus, after 1807, when British agents attempted to restore their government's former "Chain of Friendship" or past alliance with the Indians of the Great Lakes, the Native responses were often varied and lukewarm. The British-Indian alliance which was reformed on the immediate eve of the War of 1812 was a matter of necessity for both Britishers and Natives alike.

A handful of scholars have touched upon aspects of this subject. A few of them have written diplomatic studies pertaining to the American frontier directly after the American Revolution, including Samuel F. Bemis, of whose well-known monograph, Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy, was originally published in 1923 and revised in 1962. Bemis highlighted the significance of the frontier in influencing British policy, linking the latter to events in Europe. Although he handled British-Indian relations crudely and failed to elucidate any of the nuances of that relationship, Bemis at least acknowledged the common interest that the British and Indians had in protecting the

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[1] The Old Northwest encompassed the present-day states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and parts of Minnesota.

Old Northwest from the Americans, and the importance of a potential Native buffer state between British and American territorial possessions. This alone greatly affected Whitehall's policy. Throughout this period the British always viewed their Indian allies as vital for the protection of Upper Canada and Britain's interest in the Great Lakes. Yet in spite of his recognizing the vital importance of the western country during the postwar years, Bemis failed to appreciate the Indians' right to their homelands, which they had successfully defended during the American Revolution. The author further maintained that the Crown's retention of the British posts on American soil after the war was a gross violation of the Anglo-American peace, and that Britain, not the United States, stood as the principal belligerent in threatening diplomatic relations between the two countries and between the United States and the Indians who dwelled in its western territories.

Bemis's interpretation was indicative of a broader paradigm that held sway in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one which tended to portray Native Americans as savage impediments to the enlightened expansion of the fledgling American republic. In this vein, Jeffersonian Republicans were depicted as the defenders of true liberty, and the Jeffersonians' anti-British sentiments said to represent the proper diplomatic philosophy. With this understanding, all of Britain's activities pertaining to North America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were deemed potentially nefarious, and Anglo-American disputes of that era were seen as the principal threat to the survival of American democracy. Such a skewed perception justified American expansionist principles and disregarded Native American territorial and cultural claims; it also denied the British government the right to protect its trade, territorial interests, and Britain's right to insure American treaty compliance after the war. Finally, and most

importantly for the purposes of this study, this view does not acknowledge the necessity for a continuation of British-Indian relations in the Great Lakes, and it fails to understand the complexities of that relationship.

More recently, other diplomatic studies have countered this paradigm, taking a new look at the frontier, its inhabitants, and the British role there. Charles R. Ritcheson, in his Aftermath of Revolution: British Policy Toward the United States, 1783-1795 (1969), directly challenges the older interpretation of Bemis. Ritcheson not only views the American Jeffersonian perspective as flawed, but he blames this mentality among early American leaders for the persistence of the nation's poor relations with Great Britain, and for its continued frontier difficulties. Arguing that it was in Britain's best interests to maintain peace in the Old Northwest between the Americans and the Indians, the author largely legitimizes Britain's frontier role, implicitly suggesting that British-Indian relations in the Great Lakes were far more complex than an American nationalist interpretation would allow.

In another work, Britain and the American Frontier, 1783-1815 (1975), J. Leitch Wright, Jr. expands on the subject of British policy and activity on the frontier, making it the central focus of his monograph. This work encompasses the entire time frame covered in this project, and Wright successfully demonstrates that British Indian policy in North America throughout this period, while inconsistent at times, was principally based on Britain's greater concern to defeat France and Spain. Although its policy was not directly aimed at fomenting strife with the Americans, Whitehall, often as a byproduct of its efforts to thwart its European rivals, usually sought to limit American expansion and at times would even have welcomed an opportunity to dismember the new republic.

Wright's interpretation, then, while presenting a British perspective for the necessity of the Crown's involvement with the Indians, simultaneously demonstrates that Jeffersonian fears of British intrigue on the frontier were not completely unfounded. However, contrary to American claims, British policy makers never devised a consistent, overall plan for the Crown's frontier role, nor was America their primary concern. The lack of a clear, comprehensive frontier policy from Whitehall tended to heighten the significance and influence of the activities of the numerous independent loyalists, agents, and pro-British mixed-bloods who continued to attempt to rally and unite the Natives under the British standard, while claiming to represent the King. Therefore, while numerous Indians, loyalists, and even Americans believed that partisan British activity on the frontier represented direct instructions from home, such was often not the case, particularly at a time when Whitehall was noncommittal in forming a specific policy. Wright emphasizes the importance of the loyalist activities, demonstrating how much their interests at times diverged from that of the home government.

These diplomatic studies, while shedding light on British motives behind the Crown's frontier policy, do not adequately inform the reader on prevailing frontier conditions at the time, nor do they sufficiently convey Native American perspectives. In her classic work, The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest (1935), Louise Phelps Kellogg provided a rich narrative history of the Great Lakes and the Upper Mississippi Valley, making the activity of key figures there, rather than government policy, her central focus. Kellogg's story unfolds as traders, agents, Indians, and field officers established a diplomatic landscape of common interests, based on the fur trade and military alliances. People of multiple ethnicities and nationalities formed

connections in order to achieve their community of interests; by paying homage to Native customs and conventional diplomacy in the northern country, the British managed to maintain Indian allegiance throughout the War of 1812. In a sense, Kellogg's study was an early form of Richard White's later ethnohistorical monograph, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (1992), a benchmark work that emphasized an intercultural society based on mutual interests between indigenous peoples and Euro-Americans in the eighteenth century. According to White, neither Indians nor Europeans could fully impose their customs and ideologies on other peoples in the region of the Old Northwest, but instead, an entirely new cultural milieu emerged. The effects of this cultural interplay is seen on a personal level when studying the lives of British Indian agents who served and fought on the frontier, living among their adopted Native kinsmen and often taking Indian wives. The best scholarly biographies in this area include Reginald Horsman's Matthew Elliott, British Indian Agent (1964) and Larry L. Nelson's A Man of Distinction Among Them: Alexander McKee and British-Indian Affairs along the Ohio Country Frontier, 1754-1799 (1999).

Two other related works are worthy of mention, since they focus primarily on British-Indian relations in the Great Lakes during the era covered by this study. In Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783-1815 (1987), Colin Calloway provides an ethnohistorical approach to understanding both British and Native perspectives of this relationship as these cultures interacted in the contexts of trade, war, and diplomacy. Calloway deemphasizes policy history, concentrating more on issues of cultural and racial conceptions and misunderstandings. More pertinent and useful to this dissertation is Robert S. Allen's His Majesty's Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the

Defence of Canada, 1774-1815 (1993), a policy history that lucidly demonstrates how Britain's Indian policy effectively slowed American expansion and saved Upper Canada, but failed to preserve Native lands and cultures.

The present study is also a policy history, though it takes into account the fact that, as it made its way down from Whitehall to the actual setting in which it was applied, British policy became elastic and even protean in virtually every respect save one, the issue of Native sovereignty. In other respects, the rational coherence and long-term stability seemingly implicit in the term "policy" was frequently lacking in Britain's relations with its Native allies on both sides of the Canadian-United States border. At the center of policy-making in Whitehall relations with indigenous peoples on the Empire's North American periphery was at best a tertiary concern compared to the imperial bureaucracy's primary focus on Britain's powerful European rivals, especially Revolutionary France, and to a secondary focus on whether the United States would take an antagonistic or a neutral posture toward British interests. Whitehall officials, distracted by these more pressing crises, often issued directives to their North American subordinates without devoting the necessary time and energy needed to construct a cohesive long-term plan for imperial relations with Britain's Native allies in Canada and the United States.

By acknowledging and illustrating this protean aspect of the term "policy" when applied to British-Native diplomacy, the present study makes an important contribution to understanding precisely how British-Indian relations evolved in North America between 1783 and 1815. This dissertation incorporates more Native perspectives than previous monographs on Euro-American frontier policy, whether British or American.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes the fact that Whitehall for the most part did not achieve a unified, long-term Indian policy, and that Britain's diplomatic initiatives did not have a uniform effect when implemented in different regions of the Empire's North American borderlands. In practice, British Indian agents were compelled to tailor Whitehall's directives to conform to the unique circumstances and conditions of each of the separate geographical areas in which Britain conducted its affairs with indigenous peoples. Moreover, the Native peoples in each of these regions, with their diverse histories and varied political and military goals, often played key roles in shaping local variations in British policies. Factors affecting these bonds included: the fur trade, geographical position, Indian relations and warfare with the United States, the influence of British-Indian agents, intertribal relations between various Native groups, degree of Indian acculturation, and the constitutional issues of Native sovereignty and legal status. This study specifically compares British relations with Indians living in both the United States and Canada from the Crown's three principal Indian agencies in Upper Canada at Forts Amherstburg (i.e., Malden), St. Joseph, and George between 1783 and 1812.[2]

[2] Prior to 1796, these three agencies were located at adjacent sites on the American side of the border at Forts Detroit, Mackinac, and Niagara, respectively.

CHAPTER 1

THE QUEST FOR A JUST PEACE: BRITISH-INDIAN RELATIONS, 1783-1795

The twelve years immediately after the United States and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Paris in 1783 were marked by great volatility in British relations with the Crown's wartime Native allies in North America. British officials in western territories, Quebec, and London struggled to find a balance between competing and often contradictory aims: restoring the Indians' faith in British friendship and maintaining strong trade ties with them, while avoiding a general conflict between the U. S. and western tribes that might draw Britain into another unwanted war with its former colonies. Meanwhile, Indians who lived in parts of western New York, the upper Ohio River Valley, and the Great Lakes region that Britain had ceded to the United States labored to construct military, cultural, and political alliances that would enable them to retain their lands and their sovereignty in the face of expansionist pressure from the newly established United States.

This chapter traces how these themes played out in three brief periods between the Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Greenville (1795), the latter negotiated between the United States and the Ohio Valley tribes. The first period, 1783-1789, saw Britain retain possession of its forts in the trans-Appalachian west and witnessed Native efforts to build an intertribal coalition capable of resisting U. S. expansion. The second period, 1789-1792, produced a number of successes for the Natives as they developed, with encouragement from the British, intertribal village communities along the Maumee River and dealt defeats to two major American military expeditions. The third and final section covers the years from 1793-1795, a period during which British diplomatic and military

leaders largely stood aside as their Native allies went down to defeat at the hands of the United States.

Growth of the Intertribal Confederacy, 1783-1789

After having ceded most of the territory south of the Great Lakes to the United States in the Treaty of Paris of 1783, Britain continued to maintain a presence within the northern borders of the new republic by garrisoning eight posts on American soil. Moreover, the Indian inhabitants continued to defy the exaggerated American claims of conquest over their homelands. Nevertheless, many long-term policy choices remained unsettled. Evacuation of the upper country[1] was still a possibility, but if that step was taken, how would it affect the British fur trade and the future of the British-Indian alliance? Furthermore, Whitehall also pondered the security of its possessions north of the Lakes, the region soon to be partitioned off as the Province of Upper Canada.[2] Eventually Britain would have to demonstrate the extent of its resolve to defend these interests.

These issues arose due to the terms of the Treaty of Paris. The British government had been so eager to extricate itself from its problems in North America that it signed an agreement that neither restored British honor nor protected the sovereign territory of its Indian allies. When the French commissioner Count de Vergennes realized the full extent of the proposed British territorial cession, he remarked, "You will

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[1] The term "upper country" was used to collectively describe the region of higher altitude which encompassed the area of the Great Lakes, the Old Northwest, and the region of Upper Canada, or present-day Ontario. At the highest elevations of this upper region, a natural watershed south of the Great Lakes separated the two principal river systems which either flowed southwest toward the Mississippi River, or northeast, emptying into the Great Lakes.

[2] Parliament created the Province of Upper Canada in 1791.

notice that the English buy the peace more than they make it. Their concessions…exceed all that I should have thought possible."[3] Realistically, Britain merely needed to grant political independence to its thirteen rebelling colonies, without making further territorial concessions. By retaining possession of the Upper Country and Great Lakes, the British government could have better protected the rights of its Native allies and its Canadian possessions north of the Great Lakes. A majority in Parliament also thought the treaty far more generous than anything they had imagined. When news of the terms reached them, the government of Lord Shelburne and his liberal ministry collapsed under a storm of protest.

As a result of this diplomatic snafu, British leaders in Canada and officers in the British Indian Department faced the difficult assignment of simultaneously withdrawing from the war while somehow convincing their Native allies that the peace was honorable rather than disastrous. The unenviable task of actually addressing Britain's Iroquois allies fell upon John Johnson, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, while Alexander McKee, the Department's second-highest ranking officer, was to acquaint the western nations with the news. In May 1783, Sir Frederick Haldimand, Governor-General of Quebec, ordered Johnson to "repair immediately to [Fort] Niagara" to address the Six Nations and other tribes of the Covenant Chain regarding the peace.[4] Johnson and McKee would need to strike a fine balance between truth and grace in their crucial addresses. They must convince their late allies that the King had not abandoned them,

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[3] Vergennes to Raymond, 4 December 1782, in Francis Wharton, ed., The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, 6 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), VI: 107.

[4] Haldimand to Johnson, 22 May 1783, Canadian National Archives (hereafter CNA), Haldimand Papers, MG 21, B115, 106; Earle Thomas, Sir John Johnson, Loyalist Baronet (Toronto: Dundurn Press, Ltd., 1986), 105-07.

that the treaty was just, that the Americans would recognize their rights, and that the King in the future would continue in his role as their protector.

Johnson, known as "Owassighsishon" ("He Who Makes the Roof to Tremble") among his Iroquois brethren, delivered his long-awaited speech on 23 July. He reassured the Six Nations' leaders that nothing had changed in their relationship to the King, who still regarded them "as his children" and "faithful allies," and "should the Americans molest, or claim any part of our country, we shall then ask assistance of the King our father." But Johnson "could not harbor the idea that the United States [would ever] act so unjustly or unpolitically as to endeavour to deprive [them] of any part of [their] country under the pretense of having conquered it." Finally, the Superintendent affirmed "the boundary line agreed upon…to be just."[5] Johnson's reassurances were generally well received.[6] Similarly, McKee, an adopted Shawnee known as White Elk, reiterated these sentiments when he later addressed the nations further west. In an effort to preserve British interests in the Upper Country, McKee gathered representatives from the western nations and tribes from the northern Lakes and addressed them at a council held at Lower Sandusky in August and September of 1783. Like Johnson, McKee argued that the Americans would recognize Indian sovereignty north of the Ohio River, and promised that the King "will continue to promote your happiness by his protection."[7]

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[5] "Johnson's Speech at Niagara, July, 1783," in A. L. Burt, The United States, Great Britain, and British North America: From the Revolution to the Establishment of Peace after the War of 1812 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 89-90; speech originally taken from CNA, MG 11, Q21, 433-35.

[6] It must be remembered that Johnson, like his Iroquois friends and allies, also lost his home and inheritance as a result of the war. This included the mansions at Johnson Hall and Fort Johnson, and the vast land holdings stretching throughout much of the Mohawk River Valley.

[7] "Transactions with the Indians at Sandusky, 26 August to 8 September," Historical Collections of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society (hereafter MPHC), XX: 174-83. Also see Larry B. Nelson, A Man of Distinction among Them: Alexander McKee and British-Indian Affairs along the Ohio Country

Although leery of the proposed peace settlement and its ramifications, the Indians appeared less shaken after Johnson's and McKee's calming reassurances. Uncertain about future relations with whites, the Indians certainly had no reason to suspect that the United States would attempt to extend its sovereignty over their lands, particularly after their intertribal alliances had achieved a string of victories against American armies in the past three years alone: Mohawk Valley (1780 and 1781), Schoharie Valley (1780), Lochry's Defeat (1781), Sandusky (1782), and Blue Licks (1782).[8] Thus, based on their wartime feats and an apparent continuation in their relationship with their "British Father," the Natives initially had no reason to interpret the war's end as anything more than a truce, and certainly did not believe themselves bound by a treaty they had not signed to relinquish territories that they had defended so successfully.[9]

Shortly after Johnson and McKee delivered their respective speeches, Governor General Haldimand made two crucial decisions to help bolster Native confidence in British fidelity towards them. First, he defied the terms of the peace by refusing to evacuate the northern posts within American territory.[10] The Governor General made this determination on his own, before knowing that the Americans would renege on their

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Frontier, 1754-1799 (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999), 131-32. A few Iroquois also attended the McKee's council held at Lower Sandusky.

[8] Robert S. Allen, His Majesty's Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the Defence of Canada, 1774-1815 (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), 54. Good accounts of these actions are found scattered in several publications, including: E. A. Cruikshank, Butler's Rangers: The Revolutionary Period (Welland, ON, 1893; 3rd reprint, Niagara Falls, ON: Renown Printing Co. Ltd., 1988); Barbara Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972); William L. Potter, "Redcoats on the Frontier: The King's Regiment in the Revolutionary War," in Robert J. Holden, ed., Selected Papers from the First and Second George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences (Vincennes: Vincennes University Press, 1985), 41-60; and Charles I. Walker, "The Northwest During the Revolution," in MPHC, III: 12-36.

[9] Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 434.

part of the treaty.[11] Haldimand's decision aimed at achieving multiple goals: to placate the Indians, protect British fur trade interests, reduce the threat of a general Indian war against the Americans, and hamper American expansion into lands west of the Appalachians. To the degree that Haldimand simply sought to maintain a status quo in the western country, his actions were consistent with Britain's wartime Indian policies, but he also initiated policy changes in response to postwar conditions. At the request of John Johnson and Mohawk leader Joseph Brant, the Governor General moved to set aside lands in Canada along the Grand River, specifically for the British-allied Six Nations (i.e. Iroquois) and their dependencies who had lost their homelands during the war.[12] Haldimand's actions temporarily brought about the desired continuity he sought, bolstering the confidence of both the Iroquois and western tribes that had fought for the Crown.

The Governor General's pivotal decision to resettle the loyal Iroquois in Canada indicated that the British leaders there would attempt to act in good faith toward their indigenous allies, regardless of the home government's betrayal at Paris the year before.[13]

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[10] Haldimand to North, 27 November 1783, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 46.

[11] A full compliance with the terms of the Treaty of Paris would have required the American government to pay its nation's outstanding prewar debts to British merchants, and the separate state governments needed to either restore confiscated loyalist property to its owners, or to at least compensate these loyal refugees for their losses. Far from regaining their property, most loyalists still suffered harassment, ridicule, physical harm, and sometimes even death when attempting to collect their property in the former American colonies after the war. These violations represented breaches of Articles V & VI of the Treaty of Paris. Burt, 95-98; Charles R. Ritcheson, Aftermath of Revolution: British Policy Toward the United States, 1783-1795 (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1969; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1971), 59-69, 80-87. The entire Treaty of Paris, 1783, including a non-ratified article of the Treaty, is found in Samuel F. Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), Appendix, 259-64.

[12] "Haldimand Grant," in Graymont, Appendix B, 299; Isabel Thompson Kelsay, Joseph Brant, 1743-1807: Man of Two Worlds (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 363.

[13] Lord Shelburne, Prime Minister during the preliminary peace negotiations in Paris, defended his government's actions arguing, "the Indian nations were not abandoned to their enemies; they were remitted

Moreover, by receiving Crown lands, the refugee Iroquois would be encouraged to believe that their British Father cared for them as much as he did for his white children, the American Loyalists who also received new tracts of land in Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Bahamas. The motivations underlying both the Haldimand Grant and the retention of Britain's western posts seemed parallel. The two measures sought to protect the rights and preserve the sovereignty of both the western Indians and Britain's Iroquois allies.[14]

British postwar Indian policy, a basis for continuity and unity among the allied tribes, contained another traditional feature. As primary architect of that policy, Haldimand made his decisions compatible with past British policy, which attempted to utilize the Iroquois League's alleged supremacy over the western tribes as the key to controlling the nations throughout the Great Lakes.[15] This rationale was in keeping with the frontier diplomacy practiced by English colonial leaders since 1677, when the colonial government of New York established a loose alliance with Iroquois League known as the Covenant Chain.[16] In 1761, after the British conquest of Canada and

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to the care of neighbors, whose interests it was as much ours to cultivate friendship with them, and who were certainly the best qualified for softening and humanizing their hearts." Quoted in Graymont, 262; Colin G. Calloway also alludes to this excerpt in Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783-1815 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 8.

[14] The reader can compare the "Haldimand Grant" in Graymont, 299, to Haldimand's initial intention to retain the posts in the Upper Country in his letter to North, 27 November 1783, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 46. In his attempts to protect the Indians by preventing "such a disastrous event as an Indian war," the Governor saw the necessity in "allowing the posts in the upper country to remain as they are for sometime."

[15] The Iroquois League consisted of the Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, and Tuscarora nations.

[16] Francis Jennings cleverly disassembles the myth of a perpetual Iroquois empire in The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), especially chapter 2. Jennings also provides an overview of the history of the Covenant Chain in "Iroquois Alliances in American History," in The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy, eds. Jennings, William N. Fenton, Mary A. Druke, and David R. Miller (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 37-65. An important eighteenth-century perspective supporting the notion of Iroquois dominance over their western neighbors is

eviction of French civil authority, Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the North, continued to recognize Iroquois leadership over the western tribes in an extended "Chain of Friendship" which included the nations of the Great Lakes and upper country.

Despite the tumultuous changes brought by the American Revolution, Haldimand saw no need to abandon the Covenant Chain approach, and the Governor General continued to envision a general Indian policy carried out under the auspices of the Iroquois, particularly the Mohawks, who most ardently favored British interests. Late in 1783 he reassured Indian agent Daniel Claus, son-in-law to the late William Johnson, "I have always considered the Mohawks as the first Nation deserving of the attention of Government and I have been particularly interested for their Welfare and reestablishment."[17] The Governor also saw little need for a separate Indian policy tailored specifically to the interests of the Great Lakes nations. Haldimand predicted,

> [t]he conduct of the Western Indians (tho' infinitely a more numerous people) will always be governed by that of the Six Nations, so nice a management of them may not, therefore, be necessary –some presents and marks of friendship are nevertheless due to them for their past services, and should from time to time be dispersed among them.[18]

By naming Sir William Johnson's son John as Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1782, followed by the declaration of the Haldimand Grant two years later, the Governor

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Cadwallader Colden's History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada which are Dependent upon the Province of New York… 2 vols. (1727-1747; reprint, New York: Williams-Barker Co. 1904).

[17] Haldimand to Claus, 17 December 1783, CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, III: 277.

[18] "Memorandum Respecting the Public Matters in the Province of Quebec submitted for the consideration of the Right Honourable Lord Sydney by General Haldimand," 16 March 1785, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 48, 251.

General hoped to recreate the prewar British Indian policy that would assure a continuation of British imperial interests among the nations of the interior.

Haldimand's continuation of the former Indian policy had little chance of succeeding in the confused geo-political setting of the post-Revolution years. After losing most of their homeland during the war, and witnessing the extinguishing of the League's council fire at Onondaga in 1777, the Iroquois were in no position to wield the sort of influence that Haldimand and William Johnson had once imagined. Two of the League's six nations, the Tuscaroras and Oneidas, had sided with the Americans in the war, and before the League could recover and reunite at the war's conclusion, American commissioners quickly negotiated a new treaty with the Iroquois in 1784 at Fort Stanwix. The commissioners demanded Iroquois compliance based on a claim of conquest. All Six Nations were present, and all grudgingly acquiesced in the American demands for cession of virtually all Iroquois territory on American soil (acknowledged by the Treaty of Paris) outside of the state of New York.[19] In contrast to the British strategy, the American government attempted to reduce Iroquois prestige, hoping to terminate whatever vestige of Iroquois suzerainty remained over the western tribes.

In spite of the Six Nations' decline after the Revolution, Mohawk leader Joseph Brant attempted to assume a position of intertribal leadership over the confederated tribes in the Great Lakes that continued to resist American expansion.[20] Without any hereditary authority among his own people, Brant's claim to authority rested on his record as a war

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[19] Francis Paul Prucha, American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 46-48.

[20] The most important western nations that continued to resist American expansion after the Revolution included the Shawnees, Wyandots, Delawares, Miamis, Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis. The latter three are thought to have a common origin, and are sometimes collectively referred to as the Three Fires.

leader. Warriors in the West recalled Brant's participation in key frontier actions during their recent struggle against the Americans. The Mohawk sachem had led them to a brilliant victory over a sizable portion of George Roger Clark's army on the Ohio River in the summer of 1781,[21] and his presence a year later at the overwhelming defeat of William Crawford's American forces along the Sandusky marked Brant as a leader who always fought for the western confederacy's best interests. In addition to these feats, the Mohawk warrior also held additional influence by virtue of his status as the late Sir William Johnson's brother-in-law and his rank as a Captain in the British Indian Department.

Although Brant, Haldimand, John Johnson, and others shared the expectation of future Iroquois leadership among the Great Lakes tribes, several developments worked against this policy. Guy Carleton (recently named Lord Dorchester), who replaced Haldimand as Governor General of Quebec late in 1786, did not attempt to sustain Haldimand's outdated theory of Iroquois leadership over the western nations. Moreover, when Dorchester arrived in 1786, only a year after Haldimand predicted permanent Iroquois hegemony, occurrences in the West foreshadowed a new era and a separate path for the western nations. Brant, hoping to reestablish the old wartime alliance, traveled to the principal Shawnee villages of Mackachak and Wapatomica in southwestern Ohio late in 1786. Shortly after his arrival there, a Kentucky militia under the command of Benjamin Logan invaded the region, destroying both villages.[22] Although Brant and

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[21] Lochry's Defeat; Kelsay, 312-13.

[22] Wiley Sword, President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790-1795 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 37-40; White, The Middle Ground, 433. This expeditionary force included Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton. John Mack Faragher covers their involvement in the campaign in Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1992), 251-55.

numerous others were absent hunting when the Kentuckians attacked, the raid prompted all of the tribal delegations to seek a new site for a general council fire. They agreed to hold a council at the Wyandot village known as Brownstown, situated along the Huron River at the west end of Lake Erie, roughly sixteen miles south of Detroit.

The move to Brownstown marked a key turning point in Indian affairs in the Old Northwest. On Christmas Eve, 1786, the leaders of the newly established Confederacy at Brownstown formally met with the British at Detroit and requested direct intervention and continuing support.[23] From their location close to Detroit, the intertribal councils would now come more heavily under the influence of the British army and Indian Department, and especially Alexander McKee. American Indian agent Thomas Forsyth later asserted that the British led the Confederacy at Brownstown, which drew its Native members from among the "Shawanoes, Delawars, Mingoes, Wyandots, Miamies, Chipeways, Ottawas and Pottawatimies."[24] According to Forsyth, there existed an official belt of wampum that symbolized all of the nations in the Confederacy and placed the British at the head. At Brownstown, Forsyth continued, "The British government is always represented by their Indian Agent, and most generally accompanied by a military officer."[25] Forsyth's information was based on his contact with numerous Indians during his long career in the Great Lakes. He compared the new western Confederacy's meeting

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[23] Kelsay, 404.

[24] Emma Helen Blair, ed., Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1912), II: 188.

[25] Ibid., 189. Historian Richard White contradicts Forsyth, arguing, "official British representatives were not present at Brownstown." In The Middle Ground, 434. In spite of this disagreement between White and Forsyth (and probably an oversight by White), White agrees that the Confederacy leaders at Brownstown maintained close ties with the British at Detroit and that the Confederacy grew increasingly dependent upon the British after the initial council at Brownstown in 1786.

place at Brownstown to the old Iroquois League's gathering place "on the Mohawk River at Sir William Johnston's [Johnson's] place of residence."[26] The geographical shift paralleled a shift in leadership, since the Brownstown Confederacy's resistance to United States hegemony depended on British assistance rather than on military cooperation with the Six Nations. The host Wyandot nation, nominally the Confederacy's Native leaders, were in fact largely under British influence.

The growing importance of the British in the Confederacy's reconfiguration was also attributable to other factors. The Wyandots were led by a pro-British chief, Adam Brown, whose life and origins remain largely a mystery. Some sources suggest that he was probably not even a full-blooded Wyandot, but either a mixed-blood or "an English boy" from Virginia captured in 1755.[27] His very obscurity partially hints at why the British would so soon wield so much influence among the Confederacy at his council fire. Lacking the stature of Brant, or of other war leaders such as Blue Jacket, Little Turtle, Red Jacket, or Buckongahelas, Adam Brown was merely a village chief who gained what influence he did have by consistently supporting British interests in the West. The appeal to the British of working with a relatively weak leader like Brown was that they were ensured a key position in the Confederacy.

Britain's new relationship with the Brownstown Confederacy had its risks. First, it might involve the British government in a renewed conflict with the Americans. Also,

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[26] Blair, II: 188.

[27] E. A. Cruikshank, a late nineteenth-century, and early twentieth-century historian, described Brown as "[a] half-breed chief of the Wyandots," in Cruikshank, ed., The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe, with Allied Documents Relating to His Administration of the Government of Upper Canada, 5 Vols. (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1923-1931), III: 183, footnote 1. However, Emma Helen Blair, a contemporary of Cruikshank, noted Brown's English colonial origins in Virginia, in Blair II: 189, footnote 67. According to Blair, Brown died sometime after the War of 1812. ibid.

closer diplomatic ties to the Indians always meant greater expenditures for the Crown, money Whitehall was loath to expend.[28] Further complicating matters, British personnel who lived nearer to the Indians in the upper country did not entirely share the views of their superiors in Quebec and London. Writing at a time when Haldimand, Dorchester, and Lord Sydney (Secretary of State of the Home Department) all wanted to reduce expenses and obligations to the western Indians, Alexander McKee informed his superior in the Indian Department, John Johnson, that the British were obligated to demonstrate "some favourable support toward their [the Indians'] right of the country: this is the object that secures their reliance on and attachment to us, which must continue while this is their expectation."[29] McKee and several of his cohorts in the Indian Department, particularly Matthew Elliott, William Caldwell, and Simon Girty, spoke from the viewpoint of men who lived among the Indians in the Ohio region and had Native wives. Elliott and Caldwell had formed a partnership in the fur trade among the Ohio Indians after the Revolution, but Logan's raid dealt a lethal blow to this enterprise along the Great Miami River. Logan's men also destroyed Alexander McKee's home in the nearby Shawnee village of Kispoko on the same expedition.[30] Clearly, the Indian Department's officers who served on the frontier held vested interests in their desire for the British government to intervene on behalf of the nations who resisted American expansion. The conflicting interests of the British government and their Indian agents in the field frequently affected how policy was carried out in the upper country in the decades from

[28] Lord Sydney to General Hope, 6 April 1786, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 49, 59.

[29] McKee to Johnson, 25 February 1786, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 49, 258.

[30] Reginald Horsman, Matthew Elliott, British Indian Agent (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964), 55-57; Nelson, A Man of Distinction among Them, 153-54

1785 to 1815. Policies formulated at Whitehall often sounded very different when agents described them in council to the Indians.[31]

Finding it unsafe to remain in the region of the Great Miami River after Logan's raid, Shawnee refugees began migrating to new homes along the Maumee River, situated in the far northwestern portion of present-day Ohio, a region over which the Miami, Wyandot, and Delaware nations also held claims. The move to the Maumee River Valley made it convenient for the Indian Department from Detroit to maintain contact with these villagers; several departmental officers and fur traders once again made their homes among their clientele and adopted families, further contributing to the formation of diverse intertribal enclaves along the Maumee. These sites included Kekionga at the headwaters of the Maumee; the Glaize, located at the confluence of the Auglaize and Maumee Rivers; Roche de Bout; and the Foot of the Rapids.[32]

In the latter 1780s Kekionga became the most important of these intertribal communities. Miami, Delaware, and Shawnee villages thronged the banks of the Maumee, St. Joseph's, and St. Mary's Rivers at what was probably the most important confluence and portage in the Old Northwest. Little Turtle, one of the Miami leaders who lived near this site, once referred to Kekionga as "that glorious gate...through which all the good words of our chiefs had to pass from the north to the south, and from the east

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[31] Reginald Horsman, "The British Indian Department and the Resistance to General Anthony Wayne, 1793-1795," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 49(2) (1962): 270-71; Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 51, 64-65, 70-74.

[32] Kekionga was the site of present-day Fort Wayne, Indiana; the Glaize, present-day Defiance, Ohio; and the Foot of the Rapids, Toledo, Ohio. Roche de Bout sat a short distance upstream from the Rapids.

to the west."[33] At no time was Kekionga more important to the Confederacy's interests than those years (1786-90) during which it existed as an intertribal community. In addition to Little Turtle, other prominent Miami and Shawnee leaders –Le Gros, Pacanne, Blue Jacket, Snake, and Captain Johnny– lived in Kekionga's proximity at the time.[34] As the military activities of these war leaders escalated, Kekionga became a primary center of operations. In one six-month period during 1786 no fewer than twenty-six war parties embarked from this cluster of villages.[35]

The nations that gathered at Kekionga did not need to alter their customs and beliefs when they consolidated their communities. During the 1820s C. C. Trowbridge, Secretary to Michigan territorial Governor Lewis Cass, carried out ethnographic field studies among the Miamis, Delawares, and Shawnees, conducting interviews with a few of the former militant leaders who had resided in the Maumee Valley during the 1780s and 1790s, including Le Gros (Miami), Black Hoof (Shawnee), and Captain Pipe (Delaware). Trowbridge found that these tribes spoke similar Algonquin dialects.[36] Furthermore, all three groups generally observed some form of patrilineal, hereditary succession when determining chiefs and, according to Trowbridge, the Miamis

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[33] Excerpt from Little Turtle's speech at the Treaty proceedings of Greenville, August, 1795, quoted in Charles Poinsatte, Outpost in the Wilderness: Fort Wayne, 1706-1828 (Fort Wayne: Allen County Historical Society, 1976), 1.

[34] Le Gros and Pacanne were Miami leaders, and the other three, Shawnee.

[35] Leonard Helderman, "Danger on the Wabash, Vincennes Letters of 1786-87," Indiana Magazine of History XXXIV(4) (December 1938): 459.

[36] Bert Anson, The Miami Indians (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 12; C. C. Trowbridge, Shawnese Traditions, eds. Vernon Kinietz and Erminie W. Voegelin; Occasional Contributions from the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan, No. 9 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1939), 67. A good study pertaining to the intertribal communities along the Maumee at this time is Helen Hornbeck Tanner's "The Glaize in 1792: A Composite Indian Community," Ethnohistory 25(1) (Winter 1978): 15-39.

established both war and village chiefs by patrilineal descent.[37] In the case of the Shawnees, Trowbridge indicated that the village chiefs also descended patrilineally, and in matters of war, Shawnees based leadership qualifications on merit, requiring a prospective war chief to "have led at least 4 war parties into the enemies country successively, that he should at each time take one or more scalps & that he should return his followers unhurt to their villages."[38] The Delawares practiced a tradition closely paralleling that of the Shawnees, choosing leaders who possessed valuable experience and leadership skills.[39]

Trowbridge's findings and more modern studies indicate that these three tribal groups also shared similar clan and kinship systems. Shawnee and Miami children always belonged to their father's clan, but in spite of patriclan identification, Miami children developed stronger ties to their mother's family, indicating a matrilocal community.[40] Later in the nineteenth century, the Shawnees also developed matrilocal kinship systems, but possibly not until after their final defeat and removal. However, the Delaware nation consisted of clans, or phratries, that were both matrilineal and matrilocal.[41] Consequently, the women of all three societies occupied key positions in

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[37] Trowbridge, Meearmeear Traditions, ed. Vernon Kinietz; Occasional Contributions from the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan, No. 7 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1938), 13-14.

[38] Trowbridge, Shawnese Traditions, 11-12.

[39] Delaware Manuscripts (MS/I4d), Trowbridge Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

[40] Anson, 18-19; Stewart Rafert, The Miami Indians of Indiana: A Persistent People, 1654-1994 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996), 17-18; James H. Howard, Shawnee!: The Ceremonialism of a Native American Tribe and its Cultural Background (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), 87-90.

[41] James Howard, 100-01; For Delaware social organization, see Goddard, "Delaware" in Bruce Trigger, ed. Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 15 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 225.

the social organizations of their respective tribes, notwithstanding patriclan structures in two of them and patrilineal leadership in all three. Furthermore, Trowbridge acknowledged rare occasions on which the Shawnees and Miamis appointed women leaders.[42]

Perhaps most importantly, the Shawnees, Miamis, and Delawares adhered to similar spiritual convictions and cosmological beliefs. The three nations along the Maumee considered sacred power to be of paramount importance, and they strove to attain this through similar methods of ritual and ceremony. A pantheon of deities or manitous loomed as either a potential source of power, or a labyrinth of destruction. In 1824 and 1825, the Shawnee Prophet (Tecumseh's brother) and Captain Pipe, respectively, both explained to Trowbridge "that we live upon an island," under which lies "a vast body of water, and that the earth [i.e. the "island"] is supported by a great Turtle, swimming in it, and placed there for that purpose by the Great Spirit." If anyone questioned a Delaware, asking, "What supports this Turtle?," Captain Pipe explained that "they shrewdly answer, 'The Turtle is a Monaatwau [manitou, or deity] and requires no resting place.'" The aged Delaware leader also ascribed "earthquakes to the moving of this supporter, and...suppose[d] that he [the Turtle] will one day dive so deeply as to sink the earth and destroy its inhabitants."[43]

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[42] James Howard, 109; Trowbridge, Shawnese Traditions, 12-13; Trowbridge, Meearmeear Traditions, 14-15, 26. According to Trowbridge, the Delawares have "[n]o female Chiefs;" Delaware Manuscripts (MS/I4d), Trowbridge Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

[43] Trowbridge, Shawnese Traditions, 37; Delaware Manuscripts (MS/I4d), Trowbridge Papers, Burton Historical Collection; Howard, 182. The Wyandots, an integral member of this Confederacy, also subscribed to the legend of the giant Turtle. See Elisabeth Tooker, "Wyandot," in Trigger, ed. Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 15, 402.

In the depths of this watery underworld there existed a number of powerful manitous and evil spirits that were believed to frequently ascend to the earth's surface by way of rivers, lakes, and springs. The most powerful of these evil manitous took the form of great horned serpents, and tribal shamans constantly attempted to harness the sacred power of these beings.[44] The most potent medicine bags were thought to contain small fragments taken from the body of one of these serpents; such concentrated power could guarantee victory over one's enemies and unlimited success in the hunt.[45] The Shawnee Prophet informed Trowbridge, "On the eve of a battle which is expected to be severely contested," Shawnee warriors "address their prayers to Motshee Monitoo [the supreme evil spirit]" and "[w]ar parties sometimes leave a small quantity of tobacco by the side of a Spring…praying at the same time to the deity inhabiting it." Le Gros noted a similar practice among the Miamis.[46] Thus, the militant nations that gathered in the Maumee Valley in order to resist American encroachments enjoyed similar patterns in language, government, and kinship, and they practiced like methods of gaining sacred power.

These common traits fostered a large degree of cooperation among the Ohio nations of the western Confederacy. By 1790 the communities along the Maumee, when supported by groups from Brownstown, could muster more than two thousand warriors. This concourse of nations cohabiting the same region began to alter Native conceptions

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[44] Gregory Dowd, A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 10-11; James Howard, 176-78.

[45] James Howard explains that the legend of the Giant Horned Snake is a dual myth shared by the Shawnees and Delawares, and he relates the Delaware account of how that tribe managed to kill one of these deities; James Howard, 189-90. For the Miamis, this most feared underwater manitou took the form of a panther, called Lennipinja; Rafert, 15.

[46] Trowbridge, Shawnese Traditions, 42; Trowbridge, Meearmeear Traditions, 56.

of tribal possession and sovereignty. The various nations consciously attempted to speak with one voice and were not tolerant of an individual nation seeking to cede territory that all of the Confederacy's members now deemed common property. The last known instance (prior to 1795) in which a member of the Confederacy attempted to assert its territorial sovereignty to the exclusion of another member came at the end of 1789, when a land dispute occurred between some Miamis and Delawares, during which the Delaware faction threatened to defect from the Confederacy and join the Spanish in the Mississippi Valley.[47] No records indicate that this group of Delawares carried out its threat to defect. In fact, just the opposite occurred, as additional factions of Shawnees and Delawares continued to settle at the intertribal community.[48] In the winter of 1789-90, the Confederacy's leaders met in council and affirmed pan-tribal unity, declaring their plight "a public grievance, in which all were concerned –that therefore every able bodied man, ought and should turn out, to assist in repelling the enemy, who had come into their country, to take their land from them."[49] Keenly aware of the threat they faced from the United States, the Confederacy recognized the need for mutual tribal support and joint land possession as essential if they were to avoid future debacles such as those on the Mad River in 1786, when Logan's raiders easily destroyed the principal Shawnee villages of Mackachak and Wapatomica.

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[47] Milo M. Quaife, ed. "A Narrative of Life on the Old Frontier; Henry Hay's Journal from Detroit to the Miami River," in Proceedings of the Wisconsin Historical Society (Madison, 1915), 226.

[48] Ibid., 225.

[49] John Heckewelder, A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians, From its Commencement in the Year 1740, to the Close of the Year 1808 (Philadelphia: McCarty & Davis, 1820), 396-97.

The continued development of intertribal unity at Kekionga and along the Maumee was facilitated by the pro-British sentiments shared by these communities' inhabitants. The presence of white traders and Indian agents, namely George Ironsides, Alexander McKee, the Girty brothers, John Kinzie, and a number of loyal French traders all helped to cultivate these ties.[50] As a result, the British sphere of influence from Detroit and Brownstown remained strong along Maumee during the period from 1786 to 1794, and most of the inhabitants near Kekionga were British partisans. When Henry Hay, a British trader from Detroit, wintered at Kekionga in 1789-90, he noted that one of the leading French traders, Antoine Lasselle, "is a good loyalist and is always for supporting his King."[51]

The group of traders with whom Hay lodged dealt constantly with the more prominent war leaders, including Le Gris (not to be confused with Le Gros), Little Turtle, Blue Jacket, Captain Johnny, and Snake. When the Shawnee leader "the Wolfe" sought to move his people to a site near Kekionga, Snake solicited the opinion of "the Principal Traders & Inhabitants of the place" to aid in determining whether or not to invite the Shawnee newcomers.[52] Furthermore, when the disaffected Delawares threatened to move to Spanish territory in 1789, it was most likely Alexander McKee who prevented their defection. George Girty had informed Hay that if "Capt. McKee would Immediately

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[50] The three Girty brothers –Simon, James, and George– were captured as youths and adopted into Indian families, and all three later served as agents and interpreters in the British Indian Department. They gained infamous reputations among white Americans who viewed them, especially Simon, as savage renegades. Yet, Jonathan Alder, a young captive among the Shawnees, had a high regard for Simon Girty, who at times interceded on behalf of captives. See Larry L. Nelson, ed., A History of Jonathan Alder: His Captivity and Life with the Indians (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2002), 52-55, 171-76; Colin G. Calloway, "Simon Girty: Interpreter and Intermediary," in Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers, ed. James A. Clifton (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989), 38-58.

[51] Quaife, "Hay Journal," 237.

[52] Ibid., 255.

send in a String of wampum to hinder them from taking such a step it would no doubt immediately stop them."[53] Girty's brief statement speaks volumes, for it suggests that in the minds of the Natives living at Kekionga, the British agents, especially McKee, had become influential in the reconstructed Confederacy as early as 1789.

As the British influence rose to new heights within the multi-tribal community at Kekionga, Hay and his cohorts showed little concern over the possible consequences of their growing involvement in the escalating war between the Confederacy and the Americans. War parties went out regularly, often returning with prisoners and scalps; of one such occasion Hay wrote:

> I was shown this morning the heart of the white Prisoner I mentioned the Indians had killed some time ago…it was quite drye, like a piece of dryed venison, with a small stick run from one end of it to the other & fastened behind the fellows bundle that killed him, with also his scalp.[54]

The whites living in Kekionga, both British and French, often hosted these Indian guests and even "billetted" members of war parties "like soldiers." When "[a]nother party came in from war" the same day, they "danced with a stick in…hand & scalp flying," before "[s]ome of the warriors came over in the evening, to our [Hay's] House."[55]

The position of the British traders and agents at Kekionga in the period following the American Revolution reflects the ambiguity of British-Indian relations in general at the time. The intertribal residents at Kekionga considered the British as brethren and a leading member of the Confederacy, particularly after 1786. Yet Governor General Frederick Haldimand and his successor Lord Dorchester never intended to increase the

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[53] Ibid., 226.

[54] Ibid., 222-23.

[55] Ibid., 221-22, 223.

British presence among the tribes within the territorial boundaries of the newly formed United States, whether at Brownstown or on the Maumee. For example, in 1787 Dorchester issued a set of orders to the Indian Department, hoping "to diminish the enormous expense" of the government's Indian budget, while simultaneously demonstrating "the King's paternal care and regard" for Britain's former allies. Dorchester's instructions included a restrictive clause, stating, "No persons belonging to, or employed in the Indian Department, is to be permitted to trade, directly or indirectly, or to have any share profit, or concern therin."[56] Apparently the injunction did not faze such trader/agents along the Maumee as Ironsides and the Girty brothers, all of whom continued to participate in the British fur trade during this period.[57] Lord Dorchester had recognized the potential dangers of unmonitored trade, authorizing post commandants to intervene: "In all matters of trade where the Indians are concerned…at any time the interference of the Officer commanding may be necessary." Lord Dorchester sought "the utmost Justice" for the Indians, but he also worried that anything less could undermine "the safety of the Post, and the security of the Trade."[58]

Although Dorchester's fears were not unfounded, Britain was compelled to rely on the fur trade in order to maintain strong ties with the Indians. After withdrawing from the American war and ceding much Indian land, the British had to turn to the fur trade as

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[56] "Dorchester's Instructions for the good Government of the Indian Department. To Sir John Johnson, Baronet, Superintendant [sic.] General and Inspector General of Indian Affairs, 27 March 1787," CNA, RG 10, 789, 6759-61.

[57] In 1792, the British traders and Indian agents shared living quarters at the Glaize, the new location of the intertribal collection of villages that replaced those at Kekionga. See Helen Hornbeck Tanner, "The Glaize in 1792," 30.

[58] Dorchester's Instructions, 27 March 1787, CNA, RG 10, 789, 6760-61.

the only means available to soothe Native discontent.[59] Moreover, the North West Company was organized immediately after the close of the American Revolution (1783-84) and represented British efforts to bring greater structure and stability to both the fur trade and the Crown's frontier Indian relations. The company enhanced the careers of the McGillivray family and the famed Alexander Mackenzie. More importantly, such a pooling of resources among the traders and merchants brought about greater cooperation among men who had once been bitter rivals. The company's sales escalated dramatically in the first two years of operation, and the reported overall revenues remained high throughout the 1780s.[60]

The expansion of the British fur trade and the activities of the North West Company throughout this period brought about vast changes in Indian communities. The expanding fur trade not only bolstered the traders' influence, but it accelerated the process of limited acculturation for the Indians and a growing interdependence between traders and Indians. When the trade grew, Natives became ever more reliant on manufactured goods, which in turn compelled them to continue to engage in a market economy and augment their bounties still further.[61] Moreover, the fur trade fostered liquor abuse among the Indians and probably hastened the spread of disease. Such a destabilization of tribal social infrastructures, coupled with a rapid depletion of game,

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[59] Colin G. Calloway, "Foundations of Sand: The Fur Trade and British-Indian Relations, 1783-1815" in Le Castor Fait Tout: Selected Papers of the Fifth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1985, ed. Bruce G. Trigger, Toby Morantz, and Louise Dechene (Montreal: St. Louis Historical Society, 1987), 147-49.

[60] Charles Gordon Davidson, The North West Company (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), 17-18, 272.

[61] Calloway, "Foundations of Sand," 157-58.

eventually led to a greater economic, political, and military reliance on Britain.[62] Yet Whitehall and leaders in Canada certainly did not want the close attachment to the Indians that the fur trade would bring, particularly at a time when Indians were preparing for war with the Americans.

Considering this inherent contradiction, Britain could not indefinitely employ the fur trade as a means of cultivating good relations with the Crown's former Indian allies while simultaneously trying to keep them at arm's length.[63] As long as these conditions persisted, Whitehall could never develop a sound and consistent Indian policy that would fully satisfy the tribes in the Great Lakes and upper country, and also maintain amiable Anglo-American relations and peace on the frontier. Dorchester's orders to the Indian Department reflected this ambiguity. In striving to reduce expenses and decrease the Indian budget, the Governor General regarded the Indians as "free and Independent people," but he simultaneously instructed the agents to inform the Indians that they would continue to "merit" the King's friendship only "by acting as good and obedient Children ought to do."[64] In seeking to pacify the Indians, cut costs, and prevent the potential threats to the upper province, Dorchester's policy reflected the sentiments of his superiors at Whitehall; in theory, the measure encouraged greater Indian autonomy, while in actuality it fostered heavier Native reliance on British support. British leaders could not vacillate indefinitely, and with the Confederacy already in a state of intermittent war with the United States, the British government would be forced to determine the extent of its resolve to support its former allies with both material and militarily assistance.

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[62] Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 160, 188. Calloway refers to the fur trade as a "Trojan horse" to the Indians, "unleashing catastrophic forces at the same time as it delivered desirable gifts."

[63] Ibid., 188, and Calloway, "Foundations of Sand," 159.

The Confederacy's Zenith, 1789-1792

The Native and British residents of Kekionga thought little of the long-term repercussions of British-Indian trade relations as the continued British presence made the community's infrastructure even more complex. In some cases, Indians chose to handle matters internally, but on other occasions tribal leaders sought the advice and direct intervention of British traders and agents. For instance, when a Shawnee leader, "the Wolfe," wished to move his entire village near to the other villages at Kekionga in 1790, Captain Snake called a meeting "of the Principal Traders & Inhabitants of the place," seeking their advice and support in order to determine whether or not to welcome the potential newcomers to Kekionga; the Shawnee leader addressed the traders and other village inhabitants as "Fathers & Brothers."[65]

Snake's courtesy on this occasion did not entitle the traders to the privilege of permanent participation in Kekionga's councils, nor was it an indication of Native deference to British authority. In asking the advice of "Fathers & Brothers," Snake considered the whites at Kekionga as his own relations, but an acknowledgement of familial ties did not concede authority to the white residents. In stark contrast to the courtesy shown white traders in 1790, captive Thomas Ridout's harrowing experience in 1788 demonstrated the traders' limited influence at Kekionga. During his brief captivity, Ridout sat before an Indian tribunal that excluded all traders, and with the exception of the interpreter Simon Girty, probably barred all whites. Ridout recalled, "The Indian traders who lived on the other side of a river...had long expected me, but dared not

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[64] Dorchester's Instructions, 27 March 1787, CNA, RG 10, 789, 6759.

[65] Quaife, "Hay Journal," 255.

intercede for me whilst my life was at issue."[66] The traders' exclusion in Ridout's case, after having sat in council on previous occasions, indicates much about how the tribes at Kekionga and along the Maumee understood their relationship to Britain. They viewed their British friends as brothers in commerce and allies in war, but certainly not as possessing sovereign authority in Native councils.

The Natives' belief in their own sovereignty at Kekionga would not go unchallenged for long. Existing in a local community that lacked complete unanimity and in a confederacy that had no clear leader, the tribes at Kekionga were vulnerable to attack. When a poorly-trained and ill-equipped American army commanded by Josiah Harmar marched to Kekionga in the autumn of 1790, the leaders there could not even muster enough warriors to defend their homes or protect their crops from the invaders' torch, despite knowing of Harmar's advance from the outset.[67] The inhabitants burned the primary Miami town themselves and evacuated shortly before the army's vanguard arrived on the same day, October 15th. In the ensuing days, the regular army and militia proceeded to burn and destroy any of the remaining Indian towns and all of the crops they could find. Despite suffering the loss of their homes and crops, the warriors of Kekionga dealt Harmar a serious drubbing, as Miami war chief Little Turtle successfully orchestrated multiple ambushes against Harmar's ill-prepared army.[68]

Little Turtle's successes notwithstanding, Harmar's raid was a psychological blow to Kekionga's inhabitants. Unable to defend their homes and crops against a poorly

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[66] Matilda Edgar, ed., Ten Years of Upper Canada in Peace and War, 1805-1815; Being the Ridout Letters with Annotations (Toronto: William Briggs, 1890), 367.

[67] Sword, 102-03.

[68] Ibid., 106-08.

disciplined army, the Confederacy's warriors pondered the future, realizing they would face more capable adversaries. Moreover, tribal differences and disagreements among Confederacy leaders caused them to squander an opportunity to crush Harmar's battered army. While Blue Jacket and the Shawnees wanted to deliver the *coup de grace* against the retreating Americans, a total lunar eclipse of a full moon caused much consternation among some of the allied warriors preparing to pursue Harmar's men. Several interpreted the phenomenon as an ominous warning of certain disaster if they attempted to pursue the Americans. The Ottawas simply packed up and left, and to Blue Jacket's chagrin, other groups soon followed.[69] The Confederacy could not hope to win a war against the Americans until they became a united force.

Still smarting from the lost opportunity to destroy Harmar's army, Blue Jacket understood all too well that he needed British aid if the Indians were to achieve the unity he sought. Losing no time, the Shawnee leader journeyed to Detroit to plead for direct support, arriving there even before the remnants of Harmar's army had completed their march back to Cincinnati. On November 4th, with McKee as translator, Blue Jacket addressed Major John Smith, commandant at Detroit, arguing that Britain and the confederated tribes held a common cause against the Americans, and that the "Great Father" was indebted to the Shawnee people, who had faithfully served their Father, the King. Blue Jacket also appealed to Britain's vested interest in protecting trade with her

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[69] Ibid., 117-19. According to Trowbridge, the Shawnees and Ojibwas held differing cosmological views regarding eclipses. The Ojibwas interpreted eclipses as calamitous, while the Shawnees understood them as "precursors of war." See Trowbridge, Shawnese Traditions, 37; Chippewa Manuscripts, MS/I4C, Col. Boyd's Account, Trowbridge Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library. The Ottawas who withdrew from the battle against Harmar most likely interpreted the eclipse as the Ojibwas generally did. The two tribes shared a number of common links; they and the Potawatomis form what was known as the alliance of the Three Fires, and the three nations are thought to have a common origin.

former allies, asserting that that trade was the common bond, as he put it, "which links us together in amity and interest."[70]

Though not wanting another American war, the British officers at Detroit also did not wish to completely spurn Blue Jacket's pleas for support. The Shawnee war leader was one of the most influential chiefs among the intertribal coalition developing along the Maumee, and, as son-in-law to Jacques Baby, a Detroit-based British Indian agent, Blue Jacket was also a British partisan. The British authorities had previously honored the Shawnee leader with an officer's commission, which, according to white captive Oliver M. Spencer, entailed "the half pay of a brigadier general from the British crown." Spencer also recalled an occasion when Snake and Simon Girty visited the illustrious Shawnee, whom the captive youth described as

> dressed in a scarlet frock coat, richly laced with gold and confined around his waist with a party-colored sash, and in red leggings and moccasins ornamented in the highest style of Indian fashion. On his shoulders he wore a pair of gold epaulets, and on his arms broad silver bracelets; while from his neck hung a massive silver gorget and a large medallion of His Majesty, George III.[71]

The British influence on Blue Jacket and, conversely, the latter's reliance on Britain's aid reached their zeniths about the time the Shawnee war chief had gained his maximum influence within the coalition's leadership ranks.

In council at Detroit, British commandant Major Smith listened attentively to Blue Jacket's pleas, and responded with assurances of friendship and words of compassion, but he promised nothing other than to seek his superiors' counsel on the matter. He immediately wrote to Lord Dorchester, and in the meantime he did his best to

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[70] Speech of Blue Jacket, 4 November 1790; quoted in John Sugden, Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 106-07.

supply his Shawnee delegation with gifts and food. Smith's gifts helped temporarily sustain the homeless inhabitants of Kekionga, and his promises to place the Natives' appeals before Lord Dorchester gave Blue Jacket, Little Turtle, and Kekionga's other refugees a glimmer of hope. But in truth, neither Smith nor Lord Dorchester could do much to offer further protection to the Indians, and all that McKee could could later suggest was that the intertribal villagers who lost their homes in Harmar's raid move further down the Maumee, which would place them nearer to Detroit and shorten the supply line of the Indian Department.[72] Early in 1791, therefore, many refugees from Kekionga began doing just that, relocating at "the Glaize" (present-day Defiance, Ohio). By the summer of 1791, the community at the Glaize included almost all of the prominent figures of whom Hay had written during his stay at Kekionga a little more than a year earlier. Blue Jacket, Captain Johnny, Snake, Little Turtle, Buckongahelas, and those in their villages all built new homes at or near the Glaize. Nearly 2,000 people resided at the Glaize by 1792.[73]

Oliver M. Spencer's memoir of his captivity at the Glaize during the early 1790s offers a glimpse into life in this intertribal community, especially into the role that spirituality played in Native resistance to U. S. expansion at the time. Upon his arrival at the Glaize, Spencer was placed in the household of his captor's mother, Coocoochee, a Mohawk prophetess. Though she was not a member of any of the tribes –Shawnee, Miami, and Delaware—that predominated numerically at the Glaize, Coocoochee

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[71] Quaife, ed., The Indian Captivity of O. M. Spencer, (New York: Citadel Press, 1968), 90-1. Blue Jacket was even thought to have worn a red coat in the action against St. Clair. See Sword, 179, and Sugden, Blue Jacket, 123.

[72] Ibid., 108.

[73] Tanner, "The Glaize in 1792," 16.

nevertheless was treated as a revered member of the intertribal village community. Her respected position was based on her reputation as a medicine woman who conversed with numerous spirits and accurately forecast the results of raids.[74] For example, when more than fifty Shawnee warriors from the villages of Blue Jacket and Snake sought her out in 1792, she prophesied the success of their raid, and after they subsequently won a significant victory, they returned to the Glaize with much plunder and honored Coocoochee by giving her a share of their spoils.[75]

Although Coocoochee was respected by her fellow refugees, she, and doubtless many of them, experienced her refugee condition as an uprooted and unsettled status. Among the spirits with whom she conversed was that of her husband, Cokundiawsaw, a Mohawk war chief who had migrated into the Ohio region to join the Shawnees and Mingoes already living there, only to lose his life against Harmar's army at Kekionga.[76] On the occasion of the Feast of the Dead in the spring of 1792, a little more than a year after Cokundiawsaw's death, his widow removed his remains to the site of her new dwelling at the Glaize. Buried in a sitting position with his weapons, blanket, and moccasins, Cokundiawsaw's body faced the West, his spirit's final destination. Yet Coocoochee's ongoing conversations with her husband's spirit and the manner in which his friends tended his grave suggest that they believed that Cokundiawsaw's spirit still lingered and was not prepared for its final journey.

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[74] Quaife, The Indian Captivity of O. M. Spencer, 78, 117.

[75] Ibid., 116.

[76] Ibid., 78-80. Also see Helen Hornbeck Tanner, "Coocoochee: Mohawk Medicine Woman," American Indian Culture and Research Journal 3(3) (1979): 24-25, 28. The Ohio Iroquois, known as Mingoes, began migrating into Ohio in the 1740s and 1750s; Coocoochee's family relocated to Ohio sometime after 1768, the year in which the first Treaty of Fort Stanwix supposedly made the Ohio River a permanent boundary and acknowledged that the country north of the River belonged solely to the Indians.

The general belief in the lingering presence of Cokundiawsaw's spirit and the confidence the warriors placed in Coocoochee indicates much about the community at the Glaize. After sustaining considerable losses in the fight against Harmar, the warriors from Kekionga, though victorious, sought a new home at the Glaize. Without food after Harmar's destructive raid, much of the surviving remnant of Kekionga's populace relied heavily on the British at Detroit to supply their wants in the upcoming winter, and this caused a sudden evacuation of their former villages. Under ordinary circumstances, Cokundiawsaw, a distinguished war chief of the Mohawks, would have received a funeral replete with a full Condolence Ceremony, intended to reinvigorate his mourning relatives, prevent calamities from evil spirits, assist Cokundiawsaw's spirit on his journey, and install another leader as the fallen chief's successor.[77] As it was, due to Coocoochee's move to the Glaize, Cokundiawsaw's grave remained unattended for more than a year until his widow re-interred his remains, though still without a Condolence Ceremony. Thus Cokundiawsaw's spirit remained restless.

The absence of a Condolence Ceremony for Cokundiawsaw could also indicate that Coocoochee and her family had begun to live more like their Shawnee hosts, who did not perform the Condolence ritual.[78] Furthermore, Coocoochee's observance of the Feast of the Dead closely mirrored the similar Shawnee custom, but they differed in that

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[77] A good analysis of the Condolence Ceremony is found in William N. Fenton and J. N. B. Hewitt, "The Requickening Address of the Iroquois Condolence Council." Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences 34(3) (March 15, 1944), 65-85. Also see William N. Fenton, The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 136-37, 178-79.

[78] Erminie Wheeler Voegelin did an entire study on Shawnee death and burial customs, spanning the period from the late seventeenth century through 1938. The author also compared the differences in the practices of the five separate Shawnee divisions. Beginning in the nineteenth century, Shawnees began to practice a form of the condolence ceremony; Voegelin, Mortuary Customs of the Shawnee and Other Eastern Tribes, Prehistory Research Series, II(4) (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, March, 1944), 243-319.

Coocoochee's Iroquois version of the Feast of the Dead was supposed to take place ten days after the mourned individual's death, while Shawnees held their Death Feast only once a year, just after the Green Corn Ceremony in summertime.[79] In both cases, the Death Feast was intended to nourish the spirit of the deceased, helping to prepare it for its final journey. The feast held for Cokundiawsaw's spirit occurred much later than it should have by both Iroquois and Shawnee standards; both groups believed a spirit kept restless for so long was dangerous.[80] Yet by conferring with the dead and prophesying to departing war parties at the Glaize, Coocoochee, if not directly assuaging the passions of the lingering ghosts, could perhaps at least foretell of calamities they might cause. The medicine woman was in effect fulfilling a role that Shawnee and Miami shamans would have performed for their own peoples in more ordinary times.

As Coocoochee's presence became more vital to those living at the Glaize, she also developed closer ties with the British traders and agents living there. In her household she raised a mixed-blood grandson, thought to be Simon Girty's son, and Coocoochee's daughter married George Ironsides, one of the traders who had migrated to the Glaize from Kekionga after Harmar's raid. This couple lived directly across the Maumee River from Coocoochee.

The marriage between Ironsides and Coocoochee's daughter suggests an increasing interdependence between the British and the Indians living at the Glaize. Ironsides had married into a prominent family; his mother-in-law's power and his brothers-in-laws' status as warriors insured him a position of respect. Ironsides' new

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[79] James Howard, 286-87; Arthur C. Parker, Parker on the Iroquois: Book Two; edited with an introduction by William N. Fenton (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968), 57; Anthony F. C. Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 98-9.

dwelling at the Glaize was situated in the center of the combined villages. Instead of living on the periphery as he and the other traders had done at Kekionga, he and his fellow traders and agents were now situated at the hub of interaction at the Glaize. Moreover, like Ironsides, the Indian agents at the Glaize, namely Matthew Elliott, Alexander McKee, and the Girty brothers, also had Native wives and families. These men had become integrated members of this intertribal community.[81] Near Ironsides' house and the Auglaize River sat a small palisaded perimeter surrounding two British Indian Department buildings, one of them a permanent residence for James Girty, an interpreter within Indian Department who had once lived at Kekionga, the other a supply depot and part-time residence for Elliott and McKee.[82] This storehouse enabled the Indian Department's branch at Detroit to more quickly feed and arm the warriors at the Glaize, giving the Department a more active role in dealing with the intertribal groups there than the British had previously undertaken at Kekionga.[83]

Direct British involvement along the Maumee became more apparent late in 1791, when the Indian Department assisted the Confederacy in planning and carrying out the ambush that destroyed Arthur St. Clair's American army more than fifty miles from either the Glaize or Kekionga.[84] In addition to providing arms and intelligence, a number of the Indian Department's officers also took part in the action. Simon Girty led a group

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[80] Trowbridge, Shawnese Traditions, 42; Edgar, 364; Wallace, 98-101; Parker, Book Two, 126.

[81] Quaife, The Indian Captivity of O. M. Spencer, 95-6; Tanner, "The Glaize in 1792," 17,25-27.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Larry B. Nelson, A Man of Distinction among Them, 158.

[84] Ibid., 171.

of Wyandots in the battle, and Matthew Elliott was also present;[85] many other officers of the Department also probably fought against St. Clair that day, but they did so using extreme discretion, since the act was a violation of Britain's official neutral status in the ongoing war between the United States and the Indians of the Northwest. In all, the American army suffered more than 1000 casualties, over 600 of them fatalities.[86] Only a few dozen army personnel and civilians returned to Fort Washington (i.e. Cincinnati) unscathed.

Although certainly one of the greatest victories ever for Native Americans over Euro-Americans, St. Clair's defeat ironically exposed the Confederacy's weakness, showing a heightened dependence on the British.[87] While the Indian victory marked the high tide of the fortunes of the northwestern Native Confederacy in its struggles to thwart American expansion, it also tended to weave Indian and British interests together more tightly in the Great Lakes and upper country. Furthermore, since the U.S. government remained steadfast in refusing to acknowledge Native sovereignty in the Old Northwest, the war would continue. Confidence soared at the Glaize; the Confederacy and its leaders saw no reason why their overwhelming success against American arms should not continue, particularly with support from their supposedly neutral British confederates. Consequently, in the years immediately following St. Clair's defeat the British Indian

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[85] Sword, 182, 188; Horsman, Matthew Elliott, British Indian Agent, 69.

[86] White, The Middle Ground, 454; Allen, His Majesty's Indian Allies, 74-76. This excerpt from Allen contains a contemporary British account of the battle and its implications, found in an anonymous letter from Niagara three weeks later, 24 November 1791, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 88. The general engagement known as St. Clair's Defeat is best detailed in Sword, chapter 17. Only Edward Braddock's defeat near the banks of the Monongahela in 1755 rivaled the magnitude of St. Clair's Defeat 36 years later.

[87] White, The Middle Ground, 454.

Department enjoyed its strongest influence ever among the intertribal communities at the Glaize and along the Maumee.

During the brief period 1791 to 1794, events at the Glaize tended to define British-Indian relations overall. Despite the British government's proclamations of neutrality and its urging the leaders in Canada to reduce Indian expenditures, actual ties and relations with the Indians in the upper country were primarily shaped and carried out by those Indian agents on site, Alexander McKee and his staff.[88] Within this nebulous situation, McKee's position became particularly delicate. As the war wore on, Blue Jacket, Little Turtle, Buckongahelas, Captain Johnny, Snake, and other leaders near the Glaize trusted the British more heavily, and they viewed McKee as their lifeline to this support.

John Graves Simcoe, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, also relied heavily on McKee, expecting him to maintain British interests within the Confederacy, both in matters of trade and war. Simcoe and other British leaders had grown increasingly concerned about the activity of the traders in the Ohio Valley and its potential to undermine government policy. If the British fur trade became the sole element in developing ties between the British and Indians, Whitehall could find itself bound to the traders' diplomacy, conducted by profit-seeking individuals on the frontier. Simcoe wrote to McKee, complaining that the "self-interested & Venal Traders" would lead the Indians to believe "that G. Britain will sooner or later engage in a War with the States in the defence of the Western Indians [those Indians within the borders of the United States]," and that if the traders should find it in their own interest, they would not

[88] White, The Middle Ground, 455; Horsman, "The British Indian Department and the Resistance to General Anthony Wayne, 1793-1795," 270-71; Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 51, 64-65, 70-74.

hesitate to "counteract the general Instructions & Conduct of his Majesty's Servants, & buoy up the Indians by that false hope."[89] A year later Simcoe defended the practice of distributing Indian gifts at a distance farther from the posts, partly to "rescue the Savage from...the rapacity of Our Traders."[90] Thus, British leaders depended on the handful of agents such as McKee, who did not have personal vested interests in the trade, to maintain a status quo in British-Indian diplomacy, particularly at a time when the traders' influence was significant throughout Indian country.

When it came to war and diplomacy, Simcoe also relied on McKee to influence the Confederacy's leaders in Britain's favor, but again without making any permanent commitments on the government's part. Late in the summer of 1792 Simcoe sent careful instructions to McKee, indicating the specific goals and policy he wanted carried out in the Confederacy's upcoming general council to be held at the Glaize that fall. McKee was told to work toward a peace settlement that would encourage the continued development of "so numerous a Confederacy" among the Natives, and to preserve the Indians' territory by creating his proposed "extensive...Barrier" lying between American territory and British possessions.[91] In addition to preserving the integrity of Indian possessions, Simcoe also hoped that such a buffer occupied by a militant Confederacy would permanently protect Upper Canada's sparsely settled loyalist communities from American expansion.

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[89] John Graves Simcoe to Alexander McKee, 24 September 1792; Simcoe to McKee, 10 November 1792, in Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, V: 23, 25.

[90] Simcoe to George Hammond, 21 January 1793, in MPHC, 25: 522.

[91] John Graves Simcoe to Alexander McKee, 30 August 1792, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, I: 208.

In order to best carry out Simcoe's instructions without either alienating the Indians, damaging the unity of the Confederacy, or igniting a war between Britain and the United States, McKee remained purposefully vague in his communications with the primary Native leaders along the Maumee. Although he obeyed Simcoe by not promising the King's intervention, no record exists that McKee ever expressly told the Indians that this would never happen. In fact, the subsequent words and actions of the Confederacy's leaders indicate that they continued to harbor hopes that their British Father would defend their interests. After lengthy deliberations in the October council at the Glaize, a deputation, primarily under militant Shawnee influence, addressed McKee as Simcoe's representative. Painted Pole, a war leader from the Foot of the Rapids near McKee's residence, served as spokesperson, and the chief made it clear that he and the rest of the Confederacy's delegation expected the British to protect Indian interests:

> Father; At this Council fire which is in the center of our Country, is placed the Heart of the Indian Confederacy to which we have always considered our father to be joined, therefore we hope on this great occasion, that he will exert himself to see justice done to us, as it must be through his power & mediation that we can expect an end to our troubles.[92]

Knowing that Native hopes hung on every word he spoke, McKee remained evasive; he merely passed the speech on to Simcoe, allowing the latter to draft a response. Simcoe, in his answer, adopted a well-established practice in Euro-Indian diplomacy, seizing upon the Indians' own rhetoric as he implied the King's goodwill towards them:

> Children & Brothers,
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> You say "at this Council fire, which is in the centre of your country, is placed the heart of all the Indian Confederacy, to which you have always considered your Father to be joined." The King your Father from the earliest

[92] Confederacy's Address to Lieutenant Governor Simcoe, 9 October 1792, ibid., I: 229.

> moment of his reign, has believed this union to be necessary for your welfare, & no less so to that of the neighbouring countries; and…your late superintendant general, Sir William Johnson, in all his Councils inculcated its propriety.[93]

Simcoe's diplomatic endeavors mirrored those of the Confederacy's leaders. These leaders viewed themselves as using the British to compel the Americans to agree to a just peace, a peace that would preserve their intertribal territorial claims. Similarly, Simcoe hoped to use the strength of a united Confederacy to bring about a peace that would protect Upper Canada against the United States by threatening the use of continued Native warfare to compel the Americans to seek terms favorable to Britain. Although both Simcoe and the Indian leaders may have acted in self-interest and tried to manipulate the other, both probably believed that their interests were intertwined. In Simcoe's case this took the form of urging Britain's Native allies to strengthen the Confederacy, arguing to the leaders at the Glaize that it was "necessary for your welfare."[94]

The council at the Glaize addressed three principal issues, namely the Confederacy's territorial goals, their reactions to recent revelations that the United States government intended to impose agricultural reforms upon them, and the extent to which the Confederacy should rely on British support. While most tribal leaders in the Ohio country advocated the notion of unity and strength within the Confederacy, these issues at the Glaize exposed the fact that the Confederacy lacked clear leadership and its members were divided on the objectives for which they were fighting. Moreover, the council also indicated a decline in Iroquois influence among the western nations.

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[93] Speech from Lieutenant Governor Simcoe to the Western Indians, October 1792, ibid., I: 230.

[94] Ibid.

Tensions over leadership and goals were immediately evident when the Shawnee leaders, whose influence within the coalition was rising, challenged the influence and authority of the Six Nations.[95] Shawnee spokesman Painted Pole opened the sessions by upbraiding the delegates of the Six Nations for arriving late, and by revealing his suspicion that the Iroquois lacked genuine loyalty to the Confederacy. Painted Pole sarcastically concluded, "We suppose you have been constantly trying to do us some good, and that was the reason of your not coming sooner to join us."[96] Buckongahelas, the most important Delaware leader, agreed, exclaiming,

> Don't think because the Shawanoes only have spoke[n] to you, that it was their sentiments alone, they have spoke the sentiments of all the Nations.
> All of us are animated by one Mind, one Head and one Heart and we are resolved to stick close by each other & defend ourselves to the last.[97]

The militant leaders directed these statements at the Iroquois faction led by the Seneca chief Red Jacket, who arrived at the Glaize with a peace proposal from the United States. The question regarding the Six Nations' lack of fidelity to the Confederacy's goals seemed confirmed when Red Jacket encouraged a negotiated peace with the Americans, stating, "Brothers, we know that the Americans have held out their hands to offer you peace. Don't be too proud Spirited and reject it."[98] The next day Painted Pole heatedly responded to Red Jacket, accusing him of selling out to the Americans:

> I can see what you are about from this place. Brother of the 6 Nations, you are still talking to the Americans your head is now towards them, and you are now talking to them. When you left your village to come here, you had a bundle of

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[95] John Norton later mentioned that the Shawnees became leaders of the intertribal alliance prior to the action against St. Clair. See Carl F. Klinck and James J. Talman, eds., The Journal of Major John Norton, 1816 (Toronto: The Champlain Society), 177-78.

[96] Proceedings at the Glaize, 2 October 1792, in Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, I: 220.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Proceedings at the Glaize, 4 October 1792, ibid., I: 222.

> American Speeches under your Arm....Brothers of the 6 Nations, all the different Nations here now desire you to speak from your Heart and not from your Mouth & tell them what that bundle was which you had under your Arm when you came here. We know what you are about—we see you plainly.[99]

Stunned by Painted Pole's indictment, Red Jacket defended himself and his fellow representatives from the Six Nations, exclaiming, "You have talked to us a little too roughly, you have thrown us on our backs."[100]

A key difference that divided the opposing factions in the council at the Glaize was whether to trust British efforts to help protect Indian territorial claims. Given their perspective, the Six Nations had little choice but to negotiate with the Americans, but such a position could only draw the suspicion of their allies. Later, Painted Pole again addressed the Six Nations pointedly, making it clear that no true member of the Confederacy could continue to have such dealings with the Americans:

> All the Americans wanted was to divide us, that we might not act as one Man....Now Brothers of the 6 Nations; This is the way they served you, and you have listened to them. We know they want to break you off from the Nations here. But the Great Spirit, has now put it in your hearts, not to be broken off by them, from the general Indian Confederacy.[101]

In his final speech at the council, Painted Pole indicated upon whom the Confederacy actually did depend, asserting, "[w]e have a reliance on our Father [the King] seeing justice done to us, as we have always found we may confidently depend upon him."[102] The Six Nations delegation, led by Red Jacket, unwilling to be deemed an enemy to the hopes of their western allies, accepted the Shawnee hard-line position against concessions

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[99] Proceedings at the Glaize, 5 October 1792, ibid., 224.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Proceedings at the Glaize, 7 October 1792, ibid., 226.

[102] Proceedings at the Glaize, 8 October 1792, ibid., 228.

to the Americans and left the council promising to show unity with the rest of the Confederacy at the anticipated Sandusky conference with U. S. commissioners in 1793.[103] In the meantime the Shawnees and Delawares continued to ignore the speeches that the Americans sent to them, and they merely passed them on to the officers in the British Indian Department, arguing, "They [the Americans] mean to dupe us as usual, but we mean to be ready to receive [i.e. fight] them."[104]

Soon after Red Jacket's departure, Joseph Brant belatedly made his way to the Glaize. Like Red Jacket, Brant came with peace proposals from the American government, having just come from the U. S. capitol at Philadelphia. By the time Brant reached the mouth of the Maumee River, several of the western Indians met him, informing him that the Council at the Glaize had ended, but they briefly held a smaller council with the Mohawk sachem. Learning the determinations made at the prior council, Brant did not even bother to present the American proposals. Instead, the Mohawk representative sat and listened to the words of the Shawnee leader Snake, who reiterated the Native position, exclaiming, "General Washington has always been sending to us for peace, Now if he is true and wants peace, the Ohio [River] must be the boundary line, as we long ago agreed upon, and we will meet him at Sandusky."[105] Hence, Brant had no chance to present the American overtures for peace even if he had wanted to, and he probably knew how roughly Painted Pole and the other leaders had handled Red

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[103] Proceedings at the Glaize, 7 October 1792, ibid., 227-28.

[104] Speech of the Shawanoes and Delawares at the Grand Glaize, 11 June 1792, recorded by Thomas Duggan, Clerk, British Indian Department, Native American Collection, Clements Historical Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

[105] Snake's Speech at the Foot of the Miami Rapids, 28 October 1792, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, 242.

Jacket, so the Mohawk leader said little. Instead, Brant merely encouraged the westerners to remain united and to not trust President Washington. In doing so, Brant managed to temporarily maintain some standing in the Confederacy.

To the Shawnees and other militant nativists at the Glaize, the Six Nations' efforts at peace appeared to be more collusion than compromise. Of the points of diplomacy that the American Secretary of War Henry Knox issued to Brant, one read "that the United States will make arrangements to teach the Indians, if agreeable to them, to raise their own bread and Cattle as the white people do."[106] Few proposals could have been more alarming to the western Indians. Specifically, Painted Pole reminded the Six Nations of the documents recovered from St. Clair's baggage in the wake of the battle, claiming that the contents of these documents authorized St. Clair "to put them [the Indians] at his back & give them Hoes in their hands to plant corn for him & his people & make them labom like their beasts, their oxen & their Packhorses."[107] Thus the Natives believed that peace with the Americans, unlike with the British or the French, would entail much more than sharing land; it also would mean the imposition of a new lifestyle, one that would undermine traditional gender roles, consequently angering the deities and causing calamities.

A virtual coup had occurred within the Confederacy's leadership at the Glaize, and the Six Nations no longer held the influence over the western nations that they had once enjoyed. The very fact that an intertribal council as important as the one held at the Glaize could occur without Brant indicates the loss of the Mohawk chief's status. With

[106] Henry Knox to Joseph Brant, 27 June 1792, Northwest Territory Papers, Clements Historical Library

[107] Proceedings at the Glaize, 7 October 1792, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, I: 227

the possible exception of McKee, British leaders had not foreseen this growing rift in the Confederacy. Only seven years earlier Haldimand had predicted perpetual Iroquois hegemony over the western Indians, and as late as summer's end 1792, John Graves Simcoe, unaware of the growing anti-Iroquois sentiment within the Confederacy, continued to envision such a role for the Six Nations.[108] Less than a year later, by the time of the general council at the Foot of the Miami Rapids (1793), Simcoe better understood Brant's declining status and threw British support behind the more militant faction of the Confederacy.

Division and Defeat, 1793-1795

The gulf between the Six Nations and the western Confederacy widened the following summer, when the Confederacy's leaders met in a council held at the Miami Rapids.[109] Brant's reception there in late May 1793 confirmed his plummeting status and the Six Nations' declining position among the western tribes. In his journal, the Mohawk leader recalled that the Shawnees accused him of being "a Traitor, & that I only came there to receive Money and that they would have nothing to do with me."[110] Brant strove for unity within the Confederacy, but he advocated a renegotiated boundary line with the American commissioners, one that would produce a lasting peace. He envisioned a compromise based on the Muskingum River, which would have given the United States some territory northwest of the Ohio River, but it would also have required the American

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[108] Simcoe to McKee, 30 August 1792, ibid., I: 208-09.

[109] Reginald Horsman offers a good analysis of the proceedings at this council in "The British Indian Department and the Abortive Treaty of Lower Sandusky, 1793," The Ohio Historical Quarterly 70(3) (July 1961): 189-213.

[110] Captain Brant's Journal of the Proceedings at the General Council held at the Foot of the Rapids of the Miamis, 3 June 1793, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, II: 6.

government to relinquish some of the lands it had acquired in the Fort Harmar Treaty – thus a true compromise. Though Brant and his supporters did not realize it, this proposal was doomed from the start because the American commissioners were not authorized to make any concessions remotely resembling Brant's plan.[111]

In spite of Brant's declining influence among the Maumee tribes, he managed to temporarily gain some support at the council from other factions present. The Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis, or the Three Fires, began to follow a course more independent of the Confederacy. Their future interests would lie more in the North, and with closer ties geographically to the Lakes region and economically to the British fur trade there than to the tribes of the Maumee and Wabash Valleys. It should also be noted that the Three Fires, like the Six Nations, had little to lose by endorsing the Muskingum boundary and relinquishing part of southeastern Ohio, a chunk of territory distant from their own country. In the midst of the proceedings at the Miami Rapids the Three Fires supported Brant's proposal, thus opting for a peacefully negotiated boundary. On behalf of the Three Fires, the Ottawa Chief Egushwa graciously acknowledged Brant's past services and placed his trust in any settlement that the Mohawk leader thought most proper. The Ottawa leader stated, "You were the Promoter of this Confederacy and from your knowledge of the English, of the Americans, & the Indians, you are able to judge of our true Interest, we therefore place full Confidence in You."[112] The dispute over this boundary widened the division in the Confederacy; henceforth the British could never again fully unite the tribes of the Old Northwest and Upper Canada.

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[111] Simcoe to George Hammond, 8 September 1793, MPHC, XXIV: 608; Sword, 247.

[112] Brant Journal, 24 July 1793, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, 8.

At one point during the council, it appeared that Brant might have garnered general support for his Muskingum compromise, but Alexander McKee took matters into his own hands and privately met with the leaders of the militant faction at midnight on August 9th. After this meeting these leaders, with the Shawnee war chief Captain Johnny as their spokesman, issued without further discussion their "final Resolution" in favor of a boundary set at the Ohio River. When Brant protested this maneuver, Delaware leader Buckongahelas responded by "pointing at Col. McKee, [saying] that is the Person who advises us to insist on the Ohio River for the line."[113] Moravian missionary John Heckewelder later recalled that the message sent from the Foot of the Rapids to the American commissioners "was both Impertinent & Insolent" and used "Language…that no Person having knowledge of Indians, would believe it an Indian Speech." Heckewelder added, "We saw quite plainly that the Indians were not allowed to act freely and independently, but under the influence of evil advisers."[114]

McKee probably believed that he had merely followed orders by asserting his influence in the general council, since Simcoe reminded him during the proceedings "to exert your ascendency over the Indians in inclining them to accede to those [American] offers, if they be consistent with their safety, and benefit, or to reject them if they seem likely to prove injurious to their real Interests."[115] Furthermore, the British Indian Department had its closest ties to the Indians of the Maumee Valley, most of whom

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[113] Ibid., 16.

[114] Paul A. W. Wallace, ed., Thirty Thousand Miles with John Heckewelder (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1958), 19; American State Papers: Documents Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States—Indian Affairs (hereafter ASP, Indian Affairs), 2 Vols. (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832), I: 355; Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, II: 24, 33.

[115] Simcoe to McKee and Major John Butler, 22 June 1793, MPHC, XXIV: 555.

belonged to the militant nativistic faction, and beginning with Harmar's Defeat, the backbone of the resistance came from that quarter. Consequently, it made sense to build a confederacy around this core of resistance. Therefore, British leaders probably believed, albeit mistakenly, that the optimum degree of unity in the Confederacy would have to come through those nations that had most heartily participated in the recent victories over the Americans. Simcoe knew that any American army sent against Detroit would have to traverse this region of entrenched Native resistance. Finally, McKee was linked by marriage and kinship to the Shawnees, and he tended to favor their interests.

Simcoe approved of McKee's actions because he, like the western Native leaders, questioned Brant's loyalty and no longer trusted him. The Lieutenant Governor suspected that Brant "was pledged to [the U. S.] Congress to give it as his opinion to the Council, that the Indian Nations should give up part of the territory, on the northern side of the Ohio.[116] Simcoe also believed that the United States sought "an alliance with the Six Nations," hoping to turn "them against the Western Indians."[117] Finally, the Governor realized that Brant probably possessed goals that would not always coincide with British interests; he therefore wanted to reduce the Mohawk's influence. Simcoe wrote,

> He [Brant] is labouring to effect a pacification upon such terms and principles as He shall think proper and which will eventually make him that mediator which the United States have declined to request from His Majesty's Government....He considers the Indian Interests as the first Object—that as a second, tho' very inferior one, He prefers the British...to the people of the States, yet I...consider the use He has made of his Power to be the subject of just alarm and that it is necessary by degrees and on just principles that it should be diminished.[118]

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[116] Simcoe to Major General Alured Clarke, 10 July 1793, ibid., 569.

[117] Same to same, 14 June 1793, ibid., 549.

[118] Simcoe to Henry Dundas, 20 September 1793, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, II: 59.

Although both Simcoe and McKee wanted peace and unity, it was better to risk a continued war with a fractured Indian confederacy than to place a stronger confederacy in the hands of a principal chief whose loyalties to Britain had become dubious.

Although Brant complained of McKee's interference, his protests fell on deaf ears, and by late October 1793, he was virtually isolated. Prior to Brant's complaints, McKee had written to Simcoe, blaming the Six Nations for the prevailing divisions within the Confederacy and actually claiming that he himself had favored a compromise regarding the boundary! McKee predicted,

> However conscious I may be of having used no improper influence in the Councils of the Confederacy…I nevertheless expect from the malevolent, disappointed and ill disposed to be blamed for the opinions which the Indians have adopted and for their Resolution which put an end to the negotiations.[119]

Simcoe swallowed it whole and assured Mckee that his conduct was "perfectly proper in all respects."[120] At the same time, Simcoe was inclined to accept McKee's view that Brant was to blame for the fractured state of the Confederacy, declaring, "I suspect that the principle of disunion arose from this Chieftain."[121]

Simcoe's anti-Brant explanation of the Confederacy's troubles failed to acknowledge the schism's deeper and more complicated sources, which included old tribal rivalries, the competing political and territorial needs of the Confederacy's various members, and the degree of McKee's manipulative influence among tribal leaders. But the existence of factional divisions after the council at the Foot of the Rapids was undeniable. Moreover, the emergence of three broad subgroups –the Six Nations, the

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[119] McKee to Simcoe, 22 August 1793, MPHC, XXIV: 595-96.

[120] Simcoe to McKee, 8 September 1793, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, V: 72-3.

Maumee Valley tribes, and the Three Fires (or Lakes Indians) factions—was a major development that threatened to undermine the position of relative strength the Confederacy had previously enjoyed through its victories over Harmar and St. Clair.

After the council at the Foot of the Rapids the Confederacy continued to rely heavily on the British. At the conclusion of the proceedings, the western nations sent a speech to Lieutenant Governor Simcoe, with Captain Johnny serving as spokesman:

> Father,
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> Always considering that your Heart is placed in the center of the Indian Confederacy, we must expect, that our great dependance is still on you....We need not we hope, again repeat, the great reliance we have on you for your advice & assistance; and altho' many have united themselves with us at this Council fire, yet we can depend on nothing, so certainly as your protection & friendship...at no former period have we stood in so much need of both.[122]

In his petition to Simcoe, Captain Johnny also added that he and the other Native leaders "look up to the Great God who is a Witness to all that passes here, for his pity & his help," demonstrating that the nativist faction appealed not only to their British Father, but also to the Great Spirit for deliverance and for the restoration of their country.[123]

Indeed, Captain Johnny's concerns were well founded. Since a peace between the western Confederacy and the United States never materialized, the Indians of the Maumee Valley knew that renewed American invasions were imminent. Furthermore, after St. Clair's debacle, President Washington appointed Anthony Wayne, one of the ablest American officers of the early Republic, to lead a much larger, reorganized army back into Indian country. Known as "the Legion," Wayne's force numbered more than

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[121] Simcoe to Henry Dundas, 10 November 1793, ibid., II: 100; Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, 10 November 1793, ibid., II: 102.

[122] Speech to Chiefs of the Western Nations to His Excellency Governor Simcoe, late August 1793, MPHC, XXIV: 597-98.

[123] Ibid.

5,000 men, and the aggressive commander had already begun constructing a chain of forts in southwestern Ohio prior to the Confederacy's council at the Foot of the Miami Rapids in the summer of 1793. While the arguments in council continued to weaken and divide the Indian coalition, Wayne's army grew stronger, ultimately gaining the initiative. Native efforts to form a consensus with which to negotiate a peaceful resolution had strategically benefited the Americans. Wayne immediately followed up the failed negotiations by sending his Legion deeper into Indian country to construct Fort Greenville (the site of today's Greenville, Ohio) in the early autumn of 1793, and in December the army moved still further north, stopping at the site of St. Clair's defeat where they constructed Fort Recovery.[124]

By early 1794, Wayne's Legion was now virtually in a position in which it could not lose an Indian war. The Confederacy's leaders understood this, but they continued to harbor the expectation of direct British intervention. British leaders themselves wondered if another Anglo-American war was inevitable, and Native confidence soared when Simcoe acted on McKee's advice to fortify the country to the south of Detroit.[125] For Simcoe, the need to defend the upper province against an anticipated invasion had temporarily superceded Whitehall's policy of fiscal retrenchment for the defense and Indian budgets of the Canadian provinces. Therefore, in the spring, Simcoe's redeployment consisted of constructing blockhouses along western Lake Erie at the mouth of the River Raisin and on Turtle Island at the mouth of the Maumee. Most

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[124] Paul David Nelson, Anthony Wayne: Soldier of the Early Republic (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 243-44.

[125] Sword, 261-62; Larry B. Nelson, A Man of Distinction among Them, 167.

importantly, the British built Fort Miami, a full-sized fortress at the Foot of the Miami Rapids, containing cannons larger than the artillery of the United States Legion.

These activities and troop movements had an electrifying effect among the Indians; Native confidence in the British soared. Throughout the spring, remnants of the Confederacy began to respond favorably to calls requesting them to regather at the Glaize. Even the Three Fires, despite having differing views from the Maumee Valley tribes regarding the Confederacy's objectives, accepted the invitation; Simcoe wrote to Lord Dorchester, "It appears that the Chippewas [i.e. Ojibwas], in consequence of some superstitious circumstances have unanimously determined upon War."[126] In truth, the Three Fires' enthusiasm was probably due more to Simcoe's decision to fortify the lower Maumee with British troops and cannons; it did not necessarily portend a restoration of the Confederacy's waning unity. In any case, by June 1794 the alliance numbered approximately 1,500 warriors, consisting of Wyandots, Shawnees, Miamis, Delawares, Potawatomis, Ottawas, and Ojibwas.[127] Even Brant and the Six Nations, though not yet themselves prepared to fight, saw the necessity for the western nations and the Lakes Indians to continue to resist, particularly after his talks with the American authorities ended when the Americans informed him that they could never agree to his proposed Muskingum boundary.[128] This seeming restoration of the Confederacy's unity, while more apparent than real, led Simcoe to believe that "[t]here is every appearance of the

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[126] Simcoe to Dorchester, 29 April 1794, MPHC, XXIV: 660.

[127] Larry B. Nelson, A Man of Distinction among Them, 168-69; Sword, 277-78.

[128] Brant to McKee, 8 May 1794, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, V: 86-87.

most general union of the Indians, against the United States, that has yet been known."[129] Simcoe's confidence aside, the factious Confederacy would soon be put to the test.

For their part, the Natives continued to look to Britain for military assistance and seemed to feel they had good reason to expect it. On 26 June 1794, Wayne and his staff questioned two Shawnee prisoners who informed the General: "[T]hey [the British] told the Indians the[y] were now come to help them to fight, & if they the Indians wou'd generally turn out & join them they wou'd advance & fight the American Army."[130] Three weeks earlier, the Americans questioned two Potawatomis who informed them that "the British say they will have 1500 militia," and that "Governor Simcoe had been sending [the] Pota.[watomis] messages all previous winter."[131] Whatever basis the Natives had for believing the British would send troops, they knew from mid-June onward that the British traders and Indian agents who shared their country, whose destinies were therefore intertwined with their own, would fight in the Confederacy's campaign. This at any rate was the conclusion of a council of war held near the Glaize on 16 June 1794; a British officer recorded in his diary: "Resolved, therefore, that we shall join the [Indian] army now in readiness to march."[132] To seal this determination the council leaders handed Matthew Elliott a belt of black wampum, binding him and the

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[129] Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, 29 April 1794, MPHC, XXIV: 660.

[130] Examination of two Shawnee warriors, taken prisoners on the Miami of the Lake, 20 miles above Grand Glaize, 26 June 1794; at Greeneville, by Anthony Wayne; Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology (hereafter GABLA), Shawnee File, January-June, 1794, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

[131] Examination of two Potawatomis, 5 June 1794, GABLA, Shawnee File, January-June, 1794. According to another Potawatomi prisoner on 21 July, "The British told all the Indian Nations to bring on all their Warriors & that then the British would bring more than all of them put together." The latter quote is taken from, The Examination of a Patawatime [sic.] Warrior who was in the Attack upon Fort Recovery on the 30th Ultimo, 23 July 1794, GABLA, Shawnee File, July-December, 1794.

[132] Cruikshank, E. A., ed., "The Diary of an Officer in the Indian Country in 1794," The American Historical Magazine 3 (1908): 640.

other whites to assist in the upcoming battle. All white personnel dwelling in the Maumee Valley, whether traders, agents, or officers, were compelled to fight.

The apparent restoration of unity within the Confederacy proved to be a mirage. After waiting at the Glaize for last-minute reinforcements on 18 June, Shawnee chief Blue Jacket learned that a group of 127 Ottawas and Ojibwas from Mackinac and Saginaw had raped women and pillaged the villages along the lower Maumee while the men of those villages were absent, preparing to fight the Americans. (There existed some previous antagonism between the nations of the Maumee Valley and the Lakes Indians.)[133] The intra-Confederacy conflict remained unresolved twelve days later, when the Natives launched a poorly conceived attack on U. S. forces at Fort Recovery. Not only did the attackers have to lift their siege when their ammunition ran low, but during the course of the battle some of the Shawnee and Delaware warriors, still angry about the Ottawa-Ojibwa raid on their villages, fired on a contingent of northern Lakes Indians.[134]

As a result, the Ottawas and Ojibwas withdrew, returning to their homes in the North, even though McKee and Elliott tried in vain to prevent their departure. McKee feared that this defection would spread, predicting that "the Indians in this part of the country will feel a sensible diminution of their strength by the example they [the Ottawas and Ojibwas] shew all the other Lakes Indians as well as those who are here as those who are expected and whom they must meet on their way home."[135] McKee's concerns were well founded, as the militant faction of Maumee tribes were left alone to defend themselves against Wayne's advancing Legion later in the summer.

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[133] Cruikshank, ibid., 641; Sugden, Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees, 162.

[134] Larry B. Nelson, A Man of Distinction among Them, 169; Sword, 278.

After the failed attack on Fort Recovery the Miami war leader Little Turtle sensed that adequate British support would never be forthcoming. Realizing that the problem lay less with the officers in the Indian Department and more the with British government's refusal to go to war, Little Turtle bypassed McKee and went straight to the highest-ranking British army officer in the West, Colonel Richard England at Detroit. Little Turtle requested soldiers and artillery, and he informed the Colonel that if the Native alliance remained unassisted by the English "they would be obliged to desist in their plan of attempting to stop the progress of the American Army."[136] Colonel England gave no satisfaction and Little Turtle, as a consequence, abdicated his position as war leader.

Unlike McKee, Elliott, the Girtys, and other Britishers who lived with Natives along the Maumee River and who worked to keep the intertribal coalition together, Colonel England and his superiors in Quebec and London reflected a policy of nonintervention and withdrawal that would soon result of the signing of the so-called Jay Treaty. In June 1794, Britain had opened negotiations with U.S. diplomat John Jay, hoping to resolve several issues left over from the American Revolution, one of which was the withdrawal of all British posts from American soil.[137] Among others, these included Detroit, Michilimackinac, and Niagara, all lifelines to Indians who lived within the borders of the United States but who looked to the British for aid and sustenance. Britain, at war with revolutionary France since January 1793, could not afford to go to

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[135] McKee to Joseph Chew, 7 July 1794, MPHC, XX: 364.

[136] Colonel Richard England to Simcoe, 22 July 1794, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, II: 334.

[137] An account of the Jay Treaty proceedings and how these related to events on the frontier can be found in Samuel F. Bemis's Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy (Knights of Columbus, 1923; rev. ed., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962; 2nd printing, 1965), particularly chapters 1, 8-10, and 12. Also see Burt, 82-165.

war to protect the Indians, especially for a part of the Empire that administrators and policymakers at home regarded to be of secondary importance.

Knowledge of these ongoing peace efforts made leaders in Canada and army personnel even more hesitant to support their former allies, and this became painfully clear to the Indians on 20 August 1794 at Fallen Timbers, when Anthony Wayne's Legion routed the remnants of the confederated tribes and chased them for miles. The American dragoons pursued the fleeing warriors virtually to the gates of the British Fort Miami, located near the Foot of the Rapids, where just a year earlier the divided Confederacy had bickered about what kind of boundary ultimatum they should present to the American peace Commissioners. Major William Campbell ordered the gates closed, denying any refuge to the routed warriors. Stunned by this betrayal, the Indians continued their flight towards Lake Erie. In this brief skirmish they became keenly aware of the full significance of this act of British isolation. Even in the midst of a battle, their British Father had refused to aid them. Thus, the most stinging aspect of the defeat was psychological. In a few short years during the early 1790s the Natives in the Ohio and Lakes regions had come to rely on Britain for military and material support.[138] Now, with the exception of some sixty or so Canadian and Loyalist militia who had fought in the battle dressed in Indian garb, the Confederacy's leaders found that they were fighting the Americans alone. The Indians would never forget this betrayal. One Shawnee messenger informed the Indian Department that according to Blue Jacket and many

[138] White, The Middle Ground, 467.

others, "the English were [now] thought nothing of."[139] Blue Jacket had come to the same conclusion that Little Turtle had reached one battle earlier.

In the ensuing peace proceedings at Fort Greenville in August 1795, the Americans would have their way with the leaders of the former Confederacy. Those who came to treat with Wayne were now completely isolated; the lone British agent (John Askin, Jr.) who attempted to attend the peace council at Greenville ran afoul of Wayne and found himself treated as a spy, and ultimately locked in confinement at Fort Jefferson.[140] Not only had the British abandoned them, but the Great Spirit now seemingly favored the Americans. Apparently Little Turtle once prophesied on the eve of the battle at Fallen Timbers "that the Great Spirit would hide his face in a cloud, should his red children not talk of peace with the great chief Wayne." After the battle "many of our young men knew the Great Spirit was angry, and would not help them."[141] Thus, believing that even the Master of Life now opposed them, the Indians conducted themselves at the treaty processions with much grace and humility; one author has even marveled at how "they handled themselves with extreme dignity."[142] In the end the

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[139] Thomas Smith to McKee, 11 October 1794, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, V: 113.

[140] John Askin, Jr.'s Report to Colonel England on His Mission to Greenville, 19 August 1795, in Milo M. Quaife, ed., The John Askin Papers, 2 Vols. (Detroit: Detroit Library Commission, 1928), I: 564.

[141] Dresden W. H. Howard, "The Battle of Fallen Timbers as Told by Chief Kin-Jo-I-No," Northwest Ohio Quarterly 20 (1948): 45-47; Sword, 306.

[142] Andrew R. L. Cayton, "'Noble Actors' upon 'the Theatre of Honour': Power and Civility in the Treaty of Greenville," in Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830, ed. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 266. The treaty proceedings at Greenville, replete with Native speeches, are found in ASP, Indian Affairs, I: 564-83.

Natives accepted the difficult terms which Wayne meted out, not only because they truly desired peace, but because they now knew "that there must be peace for ever."[143]

The Treaty of Greenville represented a pivotal turning point in the history of the Old Northwest for all groups, whether for the American, British, or indigenous inhabitants residing there. Of the former Maumee confederates, a number remained in northwest Ohio, hoping to live amicably with the Americans under the treaty's terms. A large portion of Shawnees and Delawares migrated west to the Mississippi Valley, and a few, choosing to maintain ties with their British Father, moved to Upper Canada. In 1796, the British government strove to shift its foreign policy in accordance to the new peacetime conditions brought about by Jay's Treaty and the Treaty of Greenville. While British troops prepared to withdraw from their longtime American possessions that summer, Lord Dorchester set about crafting a new set of Indian guidelines and instructions to reflect those policy changes shortly before his retirement. These alterations included an Indian policy that would attempt to further reduce expenses and deal with the Indians regionally, as opposed to stressing the importance of a confederacy. Indeed, peacetime retrenchment would bring many changes, marking the beginning of a new era in British-Indian affairs.

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[143] Isaac Weld, Jr., Travels through the Sates of North America and the Provinces of Upper & Lower Canada, During the Years 1795, 1796, & 1797, 4th ed., (London: John Stockdale, 1807), 2 Vols.; (reprint, New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1970), II: 216.

CHAPTER 2

A NEW DIPLOMACY: BRITISH-INDIAN RELATIONS AT AMHERSTBURG, 1796-1803

In compliance with the terms of Jay's Treaty, British authorities relinquished the last of the Crown's possessions within American territory during the summer of 1796. With the British evacuation of their forts in the Old Northwest, and the creation of three new posts on the Canadian side—Amherstburg, George, and St. Joseph—a new phase of British-Indian relations began, the implications of which would be explored by both parties to the old alliance in the years under consideration here, 1796-1803. During those years British policy makers faced distinctive issues in the geographical areas within the sphere of influence of each of their western outposts: Amherstburg in the Detroit area, Fort George near present-day Niagara, and St. Joseph in the northern Great Lakes district. Each of these three areas will be the subject of one of the next three chapters, beginning here with the story of British-Indian relations in the Detroit-Amherstburg area in the aftermath of British withdrawal from the Maumee and upper Wabash Valleys, places that had been so hotly contested by the United States and Britain's Native allies, the Ohio Confederacy, in the mid-1790s.

British resources for continued good relations with the Crown's long-time Indian allies included a number of officers of the Indian Department who removed to new homes in the Western District of Upper Canada. These individuals included, most notably, Alexander McKee and his son Thomas, Matthew Elliott, George Ironsides, and the three Girty brothers –Simon, James, and George. Relocating at or near Amherstburg, they worked to establish a British sphere of influence that eventually stretched as far west

as the principal tributaries to the Mississippi: the Wisconsin, Rock, and Illinois rivers. Also, most tribal groups in the region that encompasses present-day northern Indiana and southern Michigan still sought closer ties to the British in the late 1790s. However, by 1795 the British no longer held significant influence in the regions where it had previously been greatest: the Wabash, Maumee, Sandusky, and Auglaize River valleys. For the most part these areas now fell under United States hegemony, due not only to American annuity payments to the Indians who lived there, but also to Wayne's strategic placement of Forts Wayne and Defiance, which sat at the sites of the former intertribal villages of Kekionga and the Glaize, respectively.

Just as the withdrawal of British outposts from the Old Northwest ended a direct British presence there, so too the death throes of the old Ohio Confederacy in 1794-1795 produced significant changes among the tribes that had long considered the British their allies. Intertribal disputes led many former coalition members to regroup in smaller villages, and factionalism divided many tribes. While living as refugees at Swan Creek (near the mouth of the Maumee River) from 1794 to 1796, the former Shawnee militants failed to come to a consensus over diplomatic strategy, and any remaining vestige of tribal unity soon disintegrated. Typical of intratribal factionalism was the case of the Shawnee leader Blue Jacket, once a leader of resistance to U. S. expansion, who now made his peace with the Americans, creating a schism with other Shawnee chiefs who felt he had usurped their peace-making authority.[1] Other factions from Swan Creek such as Tecumseh's, which numbered approximately 250 followers, remained aloof,

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[1] Sugden, Blue Jacket, 195-96; Speech of the Mekoche Shawnees, May, 1795, CNA, Claus Papers, MG 19, F 1, Vol. 7, 124. The five Shawnee divisions are Chalaakaatha, Mekoche, Thawikila, Pekowi, and Kishpoko; see James Howard, 24-30. The Mekoche division usually presided over matters of peace; Blue

recognizing neither British nor American sovereignty.[2] Among the militant Shawnees, the bands of Captain Johnny and Blackbeard formed the only significant faction to maintain close ties with the British and consequently chose to relocate with them to Upper Canada. Like the Shawnees, Potawatomis near Fort Wayne and Detroit attempted to abide by the terms of the Treaty of Greenville, but other Potawatomis who lived in northern Indiana and southern Michigan held out against U. S. control.[3] Among the Miamis, Little Turtle and his adopted white son, William Wells, also shifted from a British to an American orientation.[4] These examples simply suggest why many tribes and prominent leaders that had been bulwarks of the old Ohio Confederacy would not figure significantly among the Indians that came into the Amherstburg sphere of influence. Largely missing from the tribal groups that figure in this chapter, therefore, would be Miamis and Delawares and the Shawnee factions under Blue Jacket and Tecumseh. The tribes remaining more closely associated with the British at Amherstburg after 1795 included the Wyandots at Brownstown, the Shawnee bands of Captain Johnny and Blackbeard, the Potawatomis along the St. Joseph River and the southern shores of Lake Michigan, and the Ojibwa and Ottawa peoples scattered throughout southern Michigan and Upper Canada. The Sauks and Potawatomis of northern Illinois would also seek closer ties to the British at Amherstburg near the turn of the nineteenth century.

Jacket was a Pekowi Shawnee, and Tecumseh and his brother, the future Shawnee Prophet, belonged to the Kishpoko division.

[2] John Sugden, Tecumseh: A Life (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997), 94-97.

[3] R. David Edmunds, The Potawatomis: The Keepers of the Fire (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 153-55, 159.

[4] Rafert, 62-63. Wells had actually begun to support the Americans, scouting for them prior to Wayne's final victory over the Ohio Confederacy at Fallen Timbers.

British Gift-Giving Policy Debates, 1796-1799

Once the agreed-upon withdrawal of their forces was completed in 1796, British officials had to decide what sort of relations they would attempt and be able to maintain with their former allies of the old Ohio Confederacy. The possible choices were many. It had never been clear in the past whether those indigenous nations who dwelt within Britain's North American possessions should be considered the Crown's subjects or allies. The Indians' legal status became even more ambiguous after 1796, when many of them who lived within the territory of the United States sought to maintain their former ties with their "British Father" as they continued to visit His Majesty's posts in Canada. Were the indigenous nations independent of Euro-American sovereign powers? Even if British authorities considered these groups to have never been anything more than allies, the question still remained whether or not future British policy should be structured in a manner which would cultivate closer connections with the Indians who now lived under American jurisdiction. Should Whitehall now take steps to strengthen these groups' political and economic ties with the British government as a means of promoting Upper Canada's stability and security? During peacetime these questions would become more pressing, and which of these strategies represented the best interests of the Crown was not altogether obvious. Nor were British officials unified among themselves, as the debates among British authorities from 1796 to 1799 revealed all too clearly.

Whatever the strategy, British leaders did not know how the Natives would respond to new policy measures. In the autumn of 1796 British traveler Isaac Weld gained a glimpse of the disposition of Britain's Indian allies who now lived in the Western District of Upper Canada. Weld made his visit to the township of Malden

(including Fort Amherstburg) and to the American post at Detroit only a short time after McKee resettled the few remaining Indians from Swan Creek to the nearby island of Bois Blanc. Although Weld did not name them, his Indian informants certainly would have included those who had recently emigrated from Swan Creek, possibly even Captain Johnny and Blackbeard. From his Indian hosts and other Natives in the vicinity of Detroit and Malden, Weld learned much about such recent events as the struggle in the Maumee Valley and the battle of Fallen Timbers. According to him, the sentiments of his Indian informants reflected a much stronger dissatisfaction and concern with the Americans than with the British, in spite of the acknowledged British betrayal at Fort Miami.[5]

At this stage the continued relationship between British leaders and these remnants of Britain's former allies from the Maumee Valley lay not so much in the Natives' love for and fidelity to the British, but in feelings of frustration due to the failure of the United States to deliver annuity goods as promised. Weld described the Indians' frustration, and its causes, well:

> The American officers here [Detroit] have endeavoured to their utmost to impress upon the minds of the Indians, an idea of their own superiority over the British; but as they are very tardy in giving these people any presents, they [the Indians] do not pay much attention to their words. General Wayne, from continually promising them presents, but at the same time always postponing the delivery when they come to ask for them, has significantly been nicknamed by them, General Wabang, that is, General To-morrow.[6]

In addition to this grievance, Weld's account generally conveyed the relentless pressure the Americans imposed on the refugee Indians, and it implied that the frontier struggle

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[5] Weld, II: 200-21; 289-91.

[6] Ibid., 187.

could never be peacefully resolved. Weld also believed that the Indians received better treatment in Canada, explaining that the "English settlers" understood the "necessity of treating the Indians with respect and attention."[7]

Building on the Natives' anti-American feelings, Alexander McKee sought ways to continue strong British-Indian relations during the postwar period. Well aware that the British evacuation from the American side of the border in 1796 led to a loss of influence in the British Indian Department among Natives at such traditional meeting places as Brownstown and the Foot of the Rapids, McKee hoped to restore the Confederacy by the establishment of a new general council fire on the Canadian side of boundary. With permission from Simcoe and Dorchester, McKee purchased a twelve-square-mile parcel from the Chippewas, just north of Lake St. Clair on the Canadian side of the border at the confluence of the Rivers St. Clair and Chenail Ecarte—the reserve took its name from the latter river—and on 30 August 1796, in his first speech at Chenail Ecarte, McKee declared the site as a new location "for a General Council fire for all Nations." In addition to the loyal bands of the recently beaten tribes from the Maumee and Detroit regions that McKee hoped to resettle at Chenail Ecarte, the new council fire, he stated, would include "the Six Nations, the Nations of Canada and all the Nations of Tribes to the Northward and the Mississippi."[8] Indeed, McKee hoped for a grand council fire under British auspices along the lines of Brownstown, through which he and other British leaders could once again influence a restored Confederacy. Lord Dorchester also had high hopes for the new reserve, anticipating an intertribal population, as he put it, of

[7] Ibid., 200. Weld also asserted that the Natives in Canada had the utmost "predilection...for the French" settlers living there.

"Two or Three Thousand."[9] Had these estimates ever been realized, the new community would have been larger than either Kekionga or the Glaize in their heydays. Although this was not to be—none of the pro-British Shawnee leaders such as Captain Johnny and Blackbeard, moved to Chenail Ecarte, and very few of the militants from Swan Creek ever accepted the invitation[10]—by offering their defeated allies a refuge at Chenail Ecarte, Great Britain attempted to demonstrate good faith.

In his speech at the site McKee tried to make the case that his government's dealings with the Indians had been honorable. Regarding the British withdrawal from the American posts in 1796, McKee asserted that this was an act of "the Justice of the King" toward the Americans, who "have at last fulfilled the Treaty of 1783." In this transfer of power, McKee continued, the King, far from betraying his Indian allies, had always "taken the greatest care of the rights and independance [sic] of all the Indian Nations who by the last Treaty with America are to be perfectly free and unmolested." The veteran Indian agent also asserted that the King's desire to resettle "all his Indian Children" demonstrated the King's "paternal regard" for them, and that he had an equal affection toward them and "His own people who have fought and bled with you," many of whom the King had also resettled throughout southern Upper Canada. Finally, McKee promised that the King would never "abandon" them "so long as they behave like good and obedient children."[11] By his choice of rhetoric, the Indian agent attempted to make it

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[8] Alexander McKee's Address to Indians at Chenail Ecarte, 30 August 1796, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 9, 9170.

[9] Dorchester to the Duke of Portland, 18 June 1796, MPHC, XXV: 126.

[10] Sugden, Blue Jacket, 212.

[11] McKee's Speech at Chenail Ecarte, 30 August 1796, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 9, 9167, 9170-71.

seem that the British government had always acted with consistency and in good faith, and that if British-Indian relations had been altered, it was due to the Indians having drifted away from their British Father, not vice versa. Under these circumstances, therefore, McKee argued that future British-Indian interaction would depend solely on the Natives' attitude and conduct.

Despite his confident paternalistic tone when addressing the Indians at Chenail Ecarte, McKee was pursuing a concept of British-Indian relations not shared by his superiors at Montreal and Quebec. In an attempt to sustain close ties with the Indians, McKee hoped to continue these former allies' dependence on the British for war materiel and additional gifts and provisions that had characterized that relationship during the many years of intermittent warfare. Writing to his superior John Johnson in January 1797, McKee alluded to past British policy when requesting additional provisions intended for those groups moving to Chenail Ecarte:

> During a long period of difficulties among the Indian Tribes and pending the evacuation of the Posts and those parts of the Indian Country from whence their sustenance was generally drawn, the humanity & Policy of Great Britain through the Commander in Chief Lord Dorchester directed their distresses to be relieved as well in Provisions as in an extra allowance of Cloathing, untill [sic] they shall be enabled to plant for their own support.[12]

McKee's request did not meet with much sympathy from Johnson, who did not respond. Johnson had recently returned from a four-year sojourn in Britain, and being keenly aware of his country's wartime commitments in Europe, seemed to understand that peacetime retrenchment in the Indian Department and the reduction of the military budget in Upper Canada would never permit the increase in the Indian expenditures that McKee

[12] McKee To Johnson, 20 January 1797, in E. A. Cruikshank & A. F. Hunter, eds., The Correspondence of the Honourable Peter Russell, 3 Vols. (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1932-1936), I: 130-31.

proposed. Only three weeks prior to McKee's letter, Johnson had written to his subordinate officer, instructing him to cut costs and disapproving of McKee's intention to add additional staff to the Indian Department's payroll:

> As I cannot but look upon the present Establishment of the Indian Department as on too great a Scale, particularly should there be no Occasion for the Services of the Indians In the War [in Europe, against revolutionary France] that we are engaged in, and of which there is little prospect at present....
>
> I must request that you will be particularly attentive to the Necessity of the Service in the expenditure of Provisions and presents, and that your Requisitions will be made accordingly.[13]

As the highest-ranking official in the Indian Department, Johnson more easily understood the need to reduce expenses in the Indian budget from his distant and comfortable vantage-point at Montreal. Conversely, Johnson's officers in the field, namely McKee and his son Thomas, Elliott, Ironsides, the Girty brothers, William Claus, and others, realized how disillusioned their former allies were with the British withdrawal. More than ever before, the British needed to act graciously if they wished to maintain a "Chain of Friendship" with these nations formerly allied to the Crown.

The Indian Department's officers on the local level did not prevail. By the summer of 1797 the refugee Shawnees who had moved from Swan Creek to the Island of Bois Blanc began to notice a diminishing flow of rations from the agency at Fort Amherstburg. These bands chose not to remove to Chenail Ecarte, and McKee, having moved to a new residence on the River Thames, was no longer present to administer to the Indians' needs on a regular basis. In council one day at Amherstburg, four Shawnee Chiefs –Blackbeard, Captain Johnny, the Borrer, and the Buffaloe— met with the Commandant, William Mayne, and laid out their complaints:

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[13] Johnson to McKee, 30 December 1796, Ibid., 104.

> Colonel McKee who for many years had been our great friend told us that he was still so & that he would always pay attention to us & would see that our great Father King George would take great care of us. It appears to us friend that Col. McKee does not now take notice of his children. We know that the greatest part of the fine presents that our great Father sends to us he keeps behind for his own use....[Furthermore] Capt. Elliott does not take pity on us as formerly he did.[14]

Ironically, these loyal Shawnee militants believed that the British government had kept faith with them, and that the reduction of gifts could only be explained by corruption in the Indian Department. The Shawnee delegation did not realize that the men they accused were among the few who still advocated a return to a more liberal Indian policy and an increase of gifts to those tribes in the old Chain of Friendship.

Indeed, the Shawnee delegation's complaints fell upon deaf ears when they addressed Captain Mayne. Mayne and his successor, Captain Hector McLean, the two commandants who served at Amherstburg during the years 1796-1801, both took it upon themselves to question the practices of the Indian Department, to curb its power, and to expose any form of corruption within its ranks. McLean imposed a rigid form of accounting for all goods distributed to the Indians, a radical departure from wartime practices. Since the Indian Department in Upper Canada had just come under civil authority in 1796, theoretically this heightened pressure from the military should not have mattered, but the military still financed the Indian budget, and Dorchester's successor as Governor General, Sir Robert Prescott, also favored military authority over Indian affairs. Feeling the pressure from the added scrutiny of the Indian Department and the necessity to reduce expenses, even McKee finally recommended that his colleague Elliott urge "these Indians...to cross the Lake [to the American side] & endeavour to feed

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[14] Talk between Captain William Mayne and Indian Chiefs, Amherstburg, 30 June 1797, in Historical Archives of Fort Malden, John Marsh Papers, File 3, 151-52; MPHC, XX: 519-20; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-1, 233-38.

themselves" in order "to lessen the quantity of Provisions required."[15] Had Captain Johnny, Blackbeard, and the other British Shawnees known of McKee's instructions they certainly would have understood them as a confirmation of their suspicions when they had gone to Mayne a few months earlier and accused the Indian agent of betraying them. In asking Elliott to encourage entire groups of Natives to return to the American side of the border, McKee probably had come to realize the hopelessness of his dream of a restored Confederacy with a new council fire at Chenail Ecarte.

Yet McKee had little choice but to conform to the new standards; perhaps he already knew that Elliott's conduct was coming under closer observation. When Hector McLean took command at Amherstburg, the new commandant quickly asserted his authority, determined to reduce the Indian Department to what he believed was its proper peacetime status. McLean recognized that the Department operated more "by custom than by any Instructions," and he resented it that Elliott and the other agents at Amherstburg carried on their affairs independently of the garrison's army officers, technically a violation of the regulations Dorchester issued a decade earlier in 1787.[16] Furthermore, McLean was annoyed to find that Elliott, a low-ranking Crown official with a meager annual salary of 1,000 pounds, owned up to fifty slaves and lived lavishly on his farm a mile south of Fort Amherstburg, supposedly at the expense of the Army, which

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[15] McKee to Elliott, 13 October 1797, MPHC, XXV: 158.

[16] McLean to Capt. James Green, Military Secretary, 10 August 1797, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-1, 128. For Dorchester's instructions, see "Instructions for the good Government of the Indian Department," Dorchester to Sir John Johnson, 27 March 1787, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 789, 6759-65. Although Dorchester instructed the Indian Department to distribute Indian gifts in the presence of the post's commandant and junior officers, the Governor-General also instructed "the Commanding Officer…not under pretence of this regulation to interfere with the Agent in the management of the Indian Department." Under these ambiguous orders it remained unclear as to who actually possessed the greater authority. War years tended to favor the Indian Department, peacetime the military leaders.

financed the Indian Department.[17] The commandant also discovered that Elliott daily sent his slaves to the Fort's bakery to pick up twenty to twenty-five loaves on every trip, supposedly for the Indians, but in truth as provisions for his family and plantation staff.[18]

By themselves, these abuses probably would not have merited Elliott's dismissal from the service, but McLean's opportunity for a *coup d'etat* against Elliott and the Indian Department came in October 1797, when Elliott, following McKee's orders, submitted a requisition for goods necessary to supply the Indians wintering at Chenail Ecarte. Elliott's order for provisions assumed that 534 Indians lived at the reserve, which supposedly included some absent bands at the time of Elliott's rough census. McLean sent an officer to determine the actual number of Indians living there, which resulted in a count of only 160.[19] When the principal leader at Chenail Ecarte, the Ojibwa Chief Bowl, confirmed this latter figure, it seemed that Elliott had intentionally falsified his earlier return. This discrepancy, coupled with McLean's earlier charges of irregularities against Elliott, was all that Governor General Robert Prescott needed to unceremoniously dismiss the Indian agent in December without even the dignity of a further investigation or public hearing.[20] McKee's son Thomas replaced Elliott as Indian Superintendent at Amherstburg.

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[17] McLean to Green, 14 September 1797, MPHC, XX: 538; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-1, 150-51.

[18] Same to Same, 23 September 1797, MPHC, XX: 548.

[19] For the various returns for provisions requested at Chenail Ecarte, see MPHC, XX: 556, ibid., XXV: 157. Also, Lieutenant Thomas Fraser's census at Chenail Ecarte, taken 26 October 1797, is found in CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-2, 339.

[20] Prescott to Russell, 15 December 1797, MPHC, XX: 585; Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 43. Also see Russell's letter to Elliott, relaying Prescott's order, 6 February 1798, MPHC, XXV: 165-66.

A full retelling of the McLean-Elliott controversy is not necessary here, but for the purposes of this study the incident's significance lies in how it represented the changing British Indian policy at the time, and how this in turn affected British-Indian relations in the West.[21] Previously, during the years of intense frontier conflict when Britain's continued presence in the upper country sometimes depended on the field agents in the Indian Department, Elliott's conduct and activities would have been regarded as necessary perquisites to the agents, but in this new era they were treated as abuses, and Elliott's dismissal enabled McLean to reduce the peacetime power of the Indian Department. Far more than a personal setback for Elliott, the agent's dismissal demonstrated the diminishing importance of the entire Department, and it meant that the Army would now exercise greater control by rigidly enforcing regulations and monitoring the Indian budget. The firing of Elliott served as a warning to the other agents, most of whom were equally guilty of engaging in the peculation and irregularities that had caused Elliott's downfall. McKee in particular had spent an entire career conducting Indian affairs in an informal manner, rarely accounting for his large expenditures.[22] For the remaining agents in the Western District, the consternation of witnessing Elliott's forced departure and the Department's having to succumb to military and political authorities must have raised concerns about their future role as agents in His Majesty's Indian service.

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[21] For further reading on the McLean-Elliott controversy, see Reginald Horsman's Matthew Elliott, British Indian Agent, chapter 6, and Robert S. Allen's The British Indian Department and the Frontier in North America, 1755-1830, Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, no. 14 (Ottawa: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1975), 60-63.

[22] McKee had also approved Elliott's inflated order for the Indians at Chenail Ecarte, and the Deputy Superintendent General could have also been fired for submitting this supposedly fabricated report.

The agents were equally concerned with how their former Native allies would respond to the changes, and whether or not the Indian Department could continue to cultivate close relations with them. Already upset by the British betrayals at Fort Miami and in Jay's Treaty, the Shawnees, in particular, reacted negatively to the firing of Elliott, a longtime friend and adopted brother who had married into their tribe. Even McLean, while apt to deny the far-reaching extent of Elliott's influence among the tribes that the former agent had once served, conceded that Elliott still carried some weight with "that comtemptible tribe called the Shawanese," with whom "[t]he whole of the officers of the [Indian] Department are indeed in some shape connected…either by Marriage or Concubinage."[23] Still, McLean's bitter remarks did not acknowledge the degree of dissatisfaction with British policy that prevailed among members of the former Confederacy. Little more than a year after Elliott's removal, the Indian Department and the government of Upper Canada began to notice the effects among the Indians. At the beginning of February 1799, Lieutenant Governor Russell wrote to Prescott:

> Captain [Joseph] Brant [also a paid member of the Indian Department] took me on one side and mentioned to me in Confidence that Capt. Elliott was so universally beloved by the Indians that his dismissal had given them great uneasiness; and that the Shawanese had it in Contemplation to send a Deputation to his Majesty to move the Throne in his behalf, which he prevented. –I find by his last letter that the same uneasiness subsists among the other Tribes.[24]

The agent's swift removal during a time of transformation and retrenchment in British-Indian affairs could only have caused greater distrust and suspicion among the Indians in

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[23] McLean to James Green, Military Secretary, 27 August 1799, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 252, 234.

[24] Russell to Prescott, 1 February 1799, Toronto Public Library, L18, Russell Papers, Letterbook of Correspondence to Governor General Robert Prescott, 1796-1799; Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 82-83.

regard to British intentions, and the incident may have further dampened Native interest in Chenail Ecarte.

At the center of the McLean-Elliott controversy lay opposing philosophies regarding the future of British Indian policy, which to some degree exposed the differing attitudes among British leaders toward the Indians. While Elliott and McKee wished to increase the distribution of provisions to the Indians at Chenail Ecarte and elsewhere in hopes of restoring a British-Indian alliance, Captains Mayne and McLean and Governor General Prescott endorsed the opposite policy, a reduction of Native dependence now that the alliance was no longer necessary. According to McLean, the Indian Department had "lavished" far too many gifts on the Indians, causing a "total dependence on Govt.," discouraging "every other means of subsistence." Arguing that "the Bounty of Govt. has been an injury to many of them by encouraging indolence," the commandant recommended a gradual diminishing of this "consumption…so as in the course of time to abolish it altogether."[25] Prescott supported McLean, arguing that the "present posture of Indian affairs" cannot "Warrant…this additional Expence."

Alarmed at the extensive requests for provisions that McKee continued to submit, the Governor General "gave strict injunctions" to McLean "to guard against increasing expences at Amherstburg."[26] Prescott also concurred with McLean's assertion that Elliott had encouraged the high frequency of Indian visits to the post, and that not just Elliott, but the entire Indian Department tended "to promote their own interested views."[27]

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[25] McLean to Military Secretary James Green, 14 September 1797, MPHC, XX: 536; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-1, 146-47; Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 3, 178-79.

[26] Prescott to Russell, 28 September 1797, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 1, 91, 93.

[27] McLean to Military Secretary James Green, 14 September 1797, MPHC, XX: 536-37; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-1, 147, 149; Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 3, 179-80.

Prescott could not understand why the Indians should be encouraged to visit the posts, sometimes from great distances, and he saw no reason why "the Issues of Provisions of the present day" should be "of equal extent with those of former years." Therefore, like McLean, the Commander-in-Chief believed that Indian distributions should be vastly reduced from the expenditures that characterized the years of frontier warfare, and that any attempt by the Indian Department to impede this reduction was "highly reprehensible."[28]

With Elliott out of his way and with Prescott's support, McLean transformed the system of Indian gifts distribution, strictly adhering to Lord Dorchester's regulations and to a tighter budget. The peacetime policy of reducing Indian gifts exposed further unsettled issues inherent in British imperial strategy involving the Indians. Did the gifts represent compensation for the Indians' past allied services, or did they constitute a form of rent and acknowledgement of Britain's continued presence in Indian country? Or were Indian gifts simply the British government's method of controlling and manipulating a dependent people, a policy that was no longer urgently needed in peacetime North America? Dorchester's predecessor Sir Frederick Haldimand had adhered to the former theory, that the Indians deserved compensation for past services.[29] By contrast, McLean's desire to some day "abolish" Indian gifts altogether, and Prescott's belief that the Indian Department should not distribute provisions equal to that of previous years, indicated a new outlook, one which no longer found it necessary to compensate the Indians based purely on the merit of past services.

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[28] Prescott to Russell, 16 September 1798, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 1, 228.

By mid-1797 McLean and his superiors viewed the entire system of giving Indians gifts not as something their government owed to these past allies, but rather as a symbol of the King's goodwill and generosity. When complaining about the conduct of the Indian Department, McLean wanted to eliminate any misunderstanding on the part of the Natives, hoping "to Show the Indians Clearly that it is the bounty of Government,...[and that they are] receiving it out of the King's stores, instead of getting it from the hands of an individual, & supposing it their Gift."[30] From Whitehall the Duke of Portland, Home Secretary, concurred. In a matter regarding a misunderstanding with the Mississaugas of Upper Canada, Portland emphasized to Lieutenant Governor Peter Russell the importance of making the Indians realize that the gifts were certainly not theirs by right, nor was the British government obligated in any way to grant them. Instead, Portland maintained, "the Messessaugues...[must be] impressed with a due sense of the obligations they are under to His Majesty for the Presents they anually receive."[31] By 1800, Russell's successor, Lieutenant Governor Peter Hunter, also took this stance in his dealings with Brant, informing the Mohawk leader that "[the] King's Bounty to the Indians must not be considered merely as a reward for their past conduct but that it entirely and absolutely depends on their endeavours to promote to the utmost of their power the King's interests."[32]

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[29] "Memorandum Respecting the Public Matter in the Province of Quebec submitted for the consideration of the Right Honourable Lord Sydney by General Haldimand," 16 March 1785, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, Vol. 48, 251.

[30] McLean to Captain James Green, Military Secretary, 18 August 1797, Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Collection, File 3, 155-56; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-1, 126.

[31] Portland to Russell, 5 November 1798, P.R.O., CO 42/322, 143.5-144.

[32] Hunter to Portland, 8 March 1800, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, Vol. 325, 110.

This new imperial perspective of 1797-1800 was not without internal contradictions, notably the desire to achieve more control over Natives while giving them less in return. In order for the British administration in Upper Canada to wield the dominance over indigenous peoples that Portland envisioned, British leaders would need to make the Indians more aware of the latter's dependence on the Crown. Indians, Russell wrote, would need to be instilled with "a proper sense of the Obligations they owe to His Majesty," in return for the gifts "to which they are in no way entitled, but are indebted for them."[33] In a "Secret and Confidential" letter sent to all of the Indian Department's Superintendents in the upper province, Russell ordered them to distribute gifts to Indians in such a manner "as…to leave the strongest impressions on their minds of their Dependence on His Majesty's Bounty."[34] But this goal was to be implemented simultaneously with the Russell-Portland policy of instructing field agents to reduce Indian distributions and decrease budgets.

Such a contradictory policy could only lead to further confusion among both British personnel and tribal leaders, particularly when Captain Hector McLean, commandant at Britain's largest Indian agency at Amherstburg, already had made it clear that he believed that Indian gifts should eventually be abolished.[35] Far from wanting to make the Indians more dependent, McLean worried that the Indians were beginning to rely too heavily on British gifts, and that too many would settle at Chenail Ecarte and

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[33] Russell to Lieutenant General Count Joseph de Puisaye, 11 June 1799, P.R.O., CO 42/324, 169.5; Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 211.

[34] Russell to Colonel McKee, Capt. Claus, Thos. McKee, Esq., Jas. Givens, Esq., 15 June 1798, Toronto Public Library, L18, Peter Russell Letterbook, Indian Affairs, 1798-1799. Also see, Portland to Russell, 4 November 1797, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 3.

[35] McLean to Capt. James Green, Military Secretary, 14 September 1797, MPHC, XX: 536; CNA RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-1, 146-47; Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 3, 178-79.

other reserves, where they would become a permanent "burden upon Government." Moreover, McLean predicted that if Britain continued to dole out Indian presents, this would cause the recipients to "turn effeminate & indolent," since "a total dependence on Govt. for the means of subsistence…relaxes their exertions to provide for themselves."[36] Consequently, McLean took steps to reduce this burden, entailing both a reduction in gifts and a limited schedule as to when the presents would be distributed. Like Governor General Prescott, McLean also could not understand why "Indians from so great a distance" should be encouraged to visit the post.[37] Furthermore, although neither Portland nor Russell ever made a policy distinction between Britain's actions toward Indians living within the boundaries of Upper Canada and those living without, McLean believed that the government had virtually no obligations to those Indians living on the American side of the border. The commandant instructed Thomas McKee that "Indians of that description…should not be permitted to approach the Garrison until the purport of their Visit is known," and they are "to obtain permission previous to their being admitted to this side [of the Detroit River]." McLean justified this, arguing, "I do not conceive that we are at present in want of their aid or alliance."[38] From this perspective, Indian nations outside of British territory should always be considered as sovereign principalities and potential wartime allies, but not wards of government.

Both the Indian Department and the Natives protested McLean's reductions of Indian provisions. Thomas McKee wrote to William Claus, his superior in the

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[36] McLean to Major James Green, Military Secretary, 18 July 1798, MPHC, XX: 613; RG 10, Indian Affairs, Series A, Vol. 1, 230.

[37] McLean to Thomas McKee, 17 June 1799, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15269; Prescott to Russell, 16 September 1798, ibid., Vol. 1, 228.

[38] McLean to Thomas McKee, 17 June 1799, ibid., Vol. 26, 15269.

Department, complaining that McLean's restrictive measures were an "extraordinary deviation from a system which has been pursued here ever since Pontiac[']s War." The younger McKee also predicted that "this breach of so old a custom may greatly operate to the diminution, if not the total extinction of our influence and may infinitely prejudice His Majesty's Indian Interest in these parts."[39] Although McKee may have been prudent in not wishing to alienate the Indians, much had changed in the years since Pontiac's War in 1763, as the tribes in the vicinity of Detroit and Amherstburg had grown far more dependent on British goods and were in no position to stage another revolt. When Superintendent John Johnson visited the upper posts in the spring of 1799, Shawnees living near Amherstburg assured him of their "steady Attachment to the King their Father." But they then went on to complain of their poor condition. The cause, they told Johnson, was that they were "surrounded on all sides by the White People, and their hunting ruined."[40] The regions of the Western District, the Detroit frontier, and northwest Ohio no longer teemed with an overabundance of wildlife, at least not enough to fully sustain independent Native peoples as McLean had hoped. Rather than a reduction in provisions, the Indians needed more protection and support, but as of 1799, British policy had moved in the opposite direction, toward reduced expenditures on gifts and annuities for their Indian neighbors and former allies.

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[39] Thomas McKee to Claus, 5 June 1799, Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 6, 291; MPHC, XX: 573; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 252, 163; Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 220-21.

[40] Johnson to Robert Prescott, 3 June 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 219.

Realities Intrude, 1798-1803

Despite all the discussion among British policy makers about cutting expenses for provisioning Natives, and all the complaints from Indians about reductions in British support, the realities of the situation were more complex. While the policy that emanated from Whitehall was intended to gradually diminish the government's Indian burden and to perhaps eventually terminate British-Indian relations altogether, increasing numbers of Indians turned to Britain for aid, hardly what McLean and his superiors wanted. In fact, figures indicate that in the years following the defeat at Fallen Timbers and the subsequent Treaty of Greenville, the tribes in the regions of Detroit and Upper Canada's Western District relied more heavily on British gifts and provisions than they had in the past. During the period between 1798 and 1803, the Indian agency at Amherstburg served a growing number of Native visitors, averaging 5,548 each year. By 1803, 6,207 Indians received provisions there, representing an increase of 1,038 over the total for 1798, a jump of more than twenty percent during the five-year period. Only once within this stretch –1802— did the totals decrease from the previous year's numbers, but the statistics quickly rebounded to the five-year high recorded the following year.[41] However, these statistics do not tell the whole story of British-Indian relations within the territories that fell into Fort Malden's (i.e., Amherstburg's) sphere of influence, for, as will be shown in this subsection, the conflict between, on the one hand, Britain's initial goal of reduced gift-giving and the Natives' complaints about that policy and, on the other hand, a continuation of strong British-Indian relations, was simply a reflection of a

[41] Indians Served at Amherstburg, 1798-1803, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 10, 9369.

complicated game of give-and-take in which Natives of diverse tribal backgrounds and infighting among British officials all played significant roles.

While the British continued to seek a sphere of influence in the region around Amherstburg during this period of peace, it is important to note some key changes in the composition of the groups seeking assistance at the time. In any given year throughout this six-year stretch (1798-1803) at least eighty-six percent of those receiving provisions belonged either to one of the Three Fires' nations, the Wyandots, or to the Shawnees. Moreover, over forty percent of the totals were Ojibwas alone, and the predominantly Ojibwa reserve at Chenail Ecarte showed no signs of a diminishing populace, as McLean and the government might have hoped; instead the numbers increased in the years immediately following Elliott's dismissal in 1797 for supposedly having inflated the reserve's requisition orders.[42] These five tribes —Ojibwas, Potawatomis, Ottawas, Wyandots, and Shawnees— eventually provided the backbone of the British-allied tribes south of the Great Lakes and along the Detroit frontier in the War of 1812. Hence, just after the turn of the nineteenth century many of those peoples who would fight for the Crown a decade later demonstrated their continued fidelity to the British, despite a stingy British policy and the attitude of Captain McLean, who did not leave his post at Amherstburg until 1801.

In spite of these indications of apparent healthy ties between Britain and the Natives in the southern Great Lakes, a pro-British orientation was not typical of every tribe. The Miamis and Delawares, two of the nations that had once comprised key segments of a powerful triumvirate (with the Shawnees) in the Maumee Valley during the

[42] For returns of numbers of Indians settled at Chenail Ecarte in 1798 & 1799, see MPHC, XX: 617-18, 641-42, respectively; CNA, RG 8 Military C Series, Vol. 251, 148, and Vol. 252, 145, respectively.

1790s, rarely visited Amherstburg any more. Only a few dozen Miamis still received annual gifts from Amherstburg, and visits made by Delawares temporarily ceased in 1801. Similarly, when, in the wake of Fallen Timbers (August 1794), Alexander McKee had invited the refugee Indians temporarily living at Swan Creek to relocate to places further north, particularly Chenail Ecarte and Bois Blanc Island, fragments of the Shawnees did so, but the Miamis and Delawares generally returned home to places nearer to the expanding American settlements.[43] The Miami and Delaware villages that dotted the White and Wabash Rivers during the early years of the nineteenth century were mainly under the influence of chiefs and former war leaders, such as Little Turtle, Buckongahelas, and Captain Pipe, who now cooperated with American officials.[44] That these villages were beyond the British sphere of influence was confirmed in a report by Matthew Elliott in September 1797. Elliott's findings showed that the Indians who visited his agency were from locations far north of the Wabash and its tributaries where American influence had grown considerably.[45] The limited number of Miami and Delaware visits to Upper Canada, therefore, could be a byproduct of closer ties with the

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[43] Some Christian Delaware, primarily near the Fairfield Mission (Moravian Town), did live in Upper Canada, but probably none of them participated in the late war against the Americans, nor did they typically have dealings with the Indian agency at Amherstburg.

[44] According to one scholar, the Miamis even moved further southward from where they had previously lived when they returned to the Wabash River Valley after their defeat at Fallen Timbers and the Treaty of Greenville. The new village sites not only placed them further from Amherstburg, but the American agency at Fort Wayne now sat squarely between them and the British. See Rafert, 63.

[45] Goods Recommended to be Given to the Indians, Fort Malden, 20 September 1797, Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 3, 188-90; MPHC, XX: 545-47. According to Elliott's report, none of the bands visiting Amherstburg came from villages further south than the Elkhart River, a tributary to the St. Joseph River and Lake Michigan in present-day northern Indiana. The communities who still sought ties with the British at Amherstburg also included some of the villages situated along the Sandusky, Thames, and Huron Rivers, Brownstown being at the mouth of the latter.

Americans, as well as the westward migration of several Delaware bands.[46] Nevertheless, despite having, on the whole, grown distant from the British, the Miamis and Delawares never fully severed ties with their former Father. In 1803, 162 Miamis and sixteen Delawares visited Amherstburg. Moreover, several hundred "Monseys," loosely considered a component of the larger Delaware nation, still received provisions at the post annually.[47] Consequently, after all this time, it seems that the British in Upper Canada could count on either the support or neutrality of most Indians in the southern Great Lakes, leaving open the possibility for a renewed Confederacy in the future.

The above statistics did not mean that Britain's Indian expenditures remained high during this period, but rather that signficant numbers of Natives continued to visit Amherstburg in spite of receiving much smaller rations there. After the dismissal of Elliott and the implementation of stricter guidelines, Governor General Prescott expected post commanders to oversee and account for all distributions of provisions to Native visitors. At Fort Amherstburg Captain McLean did so with a vengeance as he continued his efforts to trim the power of the Indian Department while simultaneously reducing the government's obligations to the Indians. McLean hoped to accomplish this by discouraging Indians from visiting the post, and he began to deny gifts and full rations to those who came. The commandant maintained that

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[46] Joseph Jackson, the informant Alexander McKee sent westward only days before he (McKee) died, reported in May, 1799 that "The Delaware...I met on the White River informed me they were all going this Spring to join the Shawnees on the west side of the Mississippi." See Report of Joseph Jackson sent as a Messenger to the Mississippi by order of the late Deputy Superintendant [sic.] General, 5 May 1799, CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 8, 91. Although some Delawares may have moved West, the journals of the Moravian mission on the White River indicate that some Delawares continued to live there at least through 1806, and probably longer. For these journals see, Lawrence Henry Gipson, ed., The Moravian Indian Mission on the White River: Diaries and Letters, May 5, 1799 to November 12, 1806 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1938).

[47] Indians served at Amherstburg, 1798-1803, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 10, 9369.

> all their [the Natives'] whims and unreasonable desires ought not to be so much attended to as hitherto, when the best reason that coud [sic] often be assigned for giving them any unnecessary article was, that they ask'd for it. If all the Curiosities and Luxuries that [the] human heart can invent were deposited in the Indian Store and that they saw them, they would ask for them, but it does not follow that they are necessary or that they ought to be gratify'd [sic]. They may indeed address us emphatically with the term Father, as they artfully do for we certainly humor them like little children in all of their unreasonable requests.[48]

Consequently, in May 1799, McLean instructed agent Thomas McKee that each Indian should have a "Belly full" and nothing else "exceeding two days Provisions." This amount was intended merely to provide a little food for the visitors' homeward journeys. Moreover, no gifts were ever to be distributed, except once a year when the shipment of Indian stores arrived in October.[49]

Behind McLean's attitude lay the complex issue of the Natives' ambiguous status in Britain's ever-evolving frontier policy. Were the Indians subjects or allies? Some military officers and civil officials maintained that the Indians were both. William Dunn, Civil Administrator in Quebec in 1807, implied this dual understanding when he wrote, "I have always understood that the Indians were not considered by the [C]rown merely as subjects, but as Military allies." Dunn further argued that this was why "all the expenses attending" the Indians were "to be paid out of the Extraordinaries of the Army."[50] McLean also adhered to this logic as he developed his own rationale in supporting his actions at Amherstburg. Though previously having been considered both subjects and allies, the Indians who now lived on the American side of the boundary no longer

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[48] McLean to Sir John Johnson, 24 May 1799, MPHC, XX: 634; Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 5, 290.

[49] McLean to Thomas McKee, 10 May 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 193-94.

[50] William Dunn to William Windham, Secretary at War, 6 June 1807, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, Vol. 132, 286.

qualified as subjects, and McLean believed that there was no reason to retain those Indians as allies. Why keep an alliance during peacetime? The commandant reasoned that His Majesty's government had "[n]othing ever to fear from the Indians while at peace with America." McLean's confidence was partly due to the good relations that prevailed at the time between his government and a Federalist-led United States, but in the unlikely event of another British-American war, the Captain argued that whenever necessary the British could easily restore a Native alliance, inasmuch as "the Indians being totally guarded by Interests & not principal will side with the best bidder."[51]

In applying this rationale, the rigid commandant carried his policy as far as he could before his superiors intervened. Russell and his administration in Upper Canada were not prepared to go as far as McLean in severing ties with their former allies. Agents Thomas McKee and William Claus, fearing the repercussions of McLean's restrictive measures, warned Russell of the danger. McKee claimed that the commandant's tampering with "a system [of gift distribution] which has been pursued here ever since Pontiacs War" had caused "great dissatisfaction" among the Indians, and he predicted the possible "extinction of our influence" and loss of the "friendship of the Indian nations."[52] Claus concurred, claiming "that Captain McLean is going too far with us."[53] Not yet willing to greatly alter Britain's Indian relations, Russell heeded these warnings and ordered McLean to "immediately suspend" his "plan of withholding Provisions from the

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[51] Remarks Submitted to the Commander In Chief, by Hector McLean, 10 November 1797, Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 4, 221; MPHC, XX: 573.

[52] Thomas McKee to Claus, 5 June 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 219-20; MPHC, XX: 637; Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 6, 291-92; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, 252, 163.

[53] Claus to Russell, 6 June 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 221.

Indians" lest this lead to "consequences not only injurious but dangerous to the safety of this Province."[54] Russell's crucial decision, coming near the end of his term as Lieutenant Governor, helped prevent the eventual dissolution of British-Indian relations in the Great Lakes and Upper Canada. On the brink of a new century and during a period of relative calm in Canada, McLean and the military had seemingly gained the upper hand over the Indian Department, making the latter powerless apart from Russell's or Prescott's intervention. However, the aging Russell, a former soldier and lackluster administrator, prevented further extreme reductions, a policy that would remain in force until a successor administration once again actively prepared for war in 1807.[55]

Russell's interference in Indian affairs should not be construed as a shift in policy, despite the fact that McLean believed that he had merely been efficiently following orders by attempting to restrict Indian presents and provisions. While Russell advocated a reduction in expenditures, he also sought to preserve the age-old Chain of Friendship with the Natives who visited the posts. The issue then was not whether or not the British should follow a policy of retrenchment, but rather how and to what degree should such a policy be implemented? Considering the weak state of the upper province at the time and the Indians' nebulous status (whether subjects, allies, or both), it was not clear exactly what peacetime retrenchment should entail.

Like Russell, other leaders in Canada ultimately took the view that the policy of retrenchment merely meant a continuation of former ties with the Indians, but on a

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[54] Russell to McLean, 19 June 1799, Toronto Public Library, L 18, Peter Russell Letterbook, Indian Affairs, 1798-1799; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 252, 165.

[55] Russell served on the ill-fated expedition with General Braddock in 1755, and he assisted Sir Henry Clinton with his history of the American Revolution, but this work remained unpublished until 1954. See Edith G. Firth, "The Administration of Peter Russell, 1796-1799," Ontario History 48(4) (1956): 163.

reduced budget. The Executive Council of the Upper province agreed with this interpretation, advising Russell "to take such steps as he [Russell] shall Judge proper (by writing to Captn. McLean or otherwise) for the purpose of preventing any change in the old system until the Pleasure of the Commander in Chief [Prescott] is known."[56] A month later Prescott made his "pleasure known" when he supported Russell, ordering McLean "to issue Presents and Provisions to the Indians in the manner customary at the Post" previous to his alterations in May 1799, "and in conformity to the existing regulations." Prescott also later informed the Captain that he was not to "interfere…as to the mode or manner of conducting the business of the [Indian] Department."[57] Such language coming from the man who sacked Elliott and who also wanted to discourage excessive Native visitors at Amherstburg indicated that leaders in Canada still considered the value of maintaining relations with the Indians. To these leaders, then, retrenchment was not intended as a means to phase out Britain's Indian relations, but rather as a way of preserving ties with the Crown's former allies during a time of fiscal cuts.[58]

Prescott, who had earlier supported McLean in the latter's feud with Elliott and the Indian Department, understood the necessity of retaining some diplomatic ties with the Indians. The Governor General's concerns about the treatment of Indians at Amherstburg probably also stemmed from a letter he had received from John Johnson

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[56] Minute of the Executive Council, York, 17 June 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 236.

[57] Prescott to Russell, 18 July 1799, ibid., 277.

[58] In fact, the Indian budgets continued their downward trend, and late in 1802, when John Chew, the Indian Department's Storekeeper General, submitted his budget request for 1803, Lieutenant Governor Peter Hunter slashed Chew's request by more than twenty percent before approving the budget. Remarkably, Hunter's stiff reductions came after the war in Europe had temporarily ceased, albeit briefly, with the short-lived Peace of Amiens. James Green, Military Secretary to John Chew, 17 December 1802, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 1210, 240-41.

only weeks prior to Russell's injunctions against McLean. Johnson informed Prescott of the discontent among the Indians he had encountered there while on his visit to the post in the spring of 1799. The bands who lived near Amherstburg at the time, primarily Shawnees, Ottawas, Delawares, and Wyandots, once the nucleus of the Confederacy in the late war against the Americans, now wintered near the post at Amherstburg, where they could continue to receive at least a fraction of the aid the British had once given them when they lived at Kekionga and the Glaize.[59]

During Johnson's 1799 tour of the Western District the leaders of these bands reaffirmed their loyalty to Britain, but did so as a preface to informing the Superintendent of their needs. The Shawnees even asked Johnson to help them secure passage to England, where they could present their case directly to the government, in order "to find out what they had to depend on."[60] The Shawnees also informed Johnson that the Spanish had offered them a place to reside west of the Mississippi, where numerous Shawnees already dwelt, and that the tribe also intended to send a delegation to the Spanish King to further consider the offer. The Shawnees, realizing that Spain and Britain were presently at war, probably hoped that the threat of their defection to the Spanish would stir Johnson, McLean, and other British leaders out of their complacent attitudes toward them. Although the Natives near Amherstburg most likely understood the extent of their dependence on the British, and consequently probably never considered rebellion as their fathers had done in 1763, they did, however, seem to understand their value as potential allies, or at least the formidable threat they still posed

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[59] For the Indians wintering near the fort, see John Johnson to Robert Prescott, 3 June 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 219.

[60] Johnson to Prescott, 3 June 1799, ibid.

when allied to an enemy. Johnson, not wishing to lose the longstanding relationship between the British and the Indians of the upper country, tried to reinforce the idea that the Indians still had only one "Father," and the Superintendent ordered Thomas McKee and the other agents "to point out [to the Indians] the Impropriety" of "sending a Deputation to Spain."[61] Thus, the possibility of the Shawnee defection, in spite of McLean's assurances of Native weakness and military impotence, is most likely what grabbed Prescott's attention and led him to order a continuation of gifts to the Indians.

For a time the British, especially the officers in the Indian Department, seriously considered this threat. Logistically, they knew that a Franco-Spanish invasion up the Mississippi Valley was possible, particularly with Indian support. During the American Revolution less than twenty years earlier, a mixed British-Indian force set out from Mackinac and raided the Spanish territory near St. Louis, albeit with only moderate success.[62] The elder McKee was also aware of the importance of the passage through present-day Wisconsin via the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers, but he believed "[t]he Sakies and Fox's" were sympathetic to British interests, and thus could be "induced to resist any attempt of the French[,] Spanish or unfriendly Indians to pass through their Country."[63] British agents understood the need to maintain ties with these distant tribes, and McKee believed that French and Spanish agents regularly circulated war-belts among the Indians of the Mississippi and western Great Lakes; only days before his death on 15 January 1799, the ailing agent dispatched an informant, Joseph Jackson, to the lower Mississippi.

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Louise Phelps Kellogg, The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1935; reprint, New York: De Capo Press, 1971), 163-69.

[63] Prideaux Selby to Peter Russell, forwarding the instructions of the late Alexander McKee, 23 January 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 61; MPHC, XXV: 186.

But Jackson found little evidence of any potential invasion brewing in that region; the Indians informed Jackson that neither French nor Spanish agents had solicited their service within the previous two years. However, Jackson did believe that although "very large Bodies of Indians of the Creek[,] Cherokee & Choctaw Nations are under Spanish influence," the Natives would only participate in an invasion if the Spaniards were to produce a substantial army in the lower Mississippi; such a force never appeared.[64]

True or not, the reports were of special interest to those who wished to see a restoration of the Indian Department's wartime status, and perhaps a revival of Britain's Indian alliance. Writing to Russell, Mohawk leader Joseph Brant firmly believed that "the French are busy among the Indians, and they will (if possible) Invade the Country." Brant feared that a renewed French influence might shake the western nations from their longtime allegiance to the British. The Mohawk leader also ascribed some of the disillusionment among the Indians to "some new arrangements…in the Indian Department, which they are not acquainted with," adding, "they seem to be jealous."[65] The "new arrangements" to which Brant alluded most likely referred to both the reduction in the Indian budget and to Elliott's dismissal. With the possibility of either the French or the Spanish having become active among the Indians, Brant could not think of a worse time for Britain to reduce its Indian commitments. Moreover, the Mohawk chief,

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[64] Report of Joseph Jackson, 5 May 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 188; CNA, MG 19, F 1, Vol. 8, 90. Jackson's report corroborated that of another informant, James Day, who had previously traveled to the lower Mississippi Valley in 1797. According to Day, the Shawnees and Delawares living there professed loyalty to Britain and claimed that they could "never forget the friendship of Col. McKee & Capt. Elliott and that they will always keep it in their minds in whatever situation they may be." Information of James Day, 10 October 1797, CNA, MG 19, F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 8, 35-37; Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, I: 300-01.

[65] Brant to Russell, 27 January 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 69-70; MPHC, XXV: 188.

who for several years had clamored to gain exclusive territorial rights and sovereignty for the Natives living at the Grand River Reserve, could enhance the Six Nations' sovereign status and possibly even improve his own position if the British were to once again acknowledge the Indians as indispensable allies. Matthew Elliott similarly predicted a French-led invasion into the Upper Province, originating from the Upper Mississippi and Lake Superior.[66] Like Brant, Elliott had a vested interest in these matters, and his warnings of an invasion came at the very time that he submitted personal Memorials to his superiors, listing his past services and hoping for reinstatement.[67]

When none of the dreaded western invasions materialized, Captain McLean took pleasure in discrediting the rumors, and the commandant pointed out that, with the exception of Brant, all the exaggerated reports seemed to filter through what he regarded as untrustworthy sources in the Indian Department's branch at his post. McLean charged that "[t]hese reports have without doubt originated with the Dept. themselves," for the purpose of adding "to their weight and influence in Upper Canada."[68] The commandant soon became more specific in his accusations when he discovered that one of the informants, a Shawnee chief, lived "with Mr. Elliott and is entirely under his influence, from which it may be easily conjectured how the reports are generated and the motives which gave rise to it."[69]

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[66] Russell to Prideaux Selby, 2 February 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 90.

[67] For the Memorials of Matthew of Elliott, see MHPC, XXV: 178-82; 210-12.

[68] McLean to James Green, Military Secretary, 21 March 1799, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 252, 63.

[69] Same to same, 8 August 1799, MHPC, XX: 656; also, McLean to Commodore Grant, 23 August 1799, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15291.

Without knowing for certain whether or not the reports contained any truth, McLean's haste to discount the stories tends to reveal his motives. In fact, according to previous British informants, Indians living on the Mississippi had already admitted that Spanish agents had made overtures to them a few years earlier. But McLean worried that the smallest threat of an invasion might create a wartime footing in which the officers in the Indian Department would once again have autonomy and control over Britain's frontier activity and Indian relations, a situation that would only increase the military spending allocated to the Indian budget at a time when McLean's superiors wanted him to reduce costs. In spite of his recent success against Matthew Elliott, McLean knew that he could still lose his struggle with the Indian Department if the Department's officials convinced Lieutenant Governor Russell to acquiesce to their goals and to restore the Indian Department to its previous standing. Russell did not understand Indian affairs as well as his illustrious predecessor, John Graves Simcoe, and to a large degree the new administrator had to rely on the information and advice of his subordinates.[70] In McLean's mind this made the Lieutenant Governor even more susceptible to being duped by those who wished to "impose a belief on" Russell of "the importance of the Crisis...of a pretended invasion."[71] When Russell eventually ordered the Captain not to withhold gifts or provisions from the Indians, the frustrated McLean fretted at how "astonished" he was that "Mr. President Russell has been deceived...by false information from this

[70] Firth, 163, 167-68.

[71] McLean to Green, 21 March 1799, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 252, 63.

quarter," but the Captain agreed to comply with his orders and promised "that the Indians shall have whatever the Superintendant [sic] asks for them."[72]

Whether or not the province was ever in a state of danger by 1799 as Russell and Prescott feared is beyond knowing for certain. However, the future course of British-Indian relations had reached a crisis point at this critical time, and unbeknownst to most British leaders, the delicacy of Indian relations possibly even affected Britain's future hopes of remaining in Upper Canada. Although McLean believed that the Indians no longer had any bearing on the future of Britain's Canadian empire, higher British officials were not so sure. In any case, although the possibility of an enemy invasion from the West seemed remote, British leaders in Canada made the crucial decision not to let their relationship lapse with those Natives who lived in U. S. territory, a decision that would later pay dividends.

McLean's cooperation did not come any too soon. In early July 1799, barely two weeks after Russell ordered McLean to stop turning away Indians, a large delegation of Fox and Sauks from the upper Mississippi descended on Amherstburg. Apparently this group of fifty warriors had discovered that the late Alexander McKee and others were concerned about the extent of Spanish influence among them, and the Indians therefore wished to prove their loyalty by visiting their Father in order to "brighten and strengthen the Chain of Friendship" and to "strengthen the confederacy with our Brother Nations in this quarter."[73] McLean particularly resented tribes from distant regions who continued to rely on British gifts and provisions, but he must have taken some satisfaction when the

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[72] McLean to Commodore Grant, 23 August 1799, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15289; McLean to Major James Green, Military Secretary, 7 September 1799, MPHC, XX: 659.

Fox and Sauk delegation seemed to corroborate his repeated assertions that the invasion rumors from the West were all unfounded. Due to the deputation's unannounced visit and to the government's efforts to reduce expenses, Thomas McKee found little in the storehouse to give to the loyal sojourners, and the agent was forced to send them away "Naked" and unsatisfied, giving them only ammunition.[74]

The appearance of a large delegation at Fort Amherstburg from a distant region was significant. It demonstrated that in spite of a reduced Indian budget and weakening relations with the Miamis and Delawares, the British still held the fidelity of the nations where it mattered most at the time, in the Spanish borderlands. The presence of the Fox and Sauk visitors also indicated the effectiveness of messengers whom Alexander McKee had sent west within the previous year. British Indian policy from Amherstburg had been a success in that it had managed to maintain ties with groups from the southern Lakes all the way to the Mississippi Valley. The Fox and Sauk delegation went to Amherstburg to restore a relationship that seemed to be waning. At a time when British leaders hoped to lessen the government's Indian obligation, the distant Fox and Sauk tribes wanted to see a greater commitment from Britain, including a restoration of a wartime alliance.

In council with Thomas McKee, McLean, and other officers at Amherstburg, the Fox and Sauk emissaries reminded the British leaders of their peoples' attachment to the British cause during the American war and lamented that "our Father did not consider us in the Peace he made." Nevertheless, the western delegation faithfully contended that "[w]e have never considered any as our Father but one," and "should you require our

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[73] Extract from the minutes of a Council held the 11th July 1799 at Amherstburg with several Chiefs of the Saakies & Foxes, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15271.

[74] Thomas McKee to Claus, 28 July 1799, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15278.

services, you may send for us." Hardly viewing themselves as a neutral power, the chiefs also asked specifically for British traders to be sent to their country, because "we desire no benefit from the Americans, neither in presents [n]or in the way of trade."[75] Had he survived, the late Alexander McKee would have taken much delight in witnessing this scene and hearing these words of loyalty from nations so distant. In part, the continued British influence among them stands as a tribute to his life's work.[76] Yet his son Thomas knew that the Fox and Sauk professions "of their Ancient attachment to Great Britian" would not continue unless his superiors saw "the propriety and necessity of treating all Nations as well distant as present with every mark of regard & friendship."[77]

Others of Britain's former Indian allies reaffirmed their friendship and loyalty at this time, hoping to continue the past relationship with their British Father. Just a month after the Fox and Sauks visited Amherstburg, the principal Wyandot chiefs from Brownstown and Sandusky also held an important council there. These leaders, while protesting the Amherstburg garrison's excessive cutting of timber on Bois Blanc Island and elsewhere, used the council to affirm a permanent bond between them and the British. Moreover, the Wyandots, formerly the first nation in the western Confederacy in times of war, claimed to still speak for the leaders of the nations of the Three Fires, "those of the Ottawas, Chippawas, and Poutawatamies."[78] In the name of all four

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[75] Extract from the minutes of a Council held the 11th July 1799 at Amherstburg with several Chiefs of the Saakies & Foxes, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15271-72.

[76] One of the elder McKee's primary deathbed concerns was to determine the disposition of these very peoples who lived on or near the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers and to secure their continued friendship and fidelity at all costs.Alexander McKee to Prideaux Selby, 10 January 1799, and Selby to Russell, 23 January 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 49, 60-62.

[77] Thomas McKee to Claus, 28 July 1799, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15278.

[78] At a Council held at Amherstburg, 10 August 1799 with the Chiefs of the Wyandots, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15283.

nations, the Wyandot leaders then offered a large gift of land lying adjacent to the town's district, enabling the garrison to continue gathering necessary timber and firewood. The delegation wanted the King to know of their faithfulness and generosity; as a token of their gift, they gave four strings of black wampum, to "be seen by our Great Father beyond the Great Lake."[79] However, like the Fox and Sauks before them, the Wyandots also wanted evidence of continued good faith on the part of their longtime European ally, concluding their speech with an appeal to "receive...what you have always given us."[80]

In this context of affairs, Blue Jacket, formerly one of the most important leaders of the western Confederacy, once again demonstrated his support for the British after having lived quietly for several years. In August 1800, barely five years since he had repudiated his British military commission and signed the Treaty of Greenville, the aging Shawnee leader secretly met with Thomas McKee.[81] McKee, the man who had once threatened to kill Blue Jacket for making peace with the Americans, now listened attentively as the old warrior disclosed private information entrusted to him by the American commandant at Detroit, who predicted an alliance between France and the United States.[82] Thomas Hunt, the American officer, apparently expected Blue Jacket to return bearing key information from his interview with McKee. Though Blue Jacket found himself in a position to act as a double agent, his loyalties seemed to fall with the British, for he potentially had much to lose by confiding in McKee. The Shawnee

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[79] Ibid., 15284.

[80] Ibid., 15285.

[81] Thomas McKee to William Claus, 15 August 1800, CNA, MG 19, F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 8, 117-18; MPHC, XV: 24-25.

[82] Ibid.; Sugden, Blue Jacket, 194-95, 223-24.

continued to receive annuity payments from the American government, and he had a "Son at School among them [the Americans]."[83] Blue Jacket may have anticipated another Anglo-American war, or, like other Natives in the southern Lakes, he may have begun to grow dissatisfied with the Americans and thought that the British might once again be useful if such a struggle were to occur. Thus, in a sense, Captain Hector McLean had been right. While at peace with the Americans, the British really had nothing to fear from the Indians, and even if another Anglo-American war should commence, Britain's former allies, being "rather prejudiced against the Americans," would once again gravitate toward the British.[84]

The eighteenth century ended with the future of British-Indian relations uncertain. Alexander McKee's death in January 1799, an irreparable loss, symbolized the state of British-Indian affairs at the time. The illustrious leader's passing further indicated the Indian Department's loss of status and power. Yet the Indians among whom McKee had labored for so long demonstrated their devotion to their late adopted kinsman, just as they continued to proclaim their loyalty to the King. In a separate ceremony several months after McKee's extravagant funeral, hundreds of Indians wished to pay their own respects. In a ritual conducted at the gravesite, located on the property of Thomas McKee (a couple of miles north of the Fort), these faithful friends danced for well over twenty-four hours in honor of their late brother, "White Elk." Thomas and several of the officers from Fort Malden, recognizing the supreme tribute intended by those conducting the ritual, are said to have joined in the dancing. Simon Girty later recalled that in all of his many years

[83] McKee to Claus, 15 August 1800, CNA, MG 19, F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 8, 117; MPHC, XV: 24.

among the Indians of the Ohio frontier and the Western District of Upper Canada, only twice before had he witnessed ceremonies that rivaled this one. Girty also claimed that the Indians would only bestow such an honor on "men of distinction among them."[85]

In honoring Alexander McKee, the Indians lamented that they would never again know such a distingnished leader or a friend who was so mindful of their interests, and they recognized this as the passing of an era. In the decade after 1794, these peoples saw themselves reduced from a formidable ally of Great Britain, a nation that once supported their cause, to a dispossessed set of refugees who had become wards of the state. McLean had even tried to make them less than that. With McKee gone and Elliott forced out of service, Britain's former Native allies no longer knew what to expect. Yet in spite of their hardship and suffering, thousands of Indians from the former alliance along the Detroit frontier and Upper Canada steadfastly clung to the idea of maintaining the old Chain of Friendship, hoping to preserve a remnant of a passing way of life.

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[84] Some circumstances & Remarks relating to the Indian Department to be submitted to the consideration of the Commander in Chief [by Captain Hector McLean], 10 November 1797, MPHC, XX: 573; Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 4, 221.

[85] John H. James Notes on Conversations with General Simon Kenton, 13 February 1832, Simon Kenton Papers, Draper Manuscripts, Vol. 5BB118 (microfilm; Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society). Regarding the British officers who participated in the ceremony, apparently neither Girty, nor Simon Kenton's informant, Solomon McCulloch, told Kenton these men's identities (with the exception of Thomas McKee, of course). The officers who danced were most likely Indian agents, or formerly so, and in addition to the younger McKee, they probably included the Girty brothers, Elliott, George Ironside, and William Caldwell, all of whom lived and served in the vicinity of Amherstburg. After all that had passed between McLean and the Indian Department, one suspects that the commandant and his staff of regular army officers did not participate in the ceremony, but all would have attended the late agent's official funeral held several months earlier.

CHAPTER 3

BRITISH-INDIAN RELATIONS IN THE NORTH, 1796-1802

In compliance with the Jay Treaty, the British withdrew from Mackinac Island in the summer of 1796, but they established a new post at nearby St. Joseph Island. Britain had multiple reasons for deciding to maintain a presence in the area. Like the old post at Mackinac, Fort St. Joseph continued to protect the British fur trade as the North West Company and its competitors continued to expand further west and into the Mississippi Valley. A northern military post also served diplomatic and strategic purposes. At St. Joseph the British could continue relations with Natives who lived in the western Great Lakes, the upper Mississippi Valley, and even the northwest regions in the direction of Lake Winnipeg and the Red River. This vital link would enable the Crown to foster ties with the northern Ojibwas and Ottawas, the Winnebagoes, Menominees, Fox & Sauks, and Dakota Sioux. The first section of this chapter will describe the most distinctive cultural and political traits of some of these groups. The evolution of British-Indian relations in the North will be the topic of subsection two.

Like the previous post at Mackinac, Fort St. Joseph remained isolated from much of the rest of the upper country; no sailing vessels or communication could pass to or from these places for several months out of every year when weather and ice made navigation impossible. Although remote and isolated, the outpost held significant geographic importance. Since 1763 Mackinac had served as the westernmost military post, and later, Indian agency, in a long, thin line of communication which stretched eastward all the way back to Halifax, then across the Atlantic to Whitehall in London.

Mackinac rested on the edge of an empire, and Britain's sphere of influence north and west of the Great Lakes depended on a continued British presence there. British control of the Straits of Mackinac protected channels of commerce with traders, both British and French, who lived further west in places scattered throughout the regions of present-day Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Manitoba. Some of these key locations included Prairie du Chien, La Baye (Green Bay), Arbre Croche (Traverse Bay), the Falls of St. Anthony (Minneapolis), the Red River (of Lake Winnipeg), Milwaukee, and elsewhere. Furthermore, by remaining near the Straits of Mackinac, British authorities could more easily monitor activity to and from the key portages which separated the water networks of the Great Lakes and the tributaries of the Mississippi.[1] Any potential French or Spanish invasion from the Mississippi would in all likelihood cross the Wisconsin-Fox portage before slipping through the Mackinac corridor and attacking Upper Canada from the rear.

British-Indian Relations in the North Prior to 1796

Prior to 1796 British policy in the North was characterized by relative indifference on the part of the British leaders when compared to other regions. The years of warfare in the Ohio country and the Treaty of Greenville had had little effect on the northern tribes, and these groups did not rely on the annuities that the American government distributed further south. The predominant tribes of the region, most

[1] Four of the five primary portages separating the great water systems of the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence seaway and the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico entailed travel through Lake Michigan and the Mackinac Straits. The fifth portage, which did not require travel through Lake Michigan nor past Mackinac, had a route from Lake Erie, the Maumee River, then from Fort Wayne a seven-mile portage to a tributary of the Wabash, and from the Wabash on down to the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. See Justin Winsor, ed., A Narrative and Critical History of America, 8 Vols. (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1884), IV: 200, 224.

importantly the northern elements of the Three Fires, including the Ottawas and Ojibwas, continued close ties with the British at St. Joseph.[2] These tribes' villages dotted the shores and tributaries of Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior; the Ottawas' principal village of Arbre Croche was situated at the northeast end of Lake Michigan, near Traverse Bay, and the Ojibwas primary village, Chequamegon,[3] rested on the southwest end of Lake Superior. Other tribal groups that less frequently visited the post at St. Joseph included the Menominees, Winnebagoes, Sioux, and Sauks. These nations' contact with British officials and traders from St. Joseph, especially in the case of the Dakota Sioux who were often at war with Ottawas and Ojibwas, often occurred at outposts run by the North West Company and other trading companies in Indian lands far from Fort St. Joseph.

British leaders and the Indians of the northern Lakes both considered the region of the Mackinac Straits and the surrounding area to be of vital importance. As late as the War of 1812, Sir George Prevost, Governor-General of Canada and Commander-in-Chief of British forces in North America, wrote to Earl Bathurst, explaining the continued significance of holding Mackinac:

> [T]he Island and Fort of Michilimackinac is of the first importance as tending to promote our Indian connexion [sic] and secure them in our interest; its geographical position is admirable; its influence extends and is felt among the Indian Tribes to New Orleans and the Pacific Ocean: vast tracts of country look to it for protection and supplies: and it gives security to the great trading establishments of the North-West and Hudson's Bay Companies by supporting the Indians in the Mississippi, the only barrier which interposes between them and the enemy. From these observations Your Lordship will be enabled to judge how

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[2] The Potawatomis, the third element of the Three Fires, generally lived too far south to have dealings with the British at Fort St. Joseph, preferring to visit Fort Amherstburg instead.

[3] Chequamegon collectively refers to the Island of La Pointe and the nearby peninsula along the northern Wisconsin coastline.

> necessary the possession of this valuable post, situated on the outskirts of these extensive provinces, is daily becoming [for] their future security and position.[4]

The Governor General's remarks, while exaggerated in places, indicated the importance the British leadership in Canada placed on possessing Mackinac and its vicinity. Although written in 1814, Prevost's statement echoed a diplomatic perspective that had been central to vintage British strategy in the North since the 1780s, when leaders at Whitehall and Quebec viewed Britain's continued presence in the Northwest as essential for both the security of Upper Canada and the control of the Mississippi Valley.[5]

Long before Euro-Americans ventured into the region, the Ottawa and Ojibwa peoples in the vicinity of Mackinac regarded the area as vital to their interests, and possibly even necessary for their survival. For them the region held spiritual, cosmological, and historical meaning. According to one myth, the Island of Michilimackinac became the first piece of land restored by the manitous after the Great Flood, and consequently the home of the first peoples, or the Anishnabeg, ancestors to the Ojibwas, Ottawas, and Potawatomis. Later, the Great Spirit, or Gitchimanitou (also Kitche Manitou) sent an emissary, Nanabush, to dwell among the Anishnabeg people at Mackinac Island and to instruct them on how to live.[6] The people of the Three Fires then

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[4] Prevost to Bathurst, 10 July 1814, CNA, MG 19 E 5, Andrew Bulger Papers, Vol. 1, File 1, 15.

[5] J. Leitch Wright, Jr., Britain and the American Frontier, 1783-1815 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), 66-76, 82-85.

[6] Basil Johnston, Ojibway Heritage (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 13-17; Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., The Chippewas of Lake Superior (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 7,20-22. During his travels through the northern Lakes country in the 1760s, English trader Alexander Henry alluded to Nanabush and commented that the people whom he encountered on the north shores of Lake Superior also referred to this supernatural being as "The Great Hare." See Alexander Henry, Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories, between the Years 1760 and 1776, with a Foreword by James Bain, editor (New York: I. Riley, 1809; reprint, New York: Burt Franklin, 1969), 205; and James A. Clifton, The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture, 1665-1965 (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977), 35.

believed that the general vicinity of Mackinac was a perpetual source of power, or metaphysical strength. Writing a history of his people, early Ottawa historian Andrew J. Blackbird told of a separate race of people known as the Mi-shi-ne-macki-naw-go, who dwelt on the island, and from whom the locale took its name, apparently after the Anishnabegs left. The Senecas then came and annihilated all but two of the Mishinemackinawgos, a pair of young lovers who escaped and then became spirit beings who assisted the Ottawas and Ojibwas. According to Blackbird, "[W]hoever would be so fortunate as to meet and see them and to talk with them, such person would always become a prophet to his people, either Ottawa or Chippewa [Ojibwa]."[7] The author maintained that "every Ottawa and Chippewa believe to this day [1887] that they are still in existence and roaming in the wildest part of the land."[8]

According to the Three Fires' traditional beliefs, Michilimackinac also marks the core or focal point from which the three nations diverged in their separate routes of migration. Eventually the Ojibwas, numbering far more than the Ottawas and Potawatomis combined, lived mainly in the regions which became northern Michigan, northern Wisconsin, southern Canada, and northern Minnesota. The Ottawas dwelt largely in the central part of Michigan, and the Potawatomis, further south, occupied the regions of southern Michigan, northern Indiana, northern Illinois, and southeastern

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[7] Andrew J. Blackbird, History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan: A Grammar of Their Language, Personal and Family History of the Author (Ypsilanti, MI: The Ypsilantian Job Printing House, 1887), 22. For a good analysis of the Ojibwa myth of creation and its aftermath, see Christopher Vecsey, Traditional Ojibwa Religion and its Historical Changes (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983), 84-99.

[8] Blackbird, 21. Blackbird claimed that for a time these spirit beings continued to dwell near Pine Lake in Charlevoix County, northern Michigan, but departed when too many whites settled in the area. Ibid., 22-23.

Wisconsin.[9] By the mid-sixteenth century, this diaspora took the Ojibwas into northern Michigan and the areas of Lake Superior, where they initially encountered stiff resistance from multiple enemies, usually Foxes and Dakotas, and occasionally Iroquois war parties as well. These initial encounters touched off centuries of hostilities between the Ojibwas and the Dakotas, but according to William Warren, mixed-blood Ojibwa historian of the nineteenth century, his ancestors gradually prevailed, "gaining foot by foot" as they pushed onward "along the southern shores of the Great Lake [Superior]."[10] In about 1680, from within this conquered territory, the Ojibwas established a religious and cultural center, forming their principal village of Chequamegon and uniting all of their bands into a single and distinct people.

From this site there arose in the late seventeenth century a religious movement among the Ojibwas that brought about their Grand Medicine Society, also known as the Midewiwin, an order of medicine men supposedly endowed with extraordinary spiritual power and wisdom. The movement may have constituted a religious revitalization movement, or may have been a conservative cultural response to years of warfare, migration, and initial European contact.[11] Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, nineteenth-century ethnologist and United States Indian agent, described this society as "an association of men who profess the highest knowledge known to the tribes," whose primary purpose "is to teach the higher doctrines of spiritual existence, their nature and mode of existence,

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[9] William W. Warren, History of the Ojibway People, with a Foreword by W. Roger Buffalohead (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984), 81-82; Vecsey, 12-13; Danziger, 7-8.

[10] Warren, 96, 83.

[11] Harold Hickerson, The Chippewa and Their Neighbors: A Study in Ethnohistory, Rev. ed., (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1987), 52-54.

and the influence they exercise among men."[12] These religious leaders could potentially wield much power over others, and the Ojibwas both feared and revered them. The priests of the Midewiwin generally instructed, healed, and called on the manitous for favors and blessings, but they remained secretive regarding the full extent of their power and actions.[13] By the mid-eighteenth century, the Midewiwin created social cohesion among the scattered Ojibwa bands, consisting of at least 25,000 people who dwelt in the northern Lakes region prior to the British arrival at Michilimackinac.[14] Though the Ojibwas recognized no form of external authority and had no central polity, Chequamegon, the Midewiwin's place of origin, became a de-facto center of tribal activity and interaction.[15] Schoolcraft later pointed out that the Midewiwin gave the Ojibwa a sense of "national pride," and he even referred to it as a "grand national society."[16] The Midewiwin's authority was such that one observer concluded that the Ojibwas' civil affairs were "much mixed with their religious and medicinal practices."[17]

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[12] Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, 6 Vols. (Philadelphia: J. Lippincott & Co., 1851-1857), V: 420.

[13] For more on the Midewiwin, see Hickerson, 54-63 and Ruth Landes, Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin (Madison, Milwaukee, and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 89-188, and Vecsey, 174-90.

[14] George I. Quimby, Indian Life in the Upper Great Lakes, 11,000 B.C. to A.D. 1800 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 122. For the eighteenth century, Quimby's estimate of 25,000 Ojibwas is conservative. Robert and Pat Ritzenthaler claim that the Three Fires' population figures at this time roughly stood at 50,000 Ojibwas, 4,000 Ottawas, and 4,000 Potawatomis. See Ritzenthaler & Ritzenthaler, The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Museum, 1983), 13. Though the Ritzenthalers' estimate might be exaggerated, their implication is well taken that Ojibwas were numerous and potentially dominant when united, and that their population dwarfed the combined numbers of their allied tribes within the Three Fires.

[15] Vecsey, 184-85; Hickerson, 55-57; Warren, 77-80.

[16] Schoolcraft, Information Respecting...the Indian Tribes of the United States, V: 416. An ethnographic field study conducted and carried out by American officials in 1824 still found the Ojibwa tribe to be "[r]epublican in all its features." Taken from the Chippewa Manuscripts (MS/I4C) –Col. Boyd's Account, Trowbridge Papers, 434, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

[17] Warren, 99.

The unifying effect of the Midewiwin and the resulting clusters of northern Ojibwa communities helped to facilitate the tribe's interaction with Europeans. The French who arrived in the late seventeenth century and the British who replaced them in 1761 showed a keen awareness of Ojibwa society by establishing posts at the primary sites of Ojibwa culture and commerce: Michilimackinac, Chequamegon, and La Baye (Green Bay).[18] By the time of the British arrival, the previous century's trade and interaction between the Indians and the French had significantly altered Ojibwa lifestyles, making them reliant on European goods. The Ojibwa success in wiping out the British garrison at Michilimackinac during Pontiac's Conspiracy was not a true index of the tribe's circumstances after such a long history of contact and trade with Europeans. In 1765 when trader Alexander Henry visited Chequamegon, a place he "regarded as the metropolis of the…O'chibbuoy," he found the people there naked, starving, and desperate. No longer did these northerners wish to expel the British from their country; rather, they wanted to reinstate the fur trade, and they compelled Henry to extend them credit in goods "to the amount of three thousand beaver-skins." His Ojibwa hosts at Chequamegon claimed that without the immediate use of Henry's merchandise, "their wives and children would perish."[19] Eager for trade, the Ojibwas at the Island of La Pointe, adjacent to the peninsula of Chequamegon, sent deputations in 1764 and 1765 to William Johnson at Niagara, seeking peace and requesting a restoration of the fur trade.[20] The British soon re-garrisoned Fort Mackinac, and numerous independent traders,

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[18] All three sites served as both trading posts and military forts under the French regime. Later, however, the British, while retaining trading posts at each of the three locales, only maintained a military presence at Michilimackinac.

[19] Henry, 188-89.

[20] Warren, 217-20.

following in Henry's path, began to barter and live among the Ojibwas and Ottawas. This began a period dominated by individual traders in the North that lasted until 1783-84, when the North West Company was organized.

The fur trade became even more deeply entrenched in the North by the 1790s. The third Article of the Jay Treaty between Britain and the United States in 1794 permitted British, Americans, and Indians "to pass and repass" to either side of the border for the purpose of "trade and commerce," insuring that the British would continue to dominate the fur trade and thereby maintain their nation's longtime influence and intervention in Native communities.[21] Pro-British traders enjoyed greater influence among their clients, and the latter generally tried to maintain good faith with the traders (i.e., make good on their credit and provide them with shelter at times) and to generally assist the traders in every way possible, enabling them to remain in operation near their villages. Traders also depended heavily on the Indians, who acted as crucial middlemen in the trading process, leading to some degree of mutual interdependence.[22] Consequently, the traders came to be trusted friends and sometimes kinsmen. Most of the traders either married Indian women or took them as mistresses, and nearly all of the men who actively traded with the North West Company, at one time or another lived with a Native woman in some capacity.[23] All of these factors gave traders a certain degree of

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[21] Burt, 146.

[22] Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 136-47.

[23] The North West Company assumed financial responsibility for its traders' wives and families, and by 1806 the burden had become so great that the Company's proprietors attempted to prevent further marriages and/or mingling between its employees and Native women. See W. Stewart Wallace, ed., Documents Relating to the North West Company (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 210-11. For more on interpersonal relations between Native peoples and the men of the North West Company, see Jennifer S. H. Brown, Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country (Vancouver & London: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 81-110, 153-76; and Jacqueline Peterson, "Many roads to Red River: Metis genesis in the Great Lakes region, 1680-1815," in The New Peoples: Being and

political power among the peoples whom they served.[24] Particularly among the Ojibwas, a nation without any central polity or unifying element apart from its Midewiwin religion, traders could enjoy significant de facto authority among smaller bands of followers. A trader at times could even induce the members of his retinue to attack an enemy or a rival.

From the Ojibwas' perspective, the fur trade benefited all parties. With virtually no restrictions placed on fur traders in the Great Lakes during the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Ojibwas received favored treatment from competing fur trade interests and individuals who paid reasonable and competitive prices. During the trade's heyday, particularly between 1790 and 1811, traders at times even extended credit to their clients and distributed additional alcohol among them, which the Indians considered a valuable article in spite of its negative effects. Also, the more successful trading groups such as the North West Company and its temporary rival (from 1798 to 1804), the XY Company, established posts nearer to Indian communities in order to better accommodate their customers.[25] Although the trade would eventually work to impoverish the Natives as they increasingly depended on European goods, the Ojibwas and Ottawas briefly prospered during the trade's zenith, and at the turn of the nineteenth

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Becoming Metis in North America, ed. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 37-71. For fur trade families associated with the Hudson's Bay Company, see Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870 (Winnipeg, MB: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1981).

[24] Victor Barnouw, "Acculturation and Personality among the Wisconsin Chippewa," American Anthropologist Association's Memoir no. 72, American Anthropologist 52: 4, part 2 (October 1950), 44-48.

[25] For more on the XY Company, see Davidson, chapter IV, pp. 69-91. Existing from 1798 through 1804, the XY Company temporarily became a more formidable threat to the North West Company, when Sir Alexander MacKenzie, formerly a key shareholder with the North West Company, took charge of the XY enterprise. Ibid., 76-77.

century they had an abundance of material goods, including guns, ammunition, clothes, blankets, kettles, utensils, knives, and cloth; they sometimes demonstrated their wealth by adorning themselves in jewelry, silver brooches, and scarlet cloth.[26]

Ties through trade meant much more than an economic exchange; the Indians also viewed it as a form of mutual reciprocity, indicating a level of trust, friendship, and loyalty. John Tanner, the famed thirty-year captive among the Ojibwas, felt betrayed when a lone trader denied him standard credit that he needed to procure blankets for his wife and family before the onslaught of winter.[27] It should not have mattered that the Ojibwas had less to offer in a material exchange; as long as they continued to profess and demonstrate their loyalty and devotion, the traders had an obligation to meet their needs. The Ojibwas and Ottawas extended this understanding of a two-sided, mutual obligation far beyond their connections with the traders; they perceived all of their relations with the British in this context. The Three Fires understood the role of a father as that of someone who would take pity on them and care for them, regardless of how destitute or dependent they became. The Indians believed that their condition should never alter that role, or lessen the responsibility of their British Father. As a captive youth, John Tanner described his relationship with his adopted Ojibwa father, "Taw-ge-we-ninne,"

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[26] Vecsey, 15; Danziger, 57, 60, 62-63. In addition to enjoying the benefit of bartering for cheaper supplies from competing traders, the Indians also freely received goods of equal quality from Indian agents (albeit in decreasing quantities during peacetime), and if the northerners were willing to travel, they could also cheaply trade for U. S. Government goods sold by U. S. agents under the newly formed factory system, another institution which tended to keep the traders' prices in check; Danziger, 63-64, and Wayne E. Stevens, The Northwest Fur Trade, 1763-1800 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1928), 158-61. John Tanner, a thirty-year white captive in the North, also recalled the advantage to the Indians when dealing with rival trading companies; John Tanner, The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner During Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America, with an Introduction by Louise Erdrich (New York, London, and Toronto: Penguin Books, 1994; originally published in 1830), 172-73.

[27] John Tanner, 173.

explaining that the latter "was always indulgent and kind to me, treating me like an equal, rather than as a dependant." Taw-ga-we-ninne provided for all of Tanner's hunting needs, and when the youth failed in his attempts to construct marten traps, Tanner recalled, "my father began to pity me....[s]o he went out and spent a day in making a large number of traps, which he gave me, and then I was able to take as many martins [sic] as the others."[28] Tanner understood that his adopted parents both loved him, but his mother bore the separate responsibility of disciplining him, while his father's role was to protect, guide, and assist his son.

Tanner's experience hints at how his adopted family and the Ojibwa in general viewed the British. Their British Father should want to care for his children, and when Ojibwas petitioned him they could expect his pity and assistance. Some studies have shown that Ojibwas approached powerful and wealthy whites in the same manner that they would address a manitou, doing so with a gracious and humble disposition.[29] Whether seeking a vision or a material necessity, Ojibwas always appealed to the pity of a manitou or spirit guardian. Similarly, they could potentially share in the power of traders and agents by petitioning them accordingly, believing that some whites held significant influence among the manitous.[30] In his memoirs, Alexander Henry recalled that his Ojibwa captors believed that he possessed a certain foreknowledge of events and became suspicious of him when he denied their assertion.[31] Moreover, the northern Indians looked upon British agents and traders as servants of the British King, a distant

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[28] Ibid., 16, 18-19.

[29] Vecsey, 135-36; Barnouw, 42-48, 53-60.

[30] Vecsey, 136; Barnouw, 58-59.

[31] Henry, 146.

person whom they regarded as a near-deity, one who would always consider their needs and take pity on them. From his missionary work among the Ojibwas and Ottawas of Michigan during the 1820s, Peter Jones noted:

> The ideas entertained by the Indians generally of the King of England, with regard to his power riches, and knowledge, are most extravagant. They imagine his power to be absolute, and his authority unlimited; that his word is law, to which all his subjects bow with implicit obedience....They also consider that his riches and benevolence are unbounded, the whole resources of the kingdom being at his command, a portion of which he grants to those of his subjects who are needy. With regard to his wisdom, they conceive that he knows everything that is going on in the world; that even the speech or talk of an Indian chief delivered to a Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the wilds of Canada is made known to him.[32]

For their deference and devotion to British agents and authorities, the Ojibwas and Ottawas expected much in return, and according to St. Joseph's storekeeper Thomas Duggan, often "the sole purport of their speeches was begging their Father would shew them Charity."[33] By reciprocating with lavish amounts of provisions, Duggan and his cohorts then fulfilled their fatherly responsibilities. In keeping with Tanner's description of his own foster father, the northern Indians expected the British to act as a genuine father by providing for his children and treating them as "equal[s], rather than as...dependant[s]," even when the power in such a relationship was skewed to one side.[34] Despite the minimal worth of the items which the northern Natives gave to the British, it

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[32] Peter Jones, History of the Ojebway Indians (London: A. W. Bennett, 1861), 207.

[33] Thomas Duggan Journal entries for 23 May 1798, 10 August 1797, 27 June 1799, and 13 June 1799, GABLA.

[34] John Tanner, 16.

was the actual act of exchanging gifts that was important to the Indians. It symbolized deeper ties and commitments than that of a mere economic partnership.[35]

British participants saw gift-giving from a different perspective. The officers in the North hoped to reinforce the Indians' belief that they participated as pseudo-equal partners by using official gift-exchanges, which often took place in formal council-settings. The British conducted these events with much solemnity and always in the presence of the post's officers, who wore full-dress uniforms. Not really needing any material items from the Indians, and hardly thinking themselves under any obligation to continue to grant provisions, the British considered all distributions of gifts as an investment of sorts in the expectation of future Native support and loyalty. This represents a slightly different rationale than the one to which the Indians were accustomed; the Natives would have regarded their gifts as both compensation for past services and as a loving Father's act of benevolence. In truth, however, promises of future Native fidelity made these exchanges more equal than the Indians' past services or any tangible gifts from them ever could. Lord Dorchester understood this principle, and in 1787 he considered the future benefits that could be derived from the Indians by psychologically making them dependent upon the British. The Governor General ordered that on every occasion, the Indians'

> requests if reasonable, are to be complied with. Should they, as is customary on these occasions, lay down Presents of any kind, they are to be taken up with thanks, and in return, Presents exceeding the value of theirs are to be given, in which case the Chiefs are always to be distinguished.[36]

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[35] Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 137. For the meaning of Indian gifts, the protocol of gift-giving, and a comparison of the British and French Indian diplomacy, see Wilbur R. Jacobs, Wilderness and Indian Gifts: The Northern Colonial Frontier, 1748-1763 (Lincoln: University Nebraska Press, 1950), chapters 1 & 2.

[36] Dorchester's Instructions, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 789, 6759.

The sobering and subtle truth in this policy was that, despite the guise of mutual reciprocity, these gift distributions, and any form of British trade for that matter, could be terminated at any moment. Among Dorchester's opening remarks in his new policy of 1787, he instructed his agents to assure "the Indian Nations...of the King's paternal care and regard as long as they continue to merit them, by acting as good and obedient Children ought to do."[37]

Ultimately, British-Indian relations in the North would more closely epitomize what Dorchester envisioned, in contrast to the course of British-Indian diplomacy elsewhere in Upper Canada. Unlike the other regions discussed in this study, the diplomacy in the North was marked by a period of continuity between 1783 and 1812. Although British leaders and northern Indians may have interpreted their relationship differently, both sides, relatively unaffected by events to the south, sought a continuation of previous ties. The continuity of the fur trade did much to maintain these relations, and the traders benefited from these consistent diplomatic and commercial ties. However, the British government did not view the trade itself as a reason to continue ties with the Natives or to maintain a presence in the region. The Crown partially subsidized the fur trade, and even at its peak, the enterprise never offset the expenses Britain incurred by governing the region and supplying the Indians' material needs.[38] Furthermore, the fur trade is not what gave the Indians diplomatic leverage in their dealings with British leaders. It was the British desire for future Native fidelity that prompted Dorchester to

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Burt, 82-85; Stevens, The Northwest Fur Trade, 1763-1800, 159-61.

attempt to ingratiate the Natives, and in the North the Indians' loyalty was never in question.

British-Indian relations in the North grew stronger in spite of the two sides' differing perspectives on the meaning of those bonds. Ojibwas and Ottawas at St. Joseph continued to view British gifts as marks of their father's benevolence, generosity, and rewards for past services; the lopsided mismatch of any exchange did not matter. The Ojibwas and Ottawas believed that by giving any small gift, and by doing so in an attitude of humility and loyalty, they merited the gifts the British gave them. In this sense, the Indians did not merely consider British presents as free gifts. This strong Indian notion of reciprocity was lost on Captain Peter Drummond, commandant as St. Joseph, in an incident late in 1799. After two Ottawa bands from Arbre Croche visited his post in October, Drummond commented to his superiors, "I cannot comprehend what they [the Ottawas] mean by saying they never receive presents at this Post, but rather buys [sic] what they get." Yet in the same letter Drummond acknowledged that "the Ottawas receive much larger presents in proportion to their numbers than any other Indians, in some respects they deserve it, as they present more sugar & corn for the use of government than any other Indians."[39] Drummond did not grasp that the Ottawas viewed their relationship with the British as one based on bartering and kinship.

Differences between Indian and British understandings of the gift exchange could lead to confusion, conflict, and, in the 1780s and 1790s, corrupt dealings. The northern Indians' insistence on a relationship of reciprocity helped to encourage a string of abuses in the Indian Department that spanned a period of many years. Some Indian agents at

[39] Drummond to James Green, Military Secretary, 28 October 1799, MPHC, XX: 668.

Mackinac and St. Joseph's, realizing that the Indians there expected to trade something for their gifts, attempted to profit from the situation. Once the formal councils had ended, the poverty-ridden Natives traded for additional goods from the Indian store with packs of furs and additional gifts of corn. John Dease, cousin of Department Superintendent John Johnson, eventually lost his position as Indian agent for receiving bartered goods and furs from the Indians in this manner. Johnson had originally sent Dease to Mackinac in 1786, hoping that his cousin could negotiate a peace between the Dakotas and Ojibwas, who were constantly at war. Dease not only failed in that difficult task, but he came under fire for allegedly embezzling goods from the Indian store and conducting personal trade with Ojibwas and other tribes in the Lakes and Upper Mississippi. Dease's activities came to light not because of Indian complaints, but because those attempting to trade legally complained that Dease competed unfairly in this market, underselling them by bartering stolen government goods.[40] Due to inconclusive evidence and contradictory reports, Dease gained an acquittal.[41] Yet he never regained his post in the Indian Department, nor did his powerful cousin clamor for his reinstatement.[42]

Dease's activities most likely influenced Lord Dorchester's decision in 1787 to expressly forbid all "persons belonging to, or employed in the Indian Department" from being "permitted to trade, directly or indirectly, or to have any share, profit, or concern

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[40] Kellogg, 201-02; Elizabeth Vincent, Fort St. Joseph: A History, Parks Canada, Manuscript Report Series 335 (Ottawa: Department of Environment Canada, 1978), 53.

[41] MPHC, XI: 489-96, 501-506, 514-620; Collections of the Wisconsin State Historical Society (hereafter cited as WHC), 31 vols. (Madison: 1854-1931), XII: 83-91.

[42] Dease's family link to the Johnsons probably did not hurt in helping him gain his acquittal. Furthermore, Dease at least received the dignity of a trial. A decade later, Matthew Elliott would be refused both, a hearing and any type of formal inquiry. Elliott hounded his superiors for 11 years, asking for a reinstatement, but Dease passively accepted his dismissal.

therein."[43] Nevertheless, subsequent storekeepers Charles Gauthier and Thomas Duggan continued to abuse the system by lending stores to traders, appropriating the goods for their own use, and/or using them to barter for furs and other goods.[44] Eventually Duggan's unscrupulous behavior became excessive, causing the Indians to complain and leading to the storekeeper's suspension in 1802.[45] Until then, however, British army officers at Mackinac and St. Joseph had been more lax about monitoring the distribution of Indian goods at their post. These conditions at Fort St. Joseph during the closing years of the century contrasted the rigid regulations implemented at Amherstburg at the time, and the activities of Gauthier and Duggan were reminiscent of Elliott's peculation prior to Captain McLean's crackdown at the latter post. The fact that the officers and agents at St. Joseph continued to conduct Indian affairs in a loose manner is indicative of the continuity in British-Indian relations in the North, and British-Indian ties remained steady there as the fur trade continued to expand in the 1790s. As of 1796, the trade's negative repercussions and the corruption in the Indian Department at St. Joseph had not yet become issues deemed worthy of scrutiny, and in the meantime neither the northern Indians nor the British wished to alter the nature of their relationship, which had existed for decades.

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[43] Dorchester's Instructions for the good Government of the Indian Department, to Sir John Johnson, Baronet, Superintendant [sic.] General and Inspector General of Indian Affairs, 27 March 1787, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 789, 6761.

[44] For Gauthier, see Captain William Doyle to Colonel Richard England, 2 February 1793, ibid., Vol. 247, 10.

[45] Lieutenant Robert Cowell to James Green, Military Secretary, 10 February 1802, ibid., Vol. 254, 3-4; Cowell to Green, 29 October 1801, ibid., Vol. 253, 341-42. Apparently Duggan also drank heavily, further complicating his difficulties and abuses. Lt. Cowell brought formal charges against Duggan in a special council called for that purpose, 25 January 1802, ibid., Vol. 254, 7-9. Also see Vincent, 106-07.

An incident that occurred in the autumn of 1796, shortly after the British had moved their northern garrison to St. Joseph Island, indicated the Native desire for continuity. In early October Thomas Duggan noted the arrival of an Ojibwa chief, Meatoosikee, who came to apologize for his band's rough treatment of some traders who had visited his village late the previous year. Duggan did not indicate the cause of the frustration of Meatoosike's band, but the incident occurred near the time of the series of events that included the Treaty of Greenville, the Jay Treaty, and the subsequent British withdrawal from the American posts. Whatever the reason for Meatoosikee's village's temporary displeasure with the British, this band soon came to understand their need of the traders' goods. Duggan warned "that if they [Meatoosikee's band] should ever be guilty of the like again[,] the Traders would be taken from them." Meatoosikee "hoped his father would have compassion on him and forgive him and his Young Men and that They would be sure to listen to their Father's advice in [the] future and be good Children."[46] Thus, regardless of changes that had occurred on the frontier in the late eighteenth century, Meatoosikee, like most of his northern brethren, sought to maintain the longstanding ties between his people and the British.

The continuity in the North at this time stood in stark contrast to circumstances at Amherstburg three hundred and fifty miles to the south, where only remnants of the shattered western Confederacy still sought to maintain their Chain of Friendship with the British. A few of the pro-British Shawnee and Delaware bands had removed to new homes in Upper Canada by 1796, but a large number of the former confederates in the greater Maumee Valley would now be receiving American annuities at Detroit and Fort

[46] Entry for 5 October 1796, Duggan Journal.

Wayne.[47] The Ojibwas and Ottawas in the North did not warmly welcome the arrival of the Americans at Mackinac, and unless these northern bands made annual pilgrimages to Detroit, they would not share in their tribal annuity disbursements from the Americans, which went to those bands dwelling nearer to Detroit and the Western District of Upper Canada. Therefore, the northern groups did not cultivate the ties with the Americans like some of the bands living in the regions of Detroit, Brownstown, and northwest Ohio. The tribes in the northern Lakes never considered themselves partisan to the Confederacy's defeat at Fallen Timbers, and they no longer held a common interest with their former allies to the south. Furthermore, the bitterness felt between the northern Indians from Mackinac and Saginaw and the southern Maumee tribes, which had resulted from their quarrel during the campaign against Fort Recovery in the summer of 1794, probably still lingered.[48] Finally, the fur trade would continue to support the peoples living in the North for some time, whereas the regions of Detroit and northern Ohio were experiencing a steady decline in the fur trade that had begun decades earlier.[49] These divergent paths would continue to shape British-Indian relations in the two regions.

The North, 1796-1802

When the British withdrew from Fort Mackinac in the summer of 1796, neither they nor the Indians of the region fully knew what to expect from these changes. Aware

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[47] For the annuity disbursements sanctioned by the Treaty of Greenville, see Treaty of Greenville, American State Papers, Indian Affairs, I: 563; MPHC, XX: 413.

[48] Examination of a Patawatime Warrior [Prisoner], 23 July 1794, Shawnee File, July-December, 1794, GABLA; Cruikshank, "Diary of an Officer in Indian Country in 1794," 641; Alexander McKee to Joseph Chew, 7 July 1794, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, II: 310; Diary of an Officer in the Indian Country, ibid., V: 94; Alexander McKee to R. G. England, 10 July 1794, ibid., II: 315; Sword, 278; Sugden, Blue Jacket, 167-68; Larry Nelson, A Man of Distinction among Them, 169.

of how the United States had recently expanded into the Ohio country and had attempted to usurp Britain's role as the Indians' overseer and protector, the northern tribes were understandably alarmed. What would become of the British? Would this signal the decline of the British fur trade? Did these changes indicate that British influence in general would decline in the North? Would the area Indians now deal with two Fathers? Despite these initial concerns, British-Indian relations in the North proved as stable as ever during the next several years, and the North West Company had some of its best returns during this period, hardly feeling the effect of American competition as company men and other British traders expanded deeper into Spanish and American territory. This section focuses on how the British and Indians in the North interacted in the years immediately following Britain's move to Fort St. Joseph, emphasizing the enduring friendship and lasting ties that both sides continued to cultivate.

In June 1796, as the British prepared to evacuate Mackinac in the ensuing weeks, the Ojibwas and Ottawas grew concerned regarding the departing officers and personnel. These Native visitors believed that the moral obligations of a father bound him to those who depended upon his provisions. On his final visit to Mackinac while it was yet under British sovereignty, Amable, an Ottawa Chief, expressed his "Concern for the English evacuating the upper Posts, and his apprehension of his Nation being abandoned by them and left to the mercy of the Big knives."[50] Once Amable and the area Indians learned that the British intended to maintain a presence in the North, they were no longer distressed; they realized that their relationship with their British Father could continue as it always

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[49] Wayne E. Stevens, "Fur Trading Companies of the Northwest," Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association 9 (October 1918): 286.

[50] Amable's Speech, 27 June 1796, Duggan Journal.

had, and they would not be compelled to deal with the American newcomers. Yet until the Indians knew for certain that their relations with the British would remain a status quo, the situation remained tense.

Initially, things appeared grim to the British as well, and they worried about the local Natives' response. Major William Doyle, former commandant at Mackinac, even wondered if the Indians would commit hostilities against British troops. In the summer of 1796, when Doyle and his garrison were relieved by a very small force ordered to take command at Fort St. Joseph in June, the commandant expressed his concern to Lieutenant Governor Russell. Doyle feared that Indian discontent in the North would increase once the Natives realized that the British intended to maintain only a token military force of a dozen soldiers at St. Joseph, a post relatively smaller than Mackinac. Such a reduction in strength when compared to the growing American military presence at Mackinac and the Old Northwest would probably be interpreted as a sign of British weakness and a possible harbinger of a complete British withdrawal from the Upper Country. Russell relayed Doyle's concerns to Governor General Prescott, fearing that such circumstances in the North

> may lead to contempt [by the Indians], contempt to insult (for it is well known that Savages are ever influenced by appearances) and should insult once begin, no man can say when it may end. In Short Major Doyle thinks that Ensign Brown and his small party are in very serious danger, from the present temper of the neighboring Indians.[51]

Prescott immediately responded to this alarming news by sending an additional detachment of forty soldiers to reinforce the post at St. Joseph Island.

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[51] Russell to Prescott, 29 August 1796, MPHC, XXV: 130; CNA, MG 11 CO 42, Colonial Office, Vol. 320, 675-76.

Doyle's fears proved unfounded. The departing officer had most likely witnessed a brief spasm of frustration by bands visiting Mackinac Island and by groups who probably had just learned that the British intended to leave the site. Only days prior to the evacuation of Mackinac Island, and therefore very close to the time of Doyle's alarming report, Storekeeper Thomas Duggan wrote, "I was given to understand that the Indians would be very troublesome here in the Spring and Summer; I am happy to tell You, that it is quite the contrary, and that They have been since last fall to this Moment remarkably quiet."[52]

Far from wanting to destroy Ensign Brown and his handful of troops, the Natives hoped to preserve a relationship that had existed for more than a generation. As the weather grew colder in the autumn of 1796, and with the small British garrison facing its first winter at St. Joseph, Ogaw, an Ojibwa leader, promised the officers that "he would protect us against any Bad people who wanted to disturb us[,] that they knew no other than their English Father[,] that They would never go to see the Big Knives [Americans at Mackinac Island, or elsewhere] and would winter near us to protect us."[53] Ogaw shrewdly implied that the British also depended on the Ojibwa, suggesting that their relationship was one of mutual benefit. Early in 1797, the leader of an Ottawa delegation at St. Joseph's picked up on the same theme, proclaiming to Duggan and the officers, "I hold you by the hand and I'll never let it go, I shall be always near You ready to assist you if you should want me –here is the mark of my Tribe presenting the Belt[.] All my Nation seeing it will know it and assist you in time[s] of trouble." In keeping with

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[52] Thomas Duggan to Prideaux Selby, 20 June 1796, CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 7, 230.

[53] Ogaw's Speech at St. Joseph's, 26 October 1796, Duggan Journal.

Dorchester's instructions, the following day the post commandant responded in council, promising continued aid to the Indians but making it plain that the British were the more powerful party to the relationship.[54]

By the following summer of 1797, new post commandant Captain Peter Drummond reported that "the Indians in this Quarter, visits [sic] this Post, the same as they formerly did at Michilimackinac, and appears [sic] to be as friendly as usual."[55] Clearly, British apprehension regarding Native discontent had been exaggerated.[56] When reporting to Storekeeper General Joseph Chew the following summer, Duggan, while conceding that "our Indian Friends" did not have "a favourable opinion of us at the time of our Evacuating the Post at Michilimackinac," also reported that "they appear to be as much attached to us as ever, & I have the pleasure of informing you that the Indians since our coming to this Post [June, 1796] have conducted themselves entirely to our satisfaction." If these statements were correct, then only days prior to the British evacuation of Mackinac Island the northern Indians were not at all displeased, and they expressed no dissatisfaction in the immediate wake of the occupation of St. Joseph Island.[57]

Once both the British and their Native allies got over the apprehensions prompted by the Jay Treaty-mandated British withdrawal from their former posts, and once both had declared that they wished to maintain friendly after the move, a variety of issues unique to the St. Joseph's milieu surfaced for British policy makers. Four such issues in

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[54] Mitaminance's Speech and the British response, 12 & 13 March 1797, ibid.

[55] Drummond to James Green, Military Secretary, 29 June 1797, MPHC, XX: 518.

[56] Kellogg, 233-34; Russell to the Duke of Portland, 28 September 1796, ibid., XXV: 132.

[57] Duggan to Chew, 9 July 1797, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-1, 256; ibid., XX: 522.

which conditions at Fort St. Joseph required distinctly different policies from those at Amherstburg will be discussed here in detail. First, St. Joseph's military officers intervened in tribal affairs to appoint chiefs, a practice the Natives in St. Joseph's sphere of influence accepted. By contrast, it would have been unusual for British officials at Amherstburg to appoint tribal leaders and any effort to do so would have offended Native sensibilities. Secondly, authority over Indian affairs, for reasons particular to the area, shifted from officers of the Indian Department to military officers much more rapidly at Fort St. Joseph than at Amherstburg. Thirdly, the threat of competition from, or military action by, Britain's French and Spanish imperial rivals was greater at St. Joseph than at Amherstburg. Finally, intertribal rivalries unique to St. Joseph's sphere of influence, most notably hostility between the Ojibwa and the Dakota Sioux, posed a significant challenge to the British goal of maintaining peace among its Indian trading partners and allies.

Army officers at St. Joseph enjoyed more influence in the affairs of the neighboring Ojibwas and Ottawas than the officers at Amherstburg exhibited in their dealings near Detroit and even Brownstown. The northern Natives who so readily gave their allegiance to the traders among them also extended their loyalty to the officers and military personnel in the Upper Country. The Natives well understood that the post commandants and Indian agents served as the King's representatives and thereby possessed the power to remove the traders at any time. The Ojibwas and Ottawas carried this loyalty even further. They not only demonstrated an eagerness to obey military officers and Indian agents, but they also sought to derive their authority and political

power over their own bands from the British.[58] In their egalitarian society, which lacked a political infrastructure, northern Ottawas and Ojibwas grew accustomed to the notion of British-recognized leaders among them.[59] British officials installed or recognized chiefs by giving them medals and sometimes flags or officers' gorgets. The Native leaders appreciated these symbols of honor and authority, and they viewed them as continuing the practice begun by the French. One Ottawa leader, Eethsaguam, specifically asked for a medal to replace the "one he got in the time of the French."[60]

In the same manner, the northern Natives also looked to British officers and Indian agents to remove a chief if necessary. On one occasion at St. Joseph's in the summer of 1798, during which time a group of Ottawa leaders received medals, this delegation requested that the officers remove from authority one of their fellow Ottawa leaders (also present at the council) for having murdered some fellow villagers at Arbre Croche. Significantly, the Ottawa delegation themselves did not attempt to remove the dishonored leader, but Duggan wrote that Interpreter "Mr. Langlade" took the guilty chief's medal "from him at the desire of all the other Chiefs present for murdering two of their Own Nation[,] One of them a Chief."[61] Apparently, the chiefs had specifically sought the authority of Captain Drummond, who in turn ordered Langlade to strip the chief of his medal.[62] Remarkably, the Ottawa leaders had permitted the murderer to

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[58] Barnouw, 46.

[59] James Clifton argues that the Potawatomis, also a member of the Three Fires, never even had chiefs among them until their contact with the French brought about the evolution of this role within their mode of government late in the seventeenth century. See Clifton, The Prairie People, 55.

[60] Entry for 19 May 1798, Duggan Journal.

[61] Entry for 14 June 1798, ibid.

[62] Drummond to Major James Green, Military Secretary, 24 June 1799, MPHC, XX: 640-41.

accompany them to St. Joseph, where he was publicly stripped of his rank and status. Apart from the anticipated revenge to be taken by the victims' families, the Ottawa delegation expected the British not only to establish authority but to mete out justice. Since the murderer, Shaushauguaw, had suffered much disgrace and public humiliation in the eyes of the Ottawas, the British hoped that that would be enough for everyone's satisfaction. Duggan and the officers advised restraint, and they distributed "Seven Strings of Wampum…to the Chiefs to speak to the Relations of the Indians Who were killed by Shaushauguaw to pacify them, [and] presents were also delivered to them [presumably referring to the victims' families, since the rest of the delegation already had received their gifts and provisions]."[63]

By expecting the British to delegate authority and administer justice among them, the northern Ottawas and Ojibwas showed that they regarded their British Father as an imperial overlord. Although British-delegated authority may have been more apparent than real, Natives who disregarded such distinctions of authority could conceivably be cut off from receiving future British gifts. As a result, the British found it a much simpler task to manipulate and control Natives in the North than they did elsewhere. By creating chiefs, they not only fostered loyalty, but the British also tended to gain the cooperation of those whom they did not make chiefs. British officers expected the men they made chiefs to wield authority and to control their people, but, most importantly, to keep their people loyal to British interests.

On at least two occasions, Major William Doyle, the last British commandant at Mackinac prior to the American occupation in the summer of 1796, even issued written

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[63] Entry for 14 June 1798, Duggan Journal.

commissions to men whom he made chiefs. On 8 May 1796, Doyle presented Keekwitamigishcam, an Ojibwa leader, with a British commission which in part read, "In consequence of your attachment to the English, of which you have given repeated proofs...I hereby constitute and appoint you a Chief of the Chippewa Indians residing at the said Sault St. Mary [Marie]"[64] Less than two months later and in his final few days at Mackinac, Doyle presented another written commission, this time to an Ottawa leader, Nangotook, who had asked for a commission in order to assume the position of his deceased father, "who had been made Chief in the time of the French." Doyle granted this request, issuing the young man a commission that stated: "In consideration of the fidelity, zeal and attachment testified by You to the British Government,...I do hereby confirm You the said Nangotook a Chief of Kishkacon [band]...of the Ottawa Nation, willing all and singular the Indians Inhabitants thereof to obey You as such."[65] With coincidental timing, Doyle issued these commissions just as he and his men prepared to deliver their post to the Americans; the commandant hoped to strengthen British loyalty among these longtime allies. However, Doyle need not have been concerned about the northern Indians' disposition, for the Ottawas and Ojibwas still drew their authority, not to mention their trade goods, from the British.

The practice of creating chiefs among the Ojibwas and Ottawas was unique to the northern British Indian agency. In the other regions examined in this study, British authorities ordinarily did not confer such authority on individual leaders. While British agents on the Maumee such as Alexander McKee, Elliott, and the Girtys had all held

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[64] Entry for 9 May 1796, ibid; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 249, 213.

[65] Entry for 4 July 1796, Duggan Journal.

significant influence in the councils of the Miamis, Delawares, and Shawnees, they did so as delegates representing their king and government; they also attended these meetings by virtue of their status as adopted kinsmen, but this did not give them authority over other leaders in Indian councils. The Native leaders in the coalition formed at Brownstown, and located at the Glaize, considered Britain a joint member of their confederacy. At no time would any British agents on the Maumee have had the power to either install or to remove a chief. In fact, in an incident in 1793 a Delaware war chief upbraided Matthew Elliott after the agent had merely inquired as to the business of a pro-American Indian delegation sent to confer with Confederacy's leaders. The Delaware leader reprimanded Elliott:

> Did you ever see me at Detroit or Niagara, in your councils, and there to ask you where such and such white man come[s] from or what is their Business: Can you watch, and look all around the earth to see who come[s] to us? or is what their Business? Do you not know that we are upon our own Business?[66]

In the North clear limits to the British role in creating or confirming tribal leaders appear never to have been established, and the extent of British authority among the northern Ojibwas and Ottawas remained undefined. At Mackinac when it seemed expedient to grant commissions to Native leaders, Major Doyle did so without hesitating. Apart from rare exceptions such as Joseph Brant's case, almost never did the British government issue commissions to Indian leaders elsewhere.[67] The tribes in the Ohio

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[66] Quote taken from White, The Middle Ground, 455.

[67] As the virtual protégé of Sir William Johnson, Brant's case was exceptional. Blue Jacket stood as another notable exception, having received a commission from John Johnson. But even then, Blue Jacket was already an established war chief among the Shawnees, and did not derive his authority from the British; Sugden, Blue Jacket, 27, 68. Furthermore, some rival Shawnee chiefs from the Mekoche tribal division made "a great noise about Blue Jacket's Commission," and "blame[d] the English very much for having made any chiefs among them especially the younger Brothers [referring to Blue Jacket's Piqua division], if any were made, they say it ought to have been some of them." See George Ironside to Alexander Mckee, 6 February 1795, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, III: 288-89; Calloway, Crown

Valley would not recognize British-imposed authority or distinctions, particularly if these did not conform to the proper Shawnee, Delaware, and Miami political hierarchy. Whereas in the North, such an infrastructure did not exist among the Ojibwas and Ottawas, and the British at Forts Mackinac and St. Joseph encountered much less resistance to their meddling in tribal affairs.

Another distinctive feature of British-Indian relations at Fort St. Joseph, setting it apart from circumstances at Amherstburg, was the degree of involvement of its regular army officers in Indian affairs. When Alexander McKee first discovered that Doyle had granted a commission to a Native leader, the "astonished" Indian agent immediately notified his superiors. McKee, however, did not protest the actual granting of Indian commissions per se, for he saw no danger in meddling in Indian affairs, or wielding such an authority over them. Instead, McKee complained that Doyle, a regular army officer, had usurped a role and privilege reserved for the Indian Department by issuing a commission to an Indian. Doyle had prevented "[t]he Principal officers of the Department" from fulfilling their duty and from increasing "their influence by the Selection of proper characters for chiefs."[68] Joseph Chew agreed, claiming that whenever the Army commissions chiefs, it "Surely will have a Bad Effect with Regard to the Influence the Officers of the Department ought to have with Indians."[69] For McKee and Chew, Doyle's actions threatened the Indian Department, because they viewed the Department's role as that of a permanent liaison between the government and a people

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and Calumet, 43. The Mekoche division of the Shawnees provided hereditary peace chiefs who presided over affairs involving the entire nation. Blue Jacket, a war chief from a different division, had no permanent or hereditary authority. Sugden, Blue Jacket, 9-10,27; James Howard, 27, 38-39; Trowbridge, Shawnese Traditions, 8.

[68] Alexander McKee to Joseph Chew, 19 June 1796, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 249, 216.

who should be kept in a state of continual dependency, and the agents viewed the Indian Department as best suited for continuing to cultivate that sort of relationship. In his grievance, McKee complained that Indians receiving direct commissions from army officers would "be freed from that dependence on the Department which has hitherto constituted all the Influence and friendship so happily established between the British Nation and all the Indians in this Country."[70]

These statements show that McKee and Chew did not fully grasp the circumstances at the northern post, nor could they foresee the imminent changes at McKee's own Amherstburg agency. Not only did McKee think it improper for army officers to interfere in Indian affairs, but the agent was soon further dismayed when regular army officers began to eclipse the Indian Department at Amherstburg. This, of course, occurred when the events that led to Matthew Elliott's dismissal in 1797 left Captain Hector McLean wielding substantial authority over Amherstburg's branch of the Indian Department. The role of the military in Indian affairs theoretically should have been reduced when Indian affairs had come under civil authority in 1796, since this gave the Lieutenant Governor supreme authority over the Indian Department in the upper province. Therefore, prior to the McLean-Elliott controversy at Amherstburg, Doyle's granting of Indian commissions in the North would have appeared as an even greater usurpation of the Indian Department's role.

What the elder McKee did not realize was that the British military command at Mackinac and St. Joseph in 1796 held principal authority over the Indian agency there.

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[69] Joseph Chew to Captain James Green, Military Secretary, 14 July 1796, ibid., 218.

[70] Alexander McKee to Chew, 19 June 1796, ibid., 216.

Conversely, the Indian Department at Amherstburg still functioned in a virtually autonomous manner until late in 1797. One reason why the military leadership at St. Joseph extended its authority over the Indian Department there was because that branch of the Department remained disorganized and shorthanded, as it had been prior to its move from Mackinac. McKee had appointed his own son Thomas as Deputy Superintendent at St. Joseph, but the younger McKee never bothered to reside at his assigned post.[71] Except for short visits, Thomas McKee never spent any time at his agency, choosing instead to remain near his Amherstburg home. In order to cut costs, Governor General Prescott rescinded Alexander McKee's appointment of an additional interpreter at the post, and at one point the agency employed an interpreter who was not even fluent enough to adequately communicate with the Indians.[72] Indian agent Thomas Duggan doubled as storekeeper and clerk, but he eventually ran afoul of the post commandant when he began drinking heavily and purportedly expropriated and traded Indian goods from the storehouse.[73] Further complicating matters, Charles Chaboillez, Duggan's French-speaking replacement, could not understand English.[74] Under these conditions army personnel assumed control over Indian affairs at St. Joseph, and Major

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[71] Vincent, 105. In truth, Thomas McKee assumed Elliott's position at Amherstburg upon the latter's dismissal, thereby holding the assignment of Deputy Superintendent for both posts simultaneously between 1797 and 1808. It therefore made sense for him to reside at Amherstburg during that period. Nonetheless, McKee chose not to reside at his assigned post, both prior to Elliott's dismissal and after the latter's restoration. Although from a distance, McKee held the position as St. Joseph's Deputy Superintendent until the War of 1812.

[72] Vincent, 106.

[73] Ibid., 106-07; Lieutenant Robert Cowell to Major James Green, Military Secretary, 29 August 1801, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 253, 341-43; Same to same, 10 February 1802, ibid., Vol. 254, 3-6.

[74] Vincent, 107. Lt. Cowell ordinarily had to translate instructions into French for Chaboillez. After Cowell was eventually transferred to a different assignment, Chaboillez informed his superiors, "I have the greatest difficulty with respect to the instructions I receive and hope there is no impropriety in my requesting that in future they may be Sent in both English & French, or the latter alone, when I can have

Doyle considered himself justified in issuing commissions to certain Indians in rare instances. He could easily justify this practice, not only because special circumstances merited these favors, but because no person of adequate rank at the time served in the northern branch of the Indian Department who could confer such an honor.

Perhaps the military authorities heeded Alexander McKee's complaints. For whatever reason, it does not appear that Doyle's successors issued any additional commissions. Nevertheless, representatives in the Indian Department at St. Joseph's, under the auspices of post commandants, continued their practice of creating chiefs within the small bands of Ottawas and Ojibwas that regularly visited the post. The elder McKee had no objections, as long as the Indian Department played a key role in the ceremonial process of establishing a chief. Thus, the Department's officials at St. Joseph's continued to present each newly-created chief with a medal and usually a Union Jack for the chief's band to hang above their village, an indication that those receiving these items took great pride in the distinctive status they symbolized.

The British needed to use caution, taking care not to create more chiefs than necessary for their purposes, nor to award too many medals. Had they carelessly distributed numerous medals, the Indian agents might have inadvertently created a chief whom the prospective leader's people deemed less deserving and less experienced as a hunter and a warrior. Such a situation would only foster jealousy, having the opposite effect of the medal's intended purpose of cultivating loyalty to a British-controlled headman. Moreover, a distribution of too many medals would diminish the value of their distinction and undermine the respect due those who wore them. Therefore, British

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not doubts respecting their meaning." Charles Chaboillez, Storekeeper and Clerk to Prideaux Selby, 31 May 1803, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15481.

officials at Fort St. Joseph always attempted to present them to older, established bandleaders, or to men who were acknowledged as leaders since "the time of the French." In the summer of 1797, when Eshkan, an Ottawa man from Arbre Croche, requested a medal for his son, Duggan "thought [it] prudent to wait for Colo. McKee's further directions with respect to giving Eshkan's Son a Medal as [neither] he nor any of his Predecessors, Relations, were ever known to be Chiefs." In the meantime, the storekeeper pleased the young man by giving him a gorget instead. Duggan explained, "The reason of my being of the opinion of giving the gorget instead of a Medal was because Mr. Langlade who knows all the Ottowas at Arbre Croche well, said that it would offend all the other Chiefs of that place if a Medal was given."[75]

Langlade had good reason to be concerned. Arbre Croche, a cluster of villages just north of Little Traverse Bay on the northwest shore of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, had served as the Ottawa nation's most important community and the center of Ottawa affairs from the 1760s.[76] In May 1798, less than a year after Eshkan's band visited St. Joseph's, a much larger Ottawa delegation arrived from Arbre Croche, this time bearing fifteen Union Jacks! After presenting Duggan, Langlade, and the officers with "Forty three Makaks of Sugar," the principal leader among them, Keeminichaugan, expressed his concern that the British system of establishing chiefs was undermining tribal unity:

> Father, Since our old Principal Chiefs deaths the Young Chiefs hold Councils by themselves constantly, this is the reason We are not all come together, I am sorry We are not all united as formerly, there are different parties among us, It is your fault, Father, in not following the Ancient Customs of Your Children the Ottowas, You make too many Young Chiefs this is the Cause of the differences among us and the reason We are not all come together, besides You received Several of

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[75] Entry for 3 July 1797, Duggan Journal.

[76] Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 62, 132.

> your Ottowa Children last year in small Bands[;] this is another reason why We did not come together.[77]

Immediately after voicing these concerns, Keeminichaugan asked for additional gifts and ended by reaffirming his people's loyalty, stating, "Father, remember our Ancestors behaved well and We follow their examples."[78]

Keeminichaugan's remarks indicate that Langlade's previous concerns regarding developing jealousies and factionalism at Arbre Croche were perceptive. The British-installed leaders had indeed divided the community at Arbre Croche, and as the older chiefs died, this allowed for a turnover in Ottawa leadership. Although British intervention may have caused temporary competition and disunity, the Ottawas had never had any form of centralized governmental authority prior to British meddling, and former Ottawa leaders held virtually no power apart from their level of influence and ability to persuade. Since Ottawas, like their Ojibwa brethren, were politically organized in bands and not as a single tribe or nation, British-based authority may have actually served to unite the bands in the long run. In any case, despite Keeminichaugan's concerns over the loss of Ottawa unity, his people later demonstrated that they could rally around a common cause whenever necessary, as in their struggles against the Sioux. At no other known time did the Indians in the North complain about British meddling in their affairs.

British influence among the leaders of northern Ojibwas and Ottawas insured that any Franco-Spanish invasion force would have little chance of gaining the Indians' loyalty and cooperation. Any army would have great difficulty in advancing up the Mississippi Valley, across the Indian-held portages, and through the Mackinac corridor

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[77] Entry for 23 May 1798, Duggan Journal.

[78] Ibid.

without the support of the indigenous British trading partners. Because of the Indians' general pro-British sentiments and ties, nobody in the North had reason to suspect an invasion. Captain Drummond seemed surprised when Russell and Military Secretary James Green warned him of French attempts to enlist the Indians in their cause prior to an anticipated French-led attack. Drummond responded to Green, claiming that he "had not found any dissatisfaction as yet among the Indians who resort to this Post, they always appear pleased at what Presents they get, and Declares [sic] their attachment to the British Government."[79] Not attack followed. Consequently, the British flag continued to follow its traders into American and Spanish territories, and these latter governments found that they could not break the stranglehold of British trade and influence over the Indians of the western Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi Valley.[80]

Drummond and other British officials in the North worried less about a potential French invasion than they worried about the incessant hostilities between the Ojibwas and the Dakota Sioux. This, more than other Euro-American powers, threatened to disrupt British trade and influence in the North. At times the Menominees and Winnebagoes also had altercations with the Ojibwas.[81] The British at St. Joseph's tried in vain to broker a permanent peace between these nations, but they merely achieved a series of temporary truces, beginning with John Dease's diplomacy between the Sioux and Ojibwas at Mackinac in 1787. Yet the Sioux, Menominee, Winnebago, and Fox & Sauk tribes would not be manipulated by the British to the same extent as the Ojibwas

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[79] Drummond to Green, 21 March 1799, MPHC, XX: 630.

[80] Kellogg, 237-38, 242.

[81] Louis Arthur Tohill, "Robert Dickson, British Fur Trader on the Upper Mississippi," North Dakota Historical Quarterly 3(1) (October 1928): 8.

and Ottawas. Due largely to geography but also partially to their tribal structure, the latter two nations had much closer ties to the British at St. Joseph's, while the Natives in Wisconsin and the upper Mississippi Valley visited St. Joseph's much less frequently. Despite less contact with the Western groups, the British still held considerable influence over them through their numerous traders along the rivers of Wisconsin and Minnesota, and the officers at St. Joseph could rely on traders for reconnaissance just as well as they could the Indians. When Lieutenant Governor Russell initially wanted a report of any activity on the upper Mississippi, Captain Drummond explained, "It will make it more difficult to get Intelligence from the Mississipy [sic] as the Chippawas & Ottawas are at war with the Indians in that Quarter, having no Intercourse with one another. The Surest Information will be by the Indian Traders."[82]

Drummond referred to the traders in a region south and west of Lake Superior, an area that included a number of private British traders and encompassed the important Fox-Wisconsin River portage. The traders there generally operated independently, or in small combinations, belonging to neither the North West nor XY Companies.[83] These men helped to maintain a British sphere of influence by cultivating relations with those tribes who did not often visit British posts, by encouraging them to prefer British goods, and by preventing American and Spanish attempts to develop a trade network. One such trader, Robert Dickson, established ties with the Dakotas and married a chief's daughter.[84] After more than two decades of living among his wife's people, Dickson was instrumental in recruiting his clients and kinsmen into the British cause in the War of

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[82] Drummond to Major James Green, Military Secretary, 21 March 1799, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 252, 51-52; MPHC, XX: 630.

[83] Kellogg, 241; Tohill, 12-14.

1812. In the absence of more formal ties, such as the Chain of Friendship which the British had cultivated with nations further east, the informal individual bonds between the traders and the Sioux are what cemented British-Dakota relations at the turn of the nineteenth century. More importantly, as a result of these links, the Sioux recognized the British as kinsmen, in spite of the ongoing relationship the British maintained with the their enemies the Ojibwas, both at St. Joseph and through the North West Company.[85]

John Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, had an unrealistic perception of the nature of British relations with the Native groups further west, particularly with the Sioux and their hostility towards the Ojibwa nation. Johnson regarded the continuing warfare which pitted the Ojibwas and Ottawas against the Sioux "merely as a private Quarrel," ever since Amable, an Ottawa Chief from Arbre Croche, visited him at Montreal, claiming that some distant traders had fomented "Hostilities...between the Sioux and them."[86] The Superintendent mistakenly believed that British power and influence, via the Indian Department, extended to that region in the same manner that it had evolved southwest of Detroit. On multiple occasions in the late 1790s, Johnson naively referred to "the Peace that was Settled with them by Mr. Dease [Johnson's cousin]" more than a decade earlier.[87] Johnson simply could not believe that the western nations, whom he considered under British auspices, would defy a British-mandated peace without having been under an external and devious influence. The head agent went

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[84] Tohill, 14.

[85] Gary Clayton Anderson, Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 76.

[86] John Johnson to Major James Green, Military Secretary, 3 December 1798, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Series A, Vol. 1, 251; Johnson to ?, 7 July 1797, CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 8, 11.

[87] Johnson to ?, 7 July 1797, CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 8, 12.

on to accuse "our remote Traders...[of being] the Instigators of those Predatory Wars from Interested Motives," and he instructed his field agents and the commandant at St. Joseph's to remind them (the Indians) of Dease's peace settlement "with those nations...when they promised in the most Solemn manner never to break it, and a very Large Belt with my name and the year upon it, was left with the Chippewas to remind them of what was agreed upon."[88] Johnson must not have realized that hostilities between the Ojibwas and the Sioux had continued uninterrupted for more than a decade.[89] The Sioux-Ojibwa wars persisted for another half-century.

Johnson erred twice. First, the Superintendent had imagined the British regime in the North strong enough to compel the cooperation of nations as far away as the west side of the Mississippi; second, Johnson mistakenly blamed the traders for the continued hostilities. In fact, it was the activities of these very men that kept the western tribes backing British interests. Due to the traders' continued influence and the expansion of the North West Company, the Indians who lived in the Upper Mississippi Valley, in both Spanish and American territories, continued to fly Union Jacks over their villages during the early years of the nineteenth century.[90] The traders possessed far more influence than

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[88] Johnson to Green, Military Secretary, 3 December 1798, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Series A, Vol. 1, 252-53.

[89] Hickerson, 83; Danziger, 61-62. Years later, Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike, American emissary to the Upper Mississippi, commented on why the British had failed to quell the Indian wars there: "[T]he British government...often brought the chiefs of the two nations together, at Michilimackinac; made them presents, & c. but the Sioux, still haughty and overbearing, spurned the proferred *calumet* [italicized as done in original text]; and returned to renew the scenes of slaughter and barbarity....the British government, it is true, requested, recommended, and made presents; but all this at a distance; and when the chiefs returned to their bands, their thirst of blood soon obliterated from their recollection the lectures of humanity, which they had heard in the councils of Michilimackinac." Donald E. Jackson, ed., The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, with Letters and Related Documents 2 Vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), I: 216-17; Danziger, 64-65.

[90] Kellogg, 258.

their own government, and they certainly did not want continued intertribal conflicts. The incessant warfare between the Sioux and the Ojibwas often hindered trade, and it also threatened the lives of the traders, particularly those who worked alone and lived near to the bands with which they dealt.[91] These men had virtually no protection. Even those traders who belonged to the larger companies found that they too were vulnerable, and a few of them lost their lives.[92] Although rivalries often grew intense, traders did not tend to foment wars that might endanger their own lives and fortunes; indeed, the year before his death Michael Curot, an agent with the North West Company, sought refuge with his rival, before he was killed at his own post the following year.[93]

Although the Sioux-Ojibwa wars persisted, the Ottawas did not always participate in these conflicts. The Ottawa leader Amable, who initially complained to John Johnson that distant traders planned to instigate hostilities between his people at Arbre Croche and the Sioux, was either confused or manipulative, because he did not represent the sentiments of his community. Three months after Amable's visit with Johnson near Montreal in the summer of 1797, Captain Drummond held a council at St. Joseph's with

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[91] See "The Narrative of Peter Pond," in Five Fur Traders of the Northwest, ed. Charles M. Gates, with an Introduction by Grace Lee Nute (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1965), 47. On the eve of the American Revolution, Pond and the other traders had solicited the intervention of Mackinac's commandant, Arent de Peyster, to negotiate a peace between the Sioux and Ojibwas, but the Colonel "told them it was O[u]t of his Power to Bring the Government Into Eney Expens in Sending to thise But Desird that we would fall on wase & Means among Ourselves and he would Indaver to youse his Enfluans as CumMandin[g] Ooffiser." Even at that early date British leaders knew that they did not hold the authority necessary to impose a peace, and they expected the traders to influence the Indians for the benefit of British diplomacy.

[92] In 1806, the Sioux killed Michael Curot, a trader of the North West Company, for having supplied weapons to the Ojibwas; see ibid., 240. More than a dozen years earlier, the Sioux had killed David Monin, a clerk of the North West Company, and his companion. See "The Diary of John MacDonell," in ibid., 112.

[93] John Tanner's description of the raid which the Nor'westers fomented against the Hudson Bay outpost on the Red River near Lake Winnipeg stands as a rare exception. In that incident, the traders of the North West Company had little to fear in the way of reprisals, but one of them was sentenced to death in a court of law. See John Tanner, 209-10.

an Ottawa delegation from Arbre Croche, confronting them directly about the rumors of "considerable difficulties among themselves…instigated by the Traders." The chiefs resoundingly "answered they had no knowledge of any thing of the kind and were certain no such speech had been sent by their Nation, They then begged their Father would not listen to any bad reports, that there was no truth in them and hoped he would never think of them again."[94] For good measure, the following June an Ottawa delegation from Arbre Croche returned to St. Joseph on their way "to see their father Sir John Johnson." Their leader, Keeminichaugan, "begged hard," asking Duggan to write a letter for him to present to Johnson, stating,

> Father, since We heard of the bad Bird's conduct in lower Canada We have been very sorry, We thank you for writing our father [Captain Drummond] last fall…We were not concerned in any of that bad Bird's transactions, he makes us very much afflicted at what he said—We shall send down in a few days a Canoe well manned to meet him, when he sees our people he will contradict every thing he said of us.[95]

The Ottawas at Arbre Croche remained firmly attached, both in their loyalty to the British, and in their dependence on the traders sent among them.

One can only speculate as to Amable's motives for fabricating stories to Johnson regarding the actions of the traders in Indian country, but perhaps the Ottawa headman had valid cause to resent the traders, both those at his village of Arbre Croche and those who lived among the Sioux. Even if the traders did not actively attempt to foment a war, Amable knew that they dealt weapons to his enemies, and the mere fact that British

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[94] Council at St. Joseph's with Ottawa delegation from Arbre Croche, October, 1797, Duggan Journal. Captain Drummond recorded the delegations' official statement at this council, and he took the signatures of all the chiefs present, five village chiefs and five war chiefs. These are listed in Captain Peter Drummond to the Chiefs and their Reply, 19 October 1797, MPHC, XX: 561; CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 250-2, 317-18.

[95] Entry for 7 June 1798, Duggan Journal.

traders bartered weapons to belligerent nations already at war endangered lives on both sides. For the British had begun to cultivate relations with the Sioux similar to those that they had established with Amable's people more than a generation earlier, and the Sioux would now also fight to defend the British traders on whom they depended. A month prior to Amable's meeting with Johnson, Duggan reported that some British

> Traders were nearly pillaged by the Sacques and Renards headed by some [Spanish] Traders around with authority from the Spanish Commandant at St. Lewis. [F]ortunately for those interested, a party of Scioux were at La Prairie due Chien which overawed the other Indians and the property is…out of danger.[96]

Amable might have perceived that the British were attempting to establish symbiotic ties with the Sioux as they had with his own people, and perhaps the Ottawa leader feared that they had become the pawns of empire as they faced a debilitating future of dependence and poverty resulting from the trade.

From 1800 until after the War of 1812, British relations with Natives in the North and West would continue to be marked by a pattern of trade and dependence, but British attempts to quell warring nations there would never fully succeed, because British officials did not possess the authority and control over the Sioux to the same extent that they managed to exert power over the Ottawas and Ojibwas. The perpetual struggle that persisted between those groups became an accepted way of life, and by the turn of the nineteenth century British leaders in the North no longer made seeking peace there a pressing priority. In the summer of 1799, Captain Drummond wrote to Military Secretary Major Green, cavalierly stating,

> I am happy to inform you that most of the Mississipy Traders are arrived at Mackinac, and bring no news of Importance, only the old Quarrel between the Chippawas and the Seus [sic] is still kept up as usual, but nothing of any

[96] Entry for 12 June 1797, ibid.

> consequence has happened only a few Scalps taken, which is the case every year.[97]

Despite the ongoing hostilities, Duggan happily reported in 1801 that all Indians in his "quarter appear very well affected to [the British] Government."[98] Thus, British-Indian relations in the North continued in a unique manner in which trade and familial ties defined British relations with indigenous nations, some of which were at war with one another. Conversely, British authorities at Amherstburg, where trade volume was much less, strove to decrease their ties with the Natives and lessen the latter's reliance on British support. Also, British policy elsewhere in Upper Canada at the turn of the nineteenth century was geared toward creating intertribal division, rather than encouraging unity of the sort that British officers, agents, and traders had attempted to cultivate at Fort St. Joseph and in the Upper Mississippi Valley.[99]

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[97] Drummond to Green, 24 June 1799, MPHC, XX: 640.

[98] Duggan to Prideaux Selby, Military Secretary, 6 July 1801, CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 8, 151.

[99] See letter from The Duke of Portland to Lieutenant Governor Peter Hunter, 4 October 1799, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 252, 270-71.

CHAPTER 4

A NEW SOCIETY ON THE GRAND RIVER, 1784-1801

A third locale of British-Indian relations after the American Revolution ended was the Grand River, a site north of Lake Erie in Upper Canada, set aside by Governor General Sir Frederick Haldimand in 1784 for the Six Nations and their dependencies who had fought for the British during the war. At Amherstburg and in the North, Britain had maintained a sphere of influence mainly through trade and Indian gifts, though in the 1790s at Amherstburg British officers reduced all gifts and annual presents to their former Native allies. The Grand River community was distinctive in that it was a large grant of territory intended as a place of settlement for the loyal refugee tribes, including Mohawks, Cayugas, Onondagas, Senecas, Tuscaroras, and Delawares, most of whom were from New York.

This chapter will explore how the terms of the Haldimand Grant became a contested subject between British authorities and the natives. The first subsection will cover the period from 1784 to 1797, during which both tribal and British leaders attempted to define the nature of the Grant on terms favorable to their respective interests. The key issue of this period was whether the Indian residents of the Grand River would be allowed to sell land to white settlers. British resistance to such proposals contributed to a virtual deadlock between the British and Indians regarding land sales by the end of this period, and the stalemate fueled a dispute over the extent of Six Nations' sovereignty[1] and the Native legal status in Canada in general. The Six Nations at the

[1] For the purposes of this study and specifically for the context of this chapter, the term "sovereignty" is used to describe the extent to which the Natives, specifically the Six Nations' community at the Grand

Grand River stressed that they were the King's allies, nothing more. They tended to view their community as a self-sufficient, separate political entity that could deal with outside nation-states and individuals independently of Great Britain's interference. Conversely, for Britain Native autonomy in Upper Canada presented a potential security threat, and Whitehall was not prepared to grant Indian demands pertaining to sovereign authority over land. The original Haldimand Grant made no provision for the Indians to alienate any of their land, and even the subsequent amended land patents always gave the British government the right of preemption, acknowledging only Crown sovereignty. The Grand River case was the first internal Indian crisis in Canada that the British faced after the United States gained independence, but it would influence subsequent British colonial jurisprudence and Canadian Indian policy down to the present time.

A second section covers British relations with the Grand River Indians and related tribes from 1797 to 1801 and will show that a series of controversies, less broad than the Grand River land sales issue but still significant, further undermined friendly relations between British officials and their former Indian allies. Again, the common thread running through these struggles was the greater issue of Iroquois sovereignty, which remained nebulous as both sides were compelled to compromise during these crucial years at the Grand River. The Six Nations' legal status in Canada would remain undefined long after the close of the period covered by this study.

River, could conduct itself as an independent nation, govern itself by its own laws, practice its own customs, enter into agreements with foreign peoples and other indigenous tribes, and conduct land transactions and distribute Reserve property, all without the consent of the British government.

The Six Nations' Bid for Sovereignty, Brant's Struggles, and the British Response

When various bands of Indian refugees originally settled along the Grand River in 1784, the community was composed of a diverse set of peoples. A census taken in 1785 indicated that 1,843 loyal Natives from nineteen different tribes or bands had settled at the Grand. In addition to elements of the Six Iroquois Nations, other groups found at the new reserve included Delawares, Nanticokes, Montours, Creeks, Cherokees, Tootalies, Oghguagas, and Canadian Iroquois from St. Regis.[2] Nevertheless, over two-thirds of the entire community were Iroquois, and the Mohawks alone numbered nearly a quarter of the total populace.

These figures helped Mohawk sachem Joseph Brant maintain a greater level of influence at the Grand River intertribal community than other Native leaders there, and Brant soon became the community's principal spokesperson and primary leader. His record as a war chief during the American Revolution certainly enhanced his standing as a capable leader, but his other qualities and attributes are what made him the Six Nations' principal spokesperson during this era. As a youth, Brant had become the protégé and brother-in-law of the late Sir William Johnson (d. 1774), who had taken Brant's older sister Molly as his mistress and eventual common-law wife. As a result of his close connections with the Johnsons, Brant learned English, received some formal education, joined the Anglican faith, and received a captain's commission in the British Indian Department. By 1786 he had twice traveled to England where he met several key figures, including Hugh Percy (later the Second Duke of Northumberland), Home Secretary Lord

[2] A Census of the Six Nations on the Grand River, 1785, in Charles M. Johnston, ed., The Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River (Toronto: The Champlain Society, For the Government of Ontario, University of Toronto Press, 1964), 52.

Sydney, Charles James Fox, King George III, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Consequently, in spite of never having possessed any hereditary authority in Iroquois councils, Brant's position and experience had made him the most important liaison between the Six Nations and the whites when the Grand River Reserve was established.[3]

Early in 1787, Brant and the Six Nations' leaders made their first Grand River land transactions by selling several thousand acres to ten Loyalist friends. Apart from the Haldimand Grant, the Six Nations possessed no other legal title to these lands, but they acted independently, without including the government in the transaction. For some time the transactions went unnoticed by both the Indian Department and Governor General Lord Dorchester. However, when Dorchester learned of these land transfers more than a year later, he vowed to "order all the white people off the Lands."[4] The Governor General instructed John Johnson to inform all concerned parties that "the King will never confirm their [the white people's] Grants nor allow the Individuals to keep possession."[5]

Brant was incensed that the British now seemed to be reneging on the stipulations of the Haldimand Grant. Much of the conflict stemmed from the vagueness of the Haldimand Deed, which, while not expressly restricting the alienation of Native lands, did not sanction the transferring of land either. According to the Haldimand Grant, the Indians were "to take possession of and settle upon the Banks of the [Grand] River."[6]

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[3] For Brant's origins and position within Mohawk society, Kelsay, 39-41; for the chief's final visit to London, see ibid., 380-91.

[4] Speech by John Deseronto at Council at the Bay of Quinte (recalling events of September, 1788), 2-10 September 1800, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 54.

[5] Statement by Sir John Johnson in Dorchester's Name to Aaron and Isaac Hill, Montreal, 20 September 1788, ibid., 72.

[6] "Haldimand Grant," in Graymont, Appendix B, 299; Kelsay, 363.

Though the government's intent behind the proclamation was later often debated, Brant assumed that by this document the Crown offered land to the Six Nations on an equal basis with any other grants of land that the government awarded to whites in Canada. The United Empire Loyalists, for example, had fought for the King in the war and subsequently settled in Upper Canada at the government's expense; many later sold their land to whomever they chose. In other words, the Six Nations expected a written deed that acknowledged their full ownership to the Grand River lands, or a title in fee simple, held in common by all of the reserve's Native inhabitants.

The controversy was intertwined with the greater issue of Iroquois sovereignty. Brant and the Six Nations, while desiring full possession of their lands, knew that they could not adequately argue their case from the perspective of the United Empire Loyalists or other whites, because these settlers were acknowledged as British subjects, while the Indians viewed themselves as autonomous Crown allies. If independent, then the Grand River community could sell or lease their lands to whomever they pleased, whether to French, American, or British settlers, without the consent of Whitehall or any leaders in Canada. Brant believed that the Iroquois had always possessed this degree of mastery over all of their affairs. In response to Dorchester's restrictions against the Six Nations' sale of Grand River lands, the sachem argued that the Iroquois are "on the same footing on which we stood previous" to the American war, adding, "your government well knew...they had no right to interfere with us as independent nations."[7]

The British held quite another view. Ever since the Canadian discoveries made by the Cabot family in the latter part of the sixteenth century, overall sovereignty of

[7] Excerpt from Joseph Brant's speech at Niagara, late 1780s, in T. G. Marquis, ed., Builders of Canada from Cartier to Laurier (Toronto: John C. Winston Co., 1903), 202-03.

British possessions in North America had always rested with the English (and after 1707, the British) Monarch. Of course the Indians within these vast domains had still enjoyed the right, known as the right of usufruct, to dwell upon and use the land, but this did not give them full title. Whenever the Indians ceded their lands by treaty, the British government maintained that the tribes had actually surrendered their usufructuary right to the land, but that was all, since the Crown had already possessed sovereign authority over those lands.[8] Contrary to Brant's claims, the British had never acknowledged any different status for the Iroquois lands in colonial New York, and the government viewed the Indians' postwar exodus to the Grand River as a continuation of a centuries-old understanding.[9] At the new site, the Six Nations again possessed their usufructuary right, just as before. Brant seemed to be the innovator in wanting to alter this longstanding tradition. Furthermore, the British government could not recognize Iroquois sovereignty over the land because British leaders, when forming government Indian policy, did not consider indigenous groups as political entities, but rather as separate racial classes, or groups, that were to receive special consideration or treatment.[10]

With such radically different notions of the Six Nations' legal status, conflict was unavoidable. Although Lord Dorchester never evicted the first wave of white settlers to move to the Grand River as he had threatened to do in 1788, Brant would not rest until he

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[8] Wright, 38-39.

[9] A good example of an eighteenth-century perspective on the relationship between the colony of New York and the Iroquois is Cadwallader Colden's The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada which are Dependent upon the Province of New York... 2 Vols., 1727-1747; also see Jennings, The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire, 11-17, and White, The Middle Ground, 351-54.

[10] Bruce Clark, Native Liberty, Crown Sovereignty: The Existing Aboriginal Right of Self-Government in Canada (Montreal & Kingston, London, and Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 19-20; Sidney L. Harring, "Indian Law, Sovereignty, and State Law," in A Companion to American Indian History, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden, MA & Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 453-55.

and the Grand River Council possessed a deed acknowledging the Six Nations' full ownership, a title in fee simple. Until that happened, the British government would never have to concede that the Haldimand Deed meant anything more than a mere license of occupation for the Indians dwelling at the Grand River Reserve. For several years the matter hung in limbo and received less attention, as Canadian authorities were more concerned with the brewing crisis on the Maumee when the advance of Wayne's army nearly drew the British into another American war. Furthermore, the Grand River question grew more complex when the British Parliament restructured the Canadian government in 1791, creating the province of Upper Canada and thus an additional bureaucratic layer of government with which Brant would have to contend in his efforts to gain the land title and the Six Nations' legal status which he sought.

When John Graves Simcoe, a distinguished veteran and officer who served in the American war, became the upper province's first Lieutenant Governor in 1792, Brant immediately petitioned Simcoe for the Grand River deed that he had persistently sought for the previous seven years. The land issue insured that relations between the two men would remain strained until Simcoe's departure in 1796.[11] Brant regularly clamored for a proper deed, while Simcoe at the same time continued his efforts to talk Brant out of engaging in any future land deals. The Lieutenant Governor and other British leaders feared that Brant would deal parts of the Reserve to "Land Jobbers," who would in turn sell these tracts to any set of buyers, many of whom lacked loyalty to the British

[11] When Brant first dined at the Simcoe residence late in 1792, Mrs. Simcoe hinted at this mistrust, describing the Mohawk leader as possessing "a countenance of art or cunning." Entry for 9 December 1792, in Mary Quayle Innis, ed., Mrs. Simcoe's Diary (Toronto & New York: MacMillan of Canada and St. Martin's Press, respectively, 1965), 82-83.

government or to British interests. The standoff continued, and Brant informed Simcoe that the Indians "were not always to be fools because they had once been such."[12]

Neither Simcoe nor Dorchester wanted to concede to the Six Nations the right to sell or lease their lands, so Simcoe finally issued a new patent to the Six Nations in January 1793, carefully defining and circumscribing the Indians' rights to the land: "IT IS OUR ROYAL WILL AND PLEASURE that no transfer, alienation conveyance sale gift exchange lease property or possession shall at any time be made or given of the said District or Territory or any part or parcel thereof."[13] In spite of the full restrictions preventing the Six Nations from alienating any of their lands, Simcoe left an opening to Brant by including a clause providing for land sales under the condition that these "always...shall be purchased for Us [the British government], our Heirs and Successors at some public meeting...to be holden for that purpose by the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor or person administering Our Government."[14] Hence, Simcoe did his best to please everyone, including both Dorchester and Brant, by restricting any free alienation of Iroquois lands, while simultaneously permitting the Grand River Six Nations to sell portions of their territory to the government alone whenever it became absolutely necessary. Yet the Six Nations' council believed that Simcoe had done little more than undermine Iroquois sovereignty by giving the British government the sole right of preemption over the Grand River lands. Such a policy mirrored that practiced by the fledgling United States, and it usually meant that the Indians would not receive a

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[12] Simcoe to Dorchester, 6 December 1793, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, 114.

[13] Simcoe's Patent of the Grand River Lands to the Six Nations, 14 January 1793, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 74. Also see John A. Noon, Law and Government of the Grand River Iroquois (New York: The Viking Fund, Inc., 1949), 86-87.

[14] Simcoe's Patent, 14 January 1793, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 74.

competitive price for the acreage, since the land was not sold on the open market; the government also wanted to turn a profit in reselling the land. Furthermore, Simcoe's patent still maintained a premise of Crown sovereignty, describing the Six Nations' Reserve as a "Tract of Land under our protection."[15]

Brant rejected the patent outright, arguing that it violated the spirit, intention, and purpose of the Haldimand Grant. From then until now, the Six Nations' Grand River Council have always claimed that Simcoe's deed could never be binding upon them.[16] If the Six Nations had merely wanted to sell the lands without seeking any additional legal status, then Simcoe had technically made it possible for them to do so, but Brant wanted more. Yet the Mohawk leader needed to use caution in seeking greater autonomy, because his sentiments could have been construed as seditious. After rejecting Simcoe's deed, the Chief poured out his heart to his soon-to-be estranged friend, Alexander McKee, describing the breach between him and the British:

> I am Sorry to inform you that we the Grand River Indians are...greatly disapoited [sic] of not having been able to obtain such Deeds we would have wished to have ...it hurt my pride and feelings extremely.... I cannot hardly reconcile myself to Live on Such Situation I never did expected [sic] that my attachment to the English should any time Shake I am totally dispirited.[17]

Knowing that Brant's loyalty to the British had been shaken, leaders in Canada soon believed that they had further cause to question the Mohawk's fidelity. Late in 1793, Simcoe informed Lord Dorchester that the Six Nations' leader communicated regularly with representatives in the American government, and that "Brant has said that the offers of [the American] Congress to him, were a Township for himself, as much

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[15] Ibid., 73.

[16] Noon, 86.

lands as he chose for the Indians, and a guinea a day for himself for life." Brant probably exaggerated the American offer, but even so, the chief's statements indicated that his loyalty to the British had its limits. Simcoe concluded, "My opinion of Brant is, that he is true to the Indian Interest, and honorable in his Attachment, where that is not concerned, to the British Nation."[18] To Simcoe, Brant's priorities were unacceptable, particularly when Britain was embroiled in a European war against revolutionary France and facing the possibility of another American war.

Although neither Brant nor Simcoe trusted the other, the Lieutenant Governor could not afford to alienate Brant while war with the Americans appeared imminent. The chief's influence over both the Six Nations and the Western Confederacy could help to determine Britain's future in Upper Canada. Yet Simcoe justifiably feared that the Six Nations' headman would exploit this to the Indians' advantage by playing off Britain and the United States.[19] Frustrated in his efforts to gain Six Nations' sovereignty, Brant could still perhaps utilize this potential diplomatic leverage in order to play off the two powers, just as his ancestors had done, with a degree of success, between the British and the French. The only trouble was that in 1793 two key elements with which Brant dealt –the Western Confederacy and the Americans—were already at war, lessening his diplomatic leverage in an effort to broker a peace to the Six Nations' advantage. Nevertheless, Simcoe still feared that Brant would either manipulate matters to draw Britain into a war against the United States, or that the chief would merely continue attempting to play off Britain against the Unites States. Remarking to Dorchester about Brant's machinations,

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[17] Brant to McKee, 25 February 1793, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 75.

[18] Simcoe to Dorchester, 6 December 1793, ibid., 76.

Simcoe explained "that he [Brant] sees the Calamities [the Indians are to experience] which in all probability must ultimately attend the Continuance of the War, unless by some means or other Great Britain shall take a direct part on the protection of the Indians."[20] Simcoe demonstrated his suspicions of the chief's disloyalty when the he sided with McKee in the latter's dispute with Brant over a potential peace with the American commissioners. Simcoe's decision to support McKee over Brant helped to divide the Western Confederacy and ultimately proved fatal to its war effort against the Americans. Thus, in little more than six months, Brant was twice thwarted, once by Simcoe at the Grand River, and later by McKee, with Simcoe's support, at the Miami Rapids.

Alarmed at Brant's growing belligerence, Simcoe considered "the use He [Brant] has made of his Power to be the subject of just alarm and that it is necessary by degrees and on just principles that it should be diminished."[21] By "just principles" Simcoe meant that he intended to reduce Brant's authority gradually through official channels. The Lieutenant Governor hoped to avoid an overt and permanent schism between Brant and the British and sought legal means by which to reduce Brant's authority, including a fresh interpretation indicating why the Six Nations could not sell or lease Grand River lands. Having already questioned Brant's motives and loyalty to the British, Simcoe now claimed that the chief's land schemes were simply "illegal in respect to the Customs and Laws of Great Britain."[22] The Lieutenant Governor reminded Brant that, according to

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[19] Simcoe to Henry Dundas, 20 September 1793, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, V: 59.

[20] Simcoe to Dorchester, 6 December 1793, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 76.

[21] Simcoe to Henry Dundas, 20 September 1793, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, V: 59.

[22] Simcoe to Dorchester, 6 December 1793, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 75.

British law, if the Indians were indeed allies, and not subjects, then the Six Nations, not being subjects, could not lease or sell lands to British subjects.[23] This determination still weighed heavily on Brant nearly three years later, when he complained about this unique interpretation in a speech near Fort George in 1796.[24] By having the ambiguous legal status of dependent allies, the Six Nations had neither the full rights and privileges enjoyed by British subjects, nor did they have the liberty to conduct their affairs as a sovereign power.

Simcoe also delayed any determinations on the land issue for as long as possible, informing Brant that any permanent decision in this matter would be made at Whitehall by the King's ministers. The Lieutenant Governor then promised Dorchester, "In respect to the lands on the Grand River, I shall do my utmost to procrastinate any decision on them."[25] Meanwhile, Simcoe took measures to appease Brant to some degree by visiting the Grand River in 1794 and allocating the necessary funds and resources to assist the Six Nations in the building of a new council house. The government of Upper Canada also promised a future pension for Brant's wife Catherine, in the event of her husband preceding her in death, and in 1795 Simcoe even approved of a measure that granted Brant 3,450 acres of land as personal property he had previously requested on Burlington Bay.[26] Simcoe's concessions were significant, indicating that the government, while

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[23] Simcoe and Dorchester partially based Simcoe's argument on the rationale of the Proclamation of 1763, which denied British subjects in North America from purchasing or settling on Indian lands.

[24] Speech of Joseph Brant at an Indian Council, Newark, Upper Canada, 24 November 1796, Cruikshank & Hunter, Correspondence of Peter Russell, I: 93; Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 82. Brant complained that Simcoe had informed the Grand River nations, that, as "only Allies," the Six Nations "cannot possibly have the King[']s Subjects to be…Tennants."

[25] Simcoe to Dorchester, 3 March 1794, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, II: 174.

[26] Same to Same, 9 October 1795, ibid., IV, 101-02.

distrusting Brant and refusing to acknowledge Six Nations' sovereignty, thought it important to continue amiable ties with them in an effort to secure their traditional fidelity and support. The delicacy with which Simcoe and other British leaders dealt with Brant shows their continued respect for the Mohawk's enduring influence at the Grand River and among American officials.

Prior to his departure from Upper Canada in the summer of 1796, Simcoe made one final attempt to solve the land issue by drafting yet another land patent that incorporated a more-clearly worded provision by which the Six Nations could lease land, albeit only to the government.[27] Brant and the Six Nations rejected the new document, because they still found it too restrictive, and the patent's wording did not necessarily confine the leasing rights strictly to the Iroquois at the Grand River. It implied that other remnants of Six Nations' enclaves, such as those at Buffalo Creek in New York and John Deseronto's band at the Bay of Quinte, could also share in the revenue generated from any leased lands at the Grand River.[28] For Brant, this would have defeated the purpose of attempting to generate revenue specifically intended for his people's survival and independent use at the Grand River. Still at an impasse, Brant continued to illegally lease Native lands in hopes of one day having the legal right to sell the title to those lands.

After Simcoe's departure his successor, Peter Russell, for a time also attempted delaying tactics regarding the Grand River lands, but unlike Simcoe, Russell was forced to come to a more definitive resolution on the matter.[29] The new administrator, with little

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[27] Simcoe to Brant, 2 March 1796, ibid., 206.

[28] Brant to Joseph Chew, 17 May 1796, ibid., 268.

[29] At the time of Simcoe's departure, he left the Province on the basis of a temporary leave of absence, expecting to one day return. Therefore, Russell often preferred the title of "President," with the implication that Simcoe would eventually return to the post of Lieutenant Governor.

knowledge of Indian affairs or policy, had inherited a diplomatic quagmire that had begun before Simcoe's administration and was growing worse. Brant immediately pressured Russell to speedily resolve the issue in the Indians' favor. Russell asked Brant to outline in writing precisely which lands the Six Nations wished to sell or lease, and to whom.[30] The new Lieutenant Governor then promised to lay all of the requested information before Upper Canada's Executive Council for their consideration. Brant responded with lightning speed; he issued the report to Russell only two days after the Lieutenant Governor had requested it, and the Mohawk leader informed Russell that he expected the entire matter to be resolved "in the course of Ten days."[31] Russell was not prepared to expedite matters in the manner that Brant expected. Due to the poor health of several members of the Executive Council, and the fact that the legislative session had ended, Russell did not have to comply with Brant's "ten days," and the legislature could not meet until spring. The delay enabled Russell to further consult Whitehall, particularly the Duke of Portland, Prime Minister Pitt the Younger's Home Secretary. While awaiting instructions from home and carefully pondering his response to Brant and the Six Nations, Russell confirmed that all of the prospective buyers of the Grand River tracts were loyal British subjects, indicating that Brant did not wish to subvert British authority in Upper Canada.[32]

When Brant learned that the Executive Council would not meet again during the fall of 1796, and did not plan to reconvene until the following May, he interpreted the

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[30] Russell to Brant, 23 October 1796, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, I: 75-76. All prospective purchasers of Grand River tracts had to first undergo a process of verification in order to confirm their status as loyal British subjects.

[31] Brant to Russell, 24 October 1796, ibid., 76.

[32] Russell to the Duke of Portland, 14 November 1796, ibid., 84.

postponement as another intentional delaying tactic, similar to the methods Simcoe had employed against him for four years. The chief bitterly exclaimed,

> We are at a loss what to think of our Great men here [i.e. British officials in Canada]....We cannot from their conduct towards us...learn what their Intentions are, nor what we are to expect from them....It is not what we expected nor what we deserved.
>
> Be assured that we have spoke[n] for the last time to the great men here on this subject; as they have from their Conduct gave us plainly to understand that it is not their Intention to do any thing for us....Surely our Father their Master [the King], never intended that we were to be trifled with in this manner. I repeat it again, that is not what we deserve.[33]

Brant had come to the end of his patience, and, as he stated, he intended to never again deal with British leaders in Canada on the issue. The frustrated leader instead resolved to travel to Britain himself in order to secure a proper deed for his Grand River Reserve. But, short of funds, he never made the trip, and, contrary to his declaration, he continued to wrangle with leaders in Canada on land matters until his death a decade later.

Brant hoped to drive a wedge between Whitehall and the Canadian authorities, and he tended to stress the Six Nations' loyalty and devotion to the King, often in exaggerated terms. In November 1796, Brant restated his peoples' loyalty, declaring,

> [W]e pride ourselves by the losses we have suffered in the good cause of our Great Father the King of England....and are firm in our Attachment to our Great Father, the King of England....the ill Treatment we met with from Individuals sent to [this] Country to rule, shall never wean our Affections form that Government that sends them here.[34]

The Mohawk leader even claimed that his peoples' fidelity and attachment exceeded that of white Loyalists, adding, "this Disappointment in not obtaining our Grant would (were

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[33] Brant's speech at Newark, 24 November 1796, ibid., 93-94; Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 82-83.

[34] Brant's speech at Newark, 24 November 1796, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, I: 95.

we white men) shake us in our Loyalty and Attachment for the King of England our Father....it would leave a wound not easily to be healed. But we are Indians."[35] On numerous other occasions in his public statements, whether written or spoken in council, the Mohawk leader was always careful to reaffirm this loyalty, promising that his "affection and Loyalty to the King shall never be shaken."[36]

Brant's opponents understood what was at stake. Russell's Attorney General, John White, pinpointed the crux of the problem when he connected all of the government's legal difficulties with the Grand River Reserve to "the Principal [difficulty, which] was that the Six Nations do not acknowledge the Sovereignty of the King."[37] Despite all of Brant's rhetoric about loyalty, the specter of a potential Indian rebellion in the vulnerable young province was empowering to the Indians, and Brant knew it. Therefore, Brant played up the threat of an invasion to Upper Canada, and he did his best to intimidate Russell. Years later, William Claus, the late Alexander McKee's successor as Deputy Superintendent General, cynically remarked,

> Whoever pretends to a moderate knowledge of the 6 Nats. and their politics in a War between two powers of white people which may affect their Country...will allow that their first and principal view...is to find out which of the two contenting [sic] parties is the best able to supply them with their Necessaries in Trade as well as best able to bribe them....During the interval of the Conflict they make no Scruple of Conscience...when Opportunity serves to take what they can ...by carrying Lies.[38]

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[35] Ibid., 94.

[36] Brant to Russell, 11 June 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 228.

[37] John White to Russell, 26 September 1796, Toronto Public Library, L 18, Peter Russell Letterbook, 16; Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, I: 46.

[38] William Claus, "Remarks and Observations upon Indn. Politics as to their Political Maxims in Time of War between White People," undated, but presumably about 1804, CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 11, 65-66.

Claus understood that there was a limit to the Six Nations' loyalty towards the British, as Simcoe had previously surmised.

In 1797, Russell personally experienced the Six Nations' diplomatic pressure. The Governor informed Portland that Brant and the Six Nations, with their patience exhausted, "took upon themselves to conclude…the Sale of Part of these Lands without waiting for His Majesty's Sanction."[39] Russell did not immediately dispute the sales, regarding it as "impolitick [sic] in the present weak state of this Province to provoke Insult even from an Indian Tribe."[40] Thus, the administrator chose not to openly reject Brant's propositions, while still maintaining that no "alienation of the lands [is]…valid without the Consent of the King," and that the Six Nations "have placed themselves under His Majesty's Protection by taking up their Residence within this Province."[41]

Russell's letter to Portland hinted at the diplomatic vise beginning to tighten in upon him. Neither Russell nor his superiors were prepared to recognize Six Nations' sovereignty, but the weak condition of the army and small population of the upper province prevented the government from flatly denying Brant's demands. Moreover, as tensions between the government of Upper Canada and the Natives at the Grand River escalated during the early months of 1797, the home government at Whitehall, from its distant vantage point, did not have a clear grasp of the seriousness of the situation. The Duke of Portland did not think it necessary for British leaders in Canada to compromise on the matter.

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[39] Russell to Portland, 28 January 1797, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, I: 131. This letter is also found in Toronto Public Library, L 18, Peter Russell Papers, 36-42, and P.R.O., CO 42, 321, pp. 91-104.

[40] Ibid., 133.

[41] Ibid.

In March, Portland wrote to Russell, adamantly insisting that the Six Nations "are positively restricted from alienating or disposing of" their land "to any other Persons whatever." Moreover, the Duke pointed out that the original intention of the Haldimand Grant was never to permit the alienation of any of the Grand River domain. He observed that the Grand River's geographic location in the heart of the province was in itself "proof of the prudence and foresight" of the Haldimand Grant, "which dictated the Provision against the most remote possibility of such an important Tract of Ground ever becoming the Property of any other Persons, without His Majesty's Special assent being obtained for that purpose."[42] Nevertheless, Portland wished for the Six Nations to understand "the Parental regard which His Majesty feels for them and of his desire to meet their wishes in any manner in which it can be done, consistently with the principle on which the original Grant was made to them." Therefore, the Duke instructed Russell to determine a monetary figure equivalent to the projected proceeds of the Six Nations' anticipated land transactions, an amount that the government could then subsidize as a supplementary annuity to the Six Nations in lieu of any land sales or leases.[43]

Portland had missed the point. Money was not the issue, but rather, as Upper Canada's Attorney General John White had already pointed out, the Six Nations insisted upon wielding independent control over all of their affairs. In the spring and summer of 1797 Brant continued to conduct the Six Nations' affairs in an autonomous manner, and, as Russell had feared, the Mohawk leader also continued to exploit the fact that Upper Canada was weak and defenseless. In April Brant traveled to Philadelphia to meet with

[42] Portland to Russell, 10 March 1797, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, I: 155-56. This document is also in the collections of the Toronto Public Library, L 18, Box 2, Russell Papers; CNA, MG 23 H 12, Peter Russell's Letterbook of Indian Affairs, 5-11; and the P.R.O., CO 42, 321, 80-84

Robert Liston, British envoy to the United States; he also spoke to anyone else who would listen to him. While in Philadelphia the sachem voiced his complaints at the inn where he lodged, purportedly asserting

> with great resentment of the treatment he had met with from the King's Government of Canada, and threatened, *if he did not obtain redress through me* [Italics are from Cruikshank's edited version; the phrase is underlined in the original letter.], that he would offer his services to the French Minister Adet [French envoy to the United States], and march his Mohawks to assist in effecting a Revolution, and overturning the British Government in the Province.

Liston patiently listened to Brant, but the British envoy wrote to Governor General Robert Prescott, warning him of "the possible event of an Insurrection in the [Upper] Province," hoping "to avert so serious a danger."[44] On 18 June, only days before the Executive Council would meet, Brant wrote to Upper Canada's Surveyor General D. W. (David William) Smith, exclaiming, "[W]e wish to be on the same footing with [the] Government [as] we were before the [American] War...we look upon it that what we formerly called the covenant chain is in some danger of getting rusty."[45] The very next day, the Six Nations' chief also sent a similar letter to Russell, expressing his distress that, unless the Six Nations could "enjoy the lands here...in the same independent and unlimited manner [as they supposedly had done in the Mohawk Valley prior to the war]," then the ancient British-Iroquois friendship would be in peril.[46] Brant insisted upon this point, and in late June three hundred angry warriors accompanied him to York, the capital of the upper province, to forcefully demonstrate the importance of the matter while the

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[43] Ibid., 156.

[44] Liston to Prescott, 8 April 1797, Toronto Public Library, L 18, Russell Letterbook, 93-94; Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, I: 160.

[45] Brant to Smith, 18 June 1797, ibid., 189.

[46] Brant to Russell, 19 June 1797, ibid., 190; P.R.O., CO 42, 321, 234.

Indians awaited a decision.[47] Indeed, Brant's behavior during the spring and summer of 1797 did not reflect the degree of loyalty he had proclaimed the previous autumn.

Brant's tactics brought a measure of success to the Grand River Indians' endeavors.[48] Acting on his own authority, but with the unanimous support of the Executive Council, and hoping to ward off an Indian rebellion, Russell evaded his orders from home and confirmed the land sales that Brant had already transacted. Fearing imminent hostilities, Russell made this decision before he could receive final instructions on the matter from Portland, even though the Home Secretary's previous correspondence strictly forbade any alienation of Iroquois lands in Canada.[49] Since Russell had already determined to disobey his instructions, there was no longer cause for delay, which at that point could only risk exacerbating the already-strained relations between his government and the Six Nations. In addition to confirming the Six Nations' prior sales, the Lieutenant Governor also provided a way for the Six Nations to conduct future land transactions, but only to the King, who retained the right of preemption.[50] Therefore, Russell believed that in spite of his having neglected his orders, all parties would ultimately be satisfied that he maintained peace and tranquility and entitled the Six Nations to conduct future land transactions strictly with the government.

Russell's hopes were soon dashed; neither Brant nor Portland was completely pleased. The Duke "lamented" the Lieutenant Governor's handling of the matter, and

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[47] Charles M. Johnston, "Joseph Brant, the Grand River Lands and the Northwest Crisis," Ontario History LV(4) (1963): 275.

[48] Ibid., 280-81.

[49] Portland to Russell, 10 March 1797, Cruikshank & Hunter, Correspondence of Peter Russell, I: 155-56.

[50] Russell to Brant, 3 July 1797, ibid., 204.

Portland feared that this show of British weakness might develop into "a most dangerous tendency."[51] For his part, Brant thanked Russell for his efforts thus far, but he complained, "I am sorry the mode adopted is not yet satisfactory, because this is not the footing *we were upon before* [Cruikshank's italics indicating emphasis in original letter]." Furthermore, the chief gave another subtle threat regarding the possible demise of British-Six Nations relations, remarking that the government's continued intervention "is entangling the Chain we so long kept hold of, which I should be sorry to be the case."[52]

Brant's response stunned Russell, who summoned another meeting with the Executive Council before meeting with the chief personally on 21 July 1797. Russell nearly revoked his previous offer to Brant, explaining to the Mohawk leader that the King's ministers would have to determine the Six Nations' legal rights regarding their land, and that His Majesty's government would provide an annuity to meet the Six Nations material needs in lieu of any alienation of lands, precisely what Portland had already proposed.[53] "Brant appeared…greatly affected by" this, and he passionately explained to Russell that had his people known that "the lands on the Grand River were given to them upon any other footing than that on which they formerly possessed those on the Mohawk River," then they never would have accepted them, and he emphasized that the Six Nations "were a free & independent Nation."[54] Russell, fearing that Brant "was very capable of doing much mischief," relented and again extended the same offer

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[51] Portland to Russell, 4 November 1797, ibid., II: 3; P.R.O., CO 42, 321, 345-49.

[52] Brant to Russell, 10 July 1797, Cruikshank & Hunter, Correspondence of Peter Russell, I: 211.

[53] Russell to Portland, 21 July 1797, ibid., 219-21.

[54] Ibid., 221.

he had presented to the chief earlier in the month.[55] The government of Upper Canada therefore confirmed the land sales that the Grand River Indians had already made, but in the future the Crown would possess the right of preemption, and the King's ministers would serve as trustees on any further relinquishments of Grand River lands. Knowing that he had better take what he could get, Brant this time responded favorably. He thanked Russell and said, "This Sir, is every thing we wanted, we have no desire just now to dispose of more land, as this will be enough for our immediate wants."[56] Three days later, Russell met in council with the leaders of the Six Nations, all of whom "marked their satisfaction & Approbation in the most distinguished manner," and Brant emphatically declared "that they would now all fight for the King to the last drop of their Blood."[57] Russell thought that the matter was finally settled.

The acting Lieutenant Governor discovered otherwise the next day, when he was "not a little mortified" to receive a new speech from Brant, supposedly written on behalf of the Six Nations' leaders and expressing the Six Nations' dissatisfaction. They again specifically requested that Russell "empower them to continue to sell at their pleasure without waiting for His Majesty's approbation."[58] When Russell held his ground, threatening to end all agreements regarding the confirmation of the current land sales, Brant again backed off, explaining that the Six Nations did not expect Russell to acquiesce, but that the Lieutenant Governor should interpret this latest written speech as a

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[55] Ibid., 222.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Russell to Portland, 29 July 1797, Ibid., 228.

[58] Ibid.

matter of tribal protocol, in which the Indians needed to voice their sentiments.[59] In other words, the Six Nations' council did not want to completely accept Russell's offers without first officially submitting his people's objections and misgivings. Brant's point was simply that, although his people would accept Russell's terms on this occasion, they did so only grudgingly, and that the Six Nations still believed that the British had an ethical obligation to eventually recognize their full sovereignty.

Brant, like Russell, found himself in an impossible predicament. The Mohawk sachem derived his non-hereditary authority from a people who still believed themselves to be free and independent, and he was caught between them and the British, who would never grant this degree of autonomy. Brant frequently faced critics and had to deal with quarreling factions at the Grand River, but as long as he kept the pressure on the British regarding land matters, his leadership authority among his people would remain intact. Thus, while facing similar plights, Brant and Russell needed each other in order to effect a compromise that would keep the peace, permit a degree of latitude for the Iroquois, provide a future method of meeting Six Nations' material needs, maintain provincial security, and preserve dignity on both sides, allowing both men to retain their positions.

Russell's position was particularly delicate. The administrator understood that his disobedience to Portland's instructions might mean his dismissal, and as Russell anticipated, the Home Secretary was not pleased with Russell's actions. In utter disbelief

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[59] Anthropologist William Fenton makes an important point in explaining that Iroquois people "distinguished 'talk in the bushes' when an issue might be explored or an agenda formulated from more formal meetings or conferences preliminary to a treaty." This sheds light on Brant's apparent inconsistencies during these public and private talks at York in the summer of 1797. See Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change in the Process of Iroquois Treaty Making," in The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy, ed. Francis Jennings, et. al. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 27.

that Russell would permit "Brant, or any other Chief or Body of Indians, to interfere with the...Government of His Majesty's Province," Portland wote that he considered this

> a most dangerous tendency, and the necessity of giving way to it, [and] allowing such necessity to have existed, can only have arisen from not pursuing a proper line of conduct towards the Indians, who, in consequence of the assistance they derive, and can only derive from the King's bounty, should be given explicitly to understand, that they owe every return, which can be expected from the warmest gratitude, and the most unshaken fidelity.[60]

Portland saw no reason why the British should have to compromise with Natives who derived their material support from the King. The Home Secretary could only conclude that if the Indians had a mistaken understanding of this relationship, then it meant that Russell had not properly implemented sound Indian policy.

Russell knew better. Portland did not grasp the dangerous political climate in Upper Canada, and he did not seem to have a full understanding of just how weak the British position in the province was at the time. Most importantly, because the Duke believed that British leaders in Canada could act from a position of complete hegemony, he saw no reason to compromise, and he assumed that mandates could be unilaterally imposed on Native people, even though the Indians still considered themselves sovereign. But Russell realized that if he handled the affair in this manner, he might ignite the rebellion that everyone hoped to avoid. The beleaguered President wrote to Governor General Robert Prescott, explaining this

> dangerous dilemma to which I am reduced: Disobedience of His Majesty's Commands or an Indian War, and tho' I should choose the former, I am not certain I shall escape the latter, for it appears...from the offence Joseph Brant has

[60] Portland to Russell, 4 November 1797, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 3; P.R.O., CO 42, 321, 345-49.

> taken without cause that he meant to pick a German quarrel with us and only seeks a feasible excuse for joining the French should they invade this Province.[61]

Clearly, Russell and the British government in Canada did not have the level of dominance and control within the upper province that Portland imagined from his vantage point in London.

Portland's view of Indian gifts also differed sharply from that of the Six Nations. While Portland considered the "King's bounty" a means of pacifying the Natives and securing their future cooperation, Brant and the Six Nations always regarded British gifts as compensation for past services, and they never felt that by receiving the King's presents and provisions they had forfeited their independence. By accepting the gifts as compensation for previous services rendered, the Iroquois understood the transfer of goods as a solemn gesture symbolizing British faithfulness and indicating that the bond of friendship, or the Covenant Chain, between the British and the Six Nations could never be broken. Portland's narrow understanding of Indian affairs signaled further conflict with the Grand River community.

Continuing Struggles at the Grand River, 1797-1801

The continued existence of these diametrically opposed views regarding the legal status of the Indians in Upper Canada meant that Russell's compromise on the land issue produced a temporary truce only, since it failed to address the real issue of Native sovereignty. This chapter subsection focuses on some of the other issues at the Grand River, in which, as in the case of the land crisis, Brant and the Six Nations continued to strive for greater autonomy. Among these issues were the Six Nations' bid for a resident

[61] Russell to Prescott, 17 July 1797, Toronto Public Library, L 18, Russell Papers, Letterbook of Correspondence with Governor General Robert Prescott, 1796-1799.

clergyman, their intertribal dealings with the Mississaugas, a French nobleman's attempt to settle on a land grant from the Mississaugas, and Brant's overtures to the United States government and to tribes dwelling within America's borders.

By the mid-summer of 1797, Lieutenant Governor Russell's failure to resolve the land grant issue was becoming increasingly evident, and Brant, frustrated but resolute, sought new ways to strengthen his position, in hopes of one day arguing his case to the King that his people should receive a land patent bearing a title in fee simple. Meanwhile, Portland, troubled by Brant's machinations, sought for the rest of Russell's administration and beyond to check at every turn Brant's seemingly expanding power. The Duke's main fear was that the Mohawk sachem, having extorted a compromise from Russell, would subsequently be encouraged to seek to expand Native power even further. Consequently, Portland wanted leaders in Canada to keep the indigenous nations of the upper province and the Great Lakes divided and dependent upon the British, thereby undermining all of Brant's endeavors. As the Home Secretary put it in a letter to Russell, it was necessary to give

> strict attention to every possible means of preventing connections or confederations from taking place between the several Nations, and…the rendering them dependent on your Government, and keeping them as separate and distinct as possible from each other, should be laid down by you as a system.[62]

Indeed, Portland's instructions marked a sharp departure from the policy that Simcoe had pursued merely two and three years earlier, when the former Lieutenant Governor attempted to encourage a vast confederacy that would theoretically serve as a buffer to protect Upper Canada from American expansion. The difference between 1797 and 1795 was that the Americans no longer posed a threat, and, ironically, Portland and Russell

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[62] Portland to Russell, 4 November 1797, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 3.

now believed that the Indians themselves presented the real danger to the internal peace and security of Upper Canada.

Realizing that Portland had ample reason to remove him from his post should the Duke wish to do so, Russell consciously strove to comply with every aspect of the Home Secretary's instructions for the remainder of his administration. Consequently, Russell now became more active than ever in attempting to curb Brant's power and influence, and he carefully monitored all matters pertaining to the Grand River. Early in 1798, less than a year after the heated land disputes of the previous summer, another issue arose which brought Russell's intervention. Towards the end of 1797 Brant had petitioned Superintendent John Johnson, requesting a permanent resident clergyman of the Anglican faith to serve the Six Nations on the Grand River.[63] The Indians there had not known the benefits of a resident minister since the Reverend John Stuart departed in 1789, and Brant grew concerned regarding the future spiritual well being of his people.[64] The Mohawk leader had already selected a potential candidate, Davenport Phelps, a former lawyer who had studied for the ministry and now sought ordination.

Like all of the other issues surrounding the Grand River at the time, the subject of procuring a resident clergyman soon became linked to the question of the Six Nations' fidelity. From the start, authorities in Canada expressed concern, not so much over Phelps's spiritual qualifications, but regarding his political sympathies. The Bishop of Quebec, one Jacob Mountain, emphasized the important role of an Anglican clergyman at the Grand River, "not only in…Religious and Moral" affairs, "but [also] in a political

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[63] Kelsay, 546-47; For Brant's initial request, see Brant to Johnson, 15 December 1797, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 238-39.

point of view."[65] Russell questioned the loyalty of Phelps, who had once served as an officer in an American militia and who, as an attorney in Upper Canada, had purportedly helped rally a group of seditious farmers in a march on a provincial courthouse in support of a man accused of treason. The administrator said he considered it his "duty to guard against the introduction of Persons to situations of that nature (wherein they may do mischief) whose attachment to the British Constitution, I have the slightest cause to suspect."[66] Yet Russell also noted "that the placing of a discreet & respectable Clergyman of the Church of England among the five [i.e. Six] Nations would be a most usefull [sic] measure in every point of view, whether religious, moral, or Political."[67] Portland later agreed, arguing that the Grand River Indians should have a "resident Clergyman.... But...that the choice should be entirely independent of them, and that they and the Clergyman should know and feel, that they neither have been, nor ever will be, consulted on the subject."[68]

Both Russell and the Bishop were probably aware of the role the American missionary Samuel Kirkland had played in splintering the Iroquois Confederacy by turning the Oneidas and Tuscaroras against the British in the Revolution. Kirkland not only helped to bring about the extinguishment of the League's Council Fire at Onondaga in 1777, but he also succeeded in undermining the fabric of British-Iroquois relations.

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[64] John Wolfe Lydekker, The Faithful Mohawks (New York: The Macmillan Co.; and Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 186-87.

[65] Bishop of Quebec to Russell, 11 January 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 63.

[66] Russell to Quebec, confidential, 22 February 1798, ibid., 99.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Portland to Russell, 24 January 1799, P.R.O., CO 42, 324, 3-4.

Even if by chance both Russell and the Bishop of Quebec had forgotten about Kirkland's influence in drawing the Indians away from the British, John Johnson certainly would have remembered these difficulties between his late father and the politically biased missionary.[69] The Bishop of Quebec denied Brant's request to ordain Phelps, arguing that no person is "fit to be their [the Indians'] Spiritual instructor who would be disposed to unsettle their notions of loyalty & obedience & weaken their attachment to the Governments under which it is their happiness to live."[70]

To no avail Brant, himself a staunch Anglican, complained to Russell, noting Phelps's purported "Testimonials of his Moral Character and Loyalty." Brant further reminded Russell of the assistance that the Archbishop of Canterbury had promised to him in the King's presence twelve years earlier in London.[71] The Mohawk naturally assumed that the provincial leaders would want the Six Nations to have a resident minister, since they had encouraged the teachings of Anglicanism among his people for nearly a century. Despite these efforts, a suitable and willing candidate never materialized, and the Grand River never acquired a resident minister during this period.[72] Embittered, the Mohawk chief threatened to invite "a Romish Priest" to settle at the

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[69] For a background of this schism, see Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution, 42-47.

[70] Quebec to Russell, Private, 12 June 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 180.

[71] Brant to Russell, 8 May 1798, ibid., 148; P.R.O., CO 42, 322, 155.

[72] Instead, the Bishop of Quebec petitioned the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.) for an augmentation of Reverend Robert Addison's salary, and the Bishop directed him to make frequent itinerant visits to the Grand River. Addison served a parish in Newark, near Niagara, and after he accepted the additional ministry, he managed to travel to the Grand River four times per year. In essence, this arrangement hardly differed from what the Six Nations at the Grand River had experienced for more than a decade, and it did not meet the demand for a resident clergyman. See Quebec to Russell, 12 June 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, 180-81, and Reverend John Stuart's Report to the S.P.G., 11 October 1798, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 241.

Grand River.[73] The decision to override Brant's request in this matter was another blow to the Six Nations' quest for autonomy and, more specifically, to the chief's authority.

Preventing Phelps's appointment was actually a single measure in a much larger secret policy through which British authorities worked to reduce Brant's power so gradually that he and his supporters would not be alienated from loyalty to the Crown. Robert Liston, British emissary to the United States, believed that "every movement on the part of Brant...must naturally give rise to suspicion." Considering the "delicate nature" of "the crisis" of Six Nations' dissatisfaction in the face of a potential French invasion of Upper Canada, Liston thought it best "to temporize" with Brant, believing that the British should "damp his [Brant's] hopes by degrees, [rather] than at once to extinguish them."[74] Portland concurred, and the Duke advised Russell to "temporize with Brant, even if you have reason for thinking unfavorably of his Conduct."[75]

Accordingly, Russell clandestinely took measures to reduce the chief's influence. Portland feared the possibility of Brant "endeavouring to form a Combination of Indians...adverse to His Majesty's Interests," and he therefore ordered Russell to follow "the general line of Policy" that he had previously given to the administrator "in order to defeat such Combinations."[76] In making these remarks, Portland referred to his instructions to Russell from the previous November, when he instructed the Lieutenant Governor to keep the Indians "as separate and distinct as possible," in order to prevent

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[73] Reverend Robert Addison's Report to the S.P.G., 29 December 1799, Johnston, ibid., 241-42.

[74] Liston to Lord Grenville, 4 April 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 168.

[75] Portland to Russell, most secret, 7 June 1798, ibid., 167; P.R.O., CO 42, 322, 100-02.

[76] Ibid.

"connections or confederations."[77] Russell ordered agent William Claus at Fort George (near Niagara) "to do everything in his power (without exposing the object of this Policy to Suspicion) to foment any existing Jealousy between the Chippewas [i.e. Mississaugas] & the Six Nations; and to prevent as far as possible any Junction or good understanding between those two Tribes."[78] In addition to giving Claus these instructions, Russell had appointed a new agent, James Givens, whom he ordered to oversee Mississauga affairs, hoping to remove this tribe from Brant's influence.[79] Since the Mississaugas had grown accustomed to participating at the Six Nations' Grand River Council Fire and receiving their gifts from the British there, Russell feared this growing intertribal connection. Thus the administrator attempted to put a halt to this growing fraternization by ordering Givens to move the Mississaugas' council fire to the mouth of the River Credit, away from the

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[77] Portland to Russell, 4 November 1797, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 3. In a letter two months earlier Portland had already given Russell virtually the same instructions. See Portland to Russell, 11 September 1797, ibid., I: 277-78; P.R.O., CO 42, 321, 193-95.

[78] Russell to Portland, 21 March 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 122; The Mississaugas are actually a branch of Chippewas (or Ojibwas) who lived in the southern portion Upper Canada, mostly along the northern shore of Lake Ontario. When Russell used the expression "Chippewas" he is most likely using this interchangeably with "Mississaugas," because later in the letter the President referred to them as "the Chippewas who come from the Vicinage of Lake Simcoe," who were actually Mississaugas. Moreover, Russell also used the expression "Mississaugas" at another place in the document. British leaders in Canada also used the names interchangeably on other occasions. See Donald B. Smith, "Who are the Mississauga?," Ontario History 67(4) (December 1975): 211, 221-22. Despite the small Mississauga population, the British respected the tribe's capacity for war, knowing that the Mississauga would probably manage to procure the assistance of their more numerous Ojibwa cousins to the North and West. See Peter S. Schmalz, The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario (Toronto, Buffalo, & London: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 104.

[79] For Givens' appointment, see Russell to Givens, 25 June 1797, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, I: 231-32.

Grand River and nearer to Givens's agency at York.[80] From the new site the Mississaugas would receive their annual presents directly from the British.[81]

The Mississaugas realized that it was in their best interests to maintain a close connection with Brant and the Grand River community at the time. When compared to the Six Nations, the Mississaugas were poorer and more migratory, dependent primarily on seasonal hunting, gathering, and fishing.[82] By contrast, the Six Nations were more sedentary, dwelling in permanent villages and practicing a more advanced form of horticulture than most indigenous peoples. The Iroquois in Upper Canada were also more numerous than the Mississaugas, who had consisted of barely 1,000 individuals in 1790, a small number that continued to diminish as white settlers moved into the region north of Lake Erie.[83] Moreover, the Six Nations had far more experience in dealing with the British Empire, and Euro-American leaders generally respected them more than they did the Mississaugas.[84] Finally, the Mississaugas had been pressured to cede most of their lands in the southern portion of the upper province in the final quarter of the

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[80] Russell to Portland, 21 March 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 122. The old city of York was later renamed Toronto.

[81] The location of the new Mississauga council fire is the site of the present-day city of Mississauga, Ontario, situated on the northwest end of Lake Ontario.

[82] E. S. Rogers, "Southeastern Ojibwa," in Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast, Vol. 15, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 760-64.

[83] Sir John Johnson, Return of the Mississaugas, 23 September 1787, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 15, 197; Peter S. Schmalz, The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario (Toronto, Buffalo, & London: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 104-05.

[84] Dean R. Snow, The Iroquois (Malden, MA & Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 141-57; Sally M. Weaver, "Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario," Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast, Vol. 15, ed. Trigger, 525-27; Elisabeth Tooker, "The League of the Iroquois: Its History, Politics, and Ritual," in ibid., 432-37.

eighteenth century, giving them stronger incentive to enlist the support of the Six Nations in an effort to retain a remnant of territory.[85]

Russell anticipated some difficulty in separating the Mississaugas from the Six Nations. At the time, relations between those groups were very amiable, and, more importantly, the Mississaugas had attempted to place themselves under the direction and leadership of Joseph Brant.[86] Russell therefore knew he would have to contend with the Mississaugas' protests when he attempted to divide the indigenous nations in his province. Relations between the British and Mississaugas had still not fully recovered after a tragic incident that had occurred late in the summer of 1796, when, as a result of a spontaneous misunderstanding, Wabakenin, the principal Mississauga leader, lost his life in a drunken scuffle with a British soldier.[87] For the Mississaugas, the loss of a competent leader strained relations with the British and led them to turn to Brant, whom they appointed "the sole guardian of our Nation, and as our Agent....[and] Attorney for us," giving Brant control over all of their affairs and dealings with whites. In their speech to Brant, the Mississauga chiefs also reaffirmed "the connection between our Nations, which we hope you have not forgot."[88]

Although Brant had not orchestrated this arrangement, his willingness to accept leadership over the Mississaugas was precisely what the British had feared. Just as Brant

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[85] For British-Mississauga relations and the land cessions during this period, see Schmalz, 102-10, 120-30; Robert J. Surtees, Indian Land Surrenders in Ontario, 1763-1867 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Canada, 1984), 13-60.

[86] Russell to Portland, 21 March 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 122.

[87] Kelsay, 568-69. A group of Mississaugas issued a deposition regarding the event to officers near Fort George, 11 September 1796, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 249, 369-70.

[88] Speech of the Mississauga Chiefs at the Mohawk Village on the Grand River, 13 April 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 186.

had always desired, the new position made him the principal Native leader and sole liaison between the British and the Indians in Upper Canada. Furthermore, this could potentially have given Brant significant influence with the bulk of the Ojibwas and Ottawas of the Great Lakes. Quite simply, such developments threatened a British policy of acting unilaterally in Indian affairs. Any growth of Brant's influence with the majority of Indians in Upper and Lower Canada at a time when the upper province remained weak raised the specter of Brant and the Six Nations gaining the necessary diplomatic leverage to compel the British government to meet their demands. Lieutenant Governor Russell, alarmed by these possibilities, noted to Governor General Prescott that Brant's activity among the Mississaugas "Militates most strongly against the Policy which the Duke of Portland recommends."[89]

Just as Simcoe and McKee five years earlier had prevented Brant from gaining the ascendancy over the Western Confederacy, thereby blocking the chief's attempts to negotiate a peace between the Confederacy and the Americans at the time, Russell and the officers in the Indian Department now took all necessary measures to bar Brant from Mississauga affairs. As in 1793, British intervention divided the Indians by overcoming Brant's influence, but this time, the British intentionally hoped to foster the division. Brant suspected the British motives in appointing Givens and moving the Mississauga council fire, and in a letter to Russell the chief claimed that the new policy had made the Mississaugas "apprehensive" and "uneasy," and "they think it done with an intent to disunite us."[90]

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[89] Russell to Prescott, Secret and Confidential, 15 June 1798, ibid.

[90] Brant to Russell, 5 November 1798, ibid., 307.

In the ensuing council the Mississauga chiefs voiced their concerns and complaints regarding the new policy, adding that they had registered these complaints with Brant.[91] After the Mississauga leaders mentioned Brant, Claus "immediately answered," trying to put their minds at ease regarding their concerns; without mentioning Brant's name, he implicitly denounced the Mohawk leader, claiming that he (Claus) could not "but believe that you have been urged to say what you have now spoke, and that it does not come from yourselves." The agent also wanted to use this opportunity to foster the division that Portland and Russell had ordered, so he ended the council, exclaiming that whoever had told them these things "were bad people."[92] The Mississaugas did not seem convinced, mostly because Claus never gave them a satisfactory explanation of why they were compelled to move their council fire. Instead, the agent twice told them that the only reason for the change was that "the Government looked upon it to be for their good."[93]

The removal of the Mississaugas' council fire to the mouth of the Credit River did not end the collaboration between Brant and the Mississaugas. The latter continued to seek the Mohawk's advice in the wake of Wabakenin's death (1796), a time when the leaders in Canada were pressuring them to make further cessions. Brant complied with the Mississaugas' wishes, continuing to advise them on land matters, further irritating Russell, Claus, and other British authorities. Shortly after Russell had ordered the removal of the Mississaugas' council fire, Brant invited all of the Mississaugas to visit the Six Nations on the Grand River, where they renewed their friendship in May 1798.

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[91] Council between the Mississaugas and Claus at the head of Lake Ontario, 3 November 1798, ibid., 306.

[92] Ibid.

The Mohawk leader viewed himself as the "guardian to their lands," claiming that he assumed this role in order to fulfill a promise he had made to the late Wabakenin and his people.[94]

By 1799 the Mississaugas had grown very concerned over the government's intentions. According to Brant, the Mississaugas had come to believe that the government wanted all of their lands and was even willing to terminate their long-enduring friendship in order "to deprive them of it [i.e. their lands] wantonly." Brant wrote William Claus that he would advise the Mississaugas to maintain faith in the British, but the chief added a complaint of his own. He could not understand why his actions should spark "[t]he jealousy of Government," when he [Brant] had, as he put it, always sought to "promote the Welfare of the Country" and its "attachment to Government." If British-Indian relations had become strained, therefore, this was in Brant's view due to the fact that the British "in Several instances…seem[ed] to put aside the Covenant Chain."[95]

The frustrated Mohawk also complained to Claus that the British method of dealing with the Indians had come to mirror that practiced by the American government, and it appeared to him that the Crown would henceforth always exercise its "preemptive right" in acquiring Native lands. The government might pay lip service to the Indians' supposed status as "free and Independent people," but the words meant nothing as long as the government did not allow them sole and full authority over their lands, including the right to dispense with them as they so chose. By denying the Indians the right "to Sell or

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[93] Ibid., 305-06.

[94] Brant to Claus, 4 June 1798, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 251, 113.

give as they please," the government would eventually "take the Whole...at as low a rate as possible." Near the end of his indictment, Brant expressed surprise and shame "at this conduct of our friends, so nearly resembling the Yankies[sic.]."[96] Thus, in airing his grievances, Brant had come full circle back to his perennial concern. In a letter that had begun as a defense of his role as protector of Mississauga interests, Brant managed to end with an assertion of the Natives' right to sell lands freely, and of his people's absolute sovereignty over the Grand River lands.

In response to these rising tensions, British authorities temporarily ceased their attempts to acquire additional Mississauga lands. Rather than bluntly inform Brant that he could not serve as agent and protector of the Mississaugas, Governor General Prescott instead thought it "highly expedient" for Russell "not to attempt to enter into any Treaty whatever with the Messissagnas" for awhile. Although he still planned to appropriate more Mississauga territory at the time, Russell backed off from immediately pursuing further negotiations. Russell and Prescott hoped to discredit Brant in the eyes of the Mississaugas, demonstrating to them that their lands were secure.[97] The Duke of Portland concurred, advising Russell "not to shew any...eagerness" regarding that tribe's lands "until the Messessaugues are impressed with a due sense of the obligations they are under to His Majesty for the Presents they...receive." Portland anticipated "that in due time an opportunity will arise of purchasing" the Mississauga lands.[98]

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[95] Ibid., 113-14.

[96] Ibid., 114-15.

[97] Prescott to Russell, 2 August 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, II: 227. Also see Prescott to Portland, 22 August 1798, ibid., 247.

[98] Portland to Russell, 5 November 1798, ibid., 300; P.R.O., CO 42, 322, 143.

In spite of Portland's instructions to wait for a better opportunity to purchase additional Mississauga lands, the matter could not be so easily set aside. A cadre of Mississauga chiefs, with Brant as their spokesman and advisor, had already begun plans to complete a cession, only this time one supposedly favorable to Indian interests and one in which they were demanding exorbitant terms. Years earlier, Simcoe had considered a land grant to an exiled French nobleman, Count Joseph de Puisaye, who had supported the British in their struggle against Revolutionary France. Like so many of the French *noblesse émigré*, de Puisaye and his people did not expect to return to their homeland any time soon, and the Frenchman had already begun discussions with Brant and the Mississaugas to acquire a substantial tract of land in Upper Canada. Therefore, in April 1799, Brant gave Russell a touching proposal, arguing "it was in the Cause of Loyalty this Nobleman and his unfortunate followers had suffered," and since the Six Nations "had suffered in the same Cause," the Mississaugas were now willing to part with a five-mile strip of choice lake-front terrain at the northwest end of Lake Ontario.[99] The Mississauga chiefs, at Brant's urging, hoped to compel the British to pay the Indians' requested price of one shilling, three pence per acre, Halifax currency,[100] for the entire 69,120 acres.[101] Thus, in spite of his warnings to the Mississaugas regarding the British desire to expropriate their lands, Brant pushed forward with the proposal, hoping this time to control the negotiations and manipulate them to the Indians' advantage.

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[99] Brant to Russell, 10 April 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 168.

[100] According to Brant's best biographer, Isabel Thompson Kelsay, this was the equivalent of three shillings four pence sterling per acre. Hence, Halifax currency was worth nearly three times the value of Britain's standard currency! See Kelsay, 590.

[101] Brant to Johnson, 10 May 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 195.

Russell sensed Brant's intentions, and he attempted to circumvent the chief's plan by informing the Mohawk that if the British engaged in further negotiations for Mississauga lands, these would be handled through the agency of Indian Superintendent John Johnson. Even if the Mississaugas had earmarked the land for the Count de Puisaye, the government reserved the right to alter or deny this agreement. The governor also pointed out that it was Brant and not the British in this case who had pushed for dispossessing the Mississaugas of their land.[102] In truth, however, Russell simply wished to remind Brant of protocol, realizing that the proposed transaction would not occur, and that John Johnson's services would therefore be unnecessary in this instance. The administrator and his Executive Council thought the Mississauga proposal absurd, considering it "Injurious to His Majesty's Interest & consequently improper to [be] acceded to, not to mention the extreme Indecency of their [the Mississaugas'] presuming to shackle their cessions to the King by any condition whatsoever."[103] Even if the government had wanted to, it could not have paid an amount close to what Brant and the Mississaugas demanded, particularly at a time when the Indian budget had already been drastically slashed and when the war with France continued to drain the home government's treasury. Russell explained the abortive agreement to the disappointed Count de Puisaye, emphasizing the impropriety of the Mississaugas' "Innovations derogatory from the King['']s dignity," and the administrator found it ironic "[t]hat Indians being ever inclined to express strong attachments to old usages, ought assuredly

[102] Russell to Brant, 25 April 1799, ibid., 183.

[103] Russell to Prescott, 26 May 1799, ibid., 209. Also see, Russell to Portland, 26 May 1799, ibid., 205-06.

[to] be the last in attempting thus to introduce new ways in their Transactions with us."[104] For the time being then, the Count and his followers would remain homeless, and the British still refused to recognize Brant as a spokesperson for the Mississaugas.

Russell did not even bother to inform Brant of the Executive Council's decision regarding the Mississauga lands. From the British perspective, Brant's repeated attempts to challenge the British government seemed to substantiate Portland's warnings regarding the hazards of the government's attempts to compromise with Indians. They also demonstrated the apparent wisdom behind the Home Secretary's cautioning against the dangers of permitting the existence of intertribal confederacies and coalitions during this period of peace with the Americans. When Brant finally inquired a few weeks later, the Lieutenant Governor curtly shot back a response the same day that he received Brant's letter, exclaiming that "it was the Unanimous opinion of the Board that this offer ought not to be accepted because it is contrary to past Usages with Indian Nations who have not before (that we have heard of) fettered their cessions of land to the King with any *Conditions* [as italicized in Cruikshank's edition] whatsoever."[105] Moreover, as Russell had done in his correspondence with Brant a month and a half earlier, he again insisted that John Johnson would handle the government's future dealings with the Mississaugas.

In his struggles against British leaders in Upper Canada Brant had lost, and he knew it. Throughout years of striving for the diplomatic leverage that could one day guarantee his people their sovereignty, he found himself checkmated at every turn. Beginning with Alexander McKee's undermining of his influence and authority among

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[104] Russell to Count de Puisaye, 26 May 1799 & 11 June 1799, ibid., 211.

[105] Russell to Brant, 10 June 1799, ibid., 226.

the Western Confederacy at the Miami Rapids in 1793, continuing with the further humiliation Brant experienced when Simcoe, Russell, Dorchester, Portland, Liston, and Prescott all worked to deny him and his people a full title in fee simple to their lands, and after leaders in Canada and at Whitehall combined to deny Brant a resident clergyman at the Grand River, Brant was finally thwarted in his attempts to serve as the Mississaugas' agent, in spite of that nation's request. After this string of defeats and humiliations, Brant could bear it no longer. Yet when the Mohawk's anger boiled over, Russell merely ascribed the disgruntled chief's behavior to either a case of too much "liquor or his extreme Impatience of Control."[106]

Although the crestfallen Mohawk for the time being refused to fraternize any further with the leaders in Upper Canada, he decided to make a last-ditch attempt to sway Prescott's opinion. Brant again stated his grievances, complaining not only of matters pertaining to the Mississauga lands but the Grand River case as well. The chief got nowhere with Prescott, who told him that he would have to petition Russell on these matters. Additionally, Prescott attempted to do Russell a favor by defusing any of Brant's remaining hopes and explaining,

> that whenever any Lands were wanted from Indians by the Government, they would be consulted respecting them according to ancient Customs, and they would be purchased from them in the manner prescribed by the Established Regulations and in no other way.[107]

The Governor General's remarks dealt Brant a crushing blow, not only because the chief had appealed to the highest authority in all of Canada, but because Prescott's words

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[106] Russell to Prescott, 22 June 1799, Toronto Public Library, L18, Russell Papers, Letterbook of Correspondence with Prescott, 1796-1799.

[107] Prescott to Russell, 18 July 1799, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 278.

presumed Native subservience to the British, precisely what Brant had striven to overcome ever since his people's migration to Canada.

Brant returned from his visit with Prescott no less perturbed and resentful than before. By December of 1800 he even seriously entertained the notion of resettling his people within the boundaries of the United States. Brant wrote a "secret and confidential" letter to an American friend, Thomas Morris, asking to make "a purchase of the Western Indians" from within the jurisdiction of the United States in order to perhaps "move there" where "we would desire to be under the protection" of that government.[108] In this letter Brant revealed that he had not given up on his dreams of an autonomous status for his people, and he even hinted at the possibility of gaining an authoritative role over the western tribes within the United States.

In the summer of 1801, barely six months after his letter to Morris, Brant addressed some of the western Indians within the boundaries of the United States, namely the Ojibwas, Ottawas, and Potawatomis living near Detroit. In possibly his most inflammatory public speech ever, Brant sharply denounced the British while attempting to rally the Three Fires under his leadership. He informed the Three Fires' leaders that they "have been misled by the advices [sic] of your [British] Father and the mistaken Ideas of the Shawanies & Wyandotts." The Mohawk leader included these latter two tribes in his indictment against the British because of their continued close ties to the

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[108] Brant to Thomas Morris, 26 December 1800, quoted in William L. Stone, Life of Joseph Brant – Thayendanegea, 2 Vols. (New York: Alexander V. Blake, 1838; reprint, Harrison, NY: Harbor Hill Books, 1969), II: 405. Brant's biographer Isabel Thompson Kelsay argues that the chief had no intention of moving from the Grand River, but that he merely wanted to turn a profit from this American land scheme. Yet, Kelsay does not offer any better explanation indicating why Brant would not have been sincere in stating his desire to move. See Kelsay, 620-21. By this time in his career Brant had come to the end of his patience with the British, and his subsequent speech to the western Indians at Detroit in the summer of 1801 demonstrates his sincerity.

latter at Amherstburg and Brownstown, respectively. Using intentional sarcasm directed at the Shawnees and Wyandots, Brant informed the Three Fires that he would not address those two tribes because "they consider themselves wise enough to guide their own conduct." In truth, the chief still smarted from the rebuff he had received from those nations when they had heeded Alexander McKee's advice in council at the Foot of the Miami Rapids eight years earlier. At that time McKee had urged them not to compromise with the American peace commissioners and to insist upon the Ohio River as a permanent boundary between the Native Confederacy and the United States. The Shawnees and Wyandots had not only opposed Brant's proposal, but they also managed to undermine the leader's influence among the majority of the Confederacy at that time. Now the angry Mohawk reminded the Three Fires' headmen that "[h]ad you listened to my advice [at the Rapids in 1793] instead of attending to that of the English Shawanies[,] the United States would have had their limits more circumscribed, and you would not have lost your country."

Brant did not stop there, choosing to further vent his grievances against the British, particularly the leaders in Canada. He informed the Three Fires that they could only blame themselves for "listening to the foolish advice of those petty Officers at the different Posts who call themselves your Father." At this point Brant exempted the King from his harangue against the British, assuring his Indian audience "that the King has no confidence in them [the leaders in Canada]; they are unexperienced [sic] and do not deserve attention and the British Government altogether has shewn great ingratitude to those [Indian allies] who have rendered it the greatest services."[109] Finally, Brant boldly

[109] Brant's speech at Detroit, Summer, 1801 (exact date unknown), CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 254, 18.

claimed that "I am a greater Man than them all, the Commander in Chief not excepted," and "I myself have done more for that [British] Government than any of those whom you call Father."[110] This speech represented a turning point in Brant's diplomacy. Having grown weary of dealing with leaders in Canada, he now sought external support, whether that be from the United States government, the tribes dwelling on the American side of the border, or from the British Monarch directly.

Nevertheless, the chief still wished to form a coalition of tribes that could coerce the Euro-American powers to recognize an autonomous Native state. In this respect, Brant considered his plight similar to these Indian nations that he addressed on the American side of the border and therefore attempted to identify with them. He believed himself dispossessed of his land by the British authorities, in spite of the Haldimand Grant and his position as Grand River agent and Captain in the Indian Department. Now he hoped to form a new confederacy and proposed to the Three Fires to meet him in council at Buffalo Creek with the Iroquois who lived on the American side of the boundary.[111] Nothing appears to have come of this invitation, nor did the American government respond to Brant's overtures via Morris to establish a new home for his people in American territory. Consequently, after 1801 the Six Nations' leader apparently abandoned his American scheme, and he resolved to formulate a strategy of ultimately presenting his Grand River case to friends and government leaders in London.

Brant still retained a kernel of faith in the home government. Wanting to believe that Russell and Prescott had always acted on their own, the Mohawk remained unaware

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[110] Ibid., 19.

[111] Ibid., 19-20.

of the extent that leaders in Canada had taken their orders from Whitehall. The Duke of Portland constantly sought ways to reduce the chief's influence, and when Portland regularly laid Russell's letters before the King, there is no evidence that George III, though having met Brant personally, ever intervened on the chief's behalf. Instead, the home government grew more confident in its dealings with Brant as the threat of a French invasion dissipated. Portland and other British leaders at Whitehall knew that the French would have much difficulty in transporting an army to North America. Britain's continued naval supremacy drastically limited French strategy after the string of decisive British victories at Ushant, Camperdown, Cape St. Vincent, and the Nile. As a result, in December 1798 Portland denied Prescott the military reinforcements that the latter had requested, and from Philadelphia British envoy Robert Liston also happily informed Russell of the reduced threat to Canada, stating that "[n]othing can be effected there [in Canada] against His Majesty's Government without external assistance, and the late destruction of the French Squadron by Admiral Nelson...will probably damp the ardour of the enemy for distant expeditions."[112] The predictions of Liston and Portland proved prophetic, and by 1800 Britain's naval supremacy had virtually ended France's hopes for a restored North American empire.

The fortunes of war had also made the leaders in Canada more bold in matters pertaining to Indian affairs. The passing of the French threat meant an end to any diplomatic leverage that Brant had once enjoyed in his efforts to intimidate Upper Canada's leaders. Such conditions meant that provincial leaders now had no reason to give in to the chief's demands, as Russell had done in 1797. In 1800, for example, Peter

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[112] Portland to Prescott, 6 December 1798, Cruikshank & Hunter, Russell Correspondence, III: 23; Liston to Russell, 1 December 1798, ibid., 1.

Hunter, Russell's successor as Lieutenant Governor of the upper province, used less tact than his predecessors when he "told [Brant] that I would not permit him to act as an Agent for the Mississagaus."[113] Then in September 1801, shortly after the Mohawk's inflammatory speech at Detroit, Brant received a letter from his longtime friend and nephew by marriage, Sir John Johnson. In a manner simultaneously caring and stern, the Superintendent informed Brant that the government could not permit him to take on the role he sought, whether with the Mississaugas or any other nation(s). Johnson instructed him

> to give up all concern in their [the Mississaugas'] affairs, and desist from assembling the different nations in distant parts of the country, and only attend to the business of your settlement, except when called upon by government to do otherwise; as it gives opening to the world to put unfavorable constructions on your conduct, which must tend to lessen your consequence in the opinion of those at the head of affairs; and I much fear may do you serious injury.[114]

Deeply hurt by Johnson's words, Brant interpreted this language as a veiled threat. Indeed, Johnson probably would not have sent such a letter four or five years earlier, during a time when provincial security seemed at risk due to rumored invasions and strained relations existed between Britain and the United States. In his response, Brant vehemently defended himself and his loyalty, and he complained of the government's "change of politics," arguing that there was once a time when his efforts at uniting the Indians "formerly gave satisfaction," but this "has now quite a different effect."[115] The frustrated chief wrote two letters to Johnson in such a vein, but neither

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[113] Hunter to Portland, 8 March 1800, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 325, 111.

[114] Johnson to Brant, 1 September 1801, quoted in Stone, II: 406. Also see, Kelsay, 625.

[115] Brant to Johnson, November 1801, quoted in Stone, II: 407-09.

drew a response. Having endured war, dispossession, and a forced migration from the Mohawk Valley, this friendship, after nearly fifty years, was over.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, little had changed at the Grand River Reserve since the Six Nations' refugees had moved there in 1784. Apart from Russell's compromise in recognizing some of Brant's land transactions with private buyers in 1797, the British had made virtually no concessions to the Grand River community. Consequently, the struggle for sovereignty would continue, and Brant proved himself both resilient and relentless in this quest. The aging Mohawk never abandoned his dreams, and in the first years of the new century he would look increasingly to his talented protégé, John Norton, and to some old friends in London, hoping to finally obtain for his people what he believed was already theirs.

CHAPTER 5

JOHN NORTON AND THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE AT THE GRAND RIVER, 1801-1812

In the history of the intertribal community at the Grand River, the years between 1801 and 1812 divide into two broad periods. From 1801 until his death in November 1807, Joseph Brant, the Mohawk chieftain, remained the dominant figure in the community. But as will be described in the first section of this chapter, John Norton, a younger leader whose career was promoted by Brant, came to prominence at the Grand River in this period. Together Brant and Norton attempted to defend the rights and future of the residents of the Grand River. Brant's passing inaugurated a new phase of the community's history that will be covered in the second section of this chapter. From 1807 to 1812 Norton became Grand River's most prominent local leader, even though his leadership was challenged by leading British officials in Canada and also by some Native opponents. A volatile period that culminated with another war involving Upper Canada, the years between 1801 and 1812 were a time when the future nature of the Grand River community was debated and its very survival often at stake.

The Emergence of John Norton, 1801-1807

As described in the previous chapter, British leaders in London, other officials in Canada, and the Indian Department's agents had worked in conjunction to thwart Joseph Brant at every turn. After briefly considering the possibility of removing his community to United States territory, Brant had delivered his inflammatory anti-British address to the nations of the Three Fires gathered at Detroit. These attempts to establish a sovereign

Native confederacy outside the boundaries of British territory having proved fruitless, the stymied Mohawk leader continued his efforts to improve his people's condition while remaining at the Grand River.

Realizing the limitations placed upon him, Brant altered his approach in dealing with Canadian and British authorities after 1801. The Mohawk leader no longer corresponded regularly with Claus, Johnson, or any other officials in the Indian Department, nor did he continue to file grievances with the Lieutenant Governor's office after Peter Hunter, who had succeeded Russell, admonished the chief about his efforts to head the Mississaugas and illegally lease Grand River lands.[1] Having a clearer idea of his opposition, he became more reserved in openly discussing matters pertaining to the Grand River, except in formal council. Although he did not abandon the fight to gain a proper land patent for his people at the Grand River, the chief now understood that he could never attain this through the conventional channels of the Indian Department and the office of Upper Canada's Lieutenant Governor. In the meantime Brant focused his attentions on improving the internal conditions at the Six Nations Reserve and on completing the still-outstanding land transactions involving the sales of the six large "Blocks" of land along the Grand River that President Peter Russell and the Executive Council had approved, albeit under duress, in the summer of 1797. If he could confirm some of these sales, Brant believed that this would produce enough income to temporarily alleviate the Six Nations' impoverished condition.

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[1] Kelsay, 619, 624-26.

As an ally in all of these endeavors during the early years of the new century, Brant came to rely heavily on John Norton.[2] Born about 1770, this talented mixed-blood of Cherokee-Scot parentage first met Brant during the 1790s when Norton worked for British trader John Askin in the regions of Detroit and the Maumee Valley.[3] Norton possessed a plethora of abilities; he proved an articulate writer and a fine orator, and he purportedly had mastered English, French, Spanish, and German, in addition to a dozen Native American dialects.[4] While visiting England and Scotland on separate occasions, Norton became acquainted with many significant individuals, including the Duke of Northumberland, the Earl of Moira, the Earl of Camden, Lord Castlereagh, John Owen, George Canning, Sir Walter Scott, William Wilberforce, and other members of the latter's Clapham Sect. Under the direction of Wilberforce and with the support of Owen, who was the Secretary for the British and Foreign Bible Society, Norton translated the Gospel of St. John into the Mohawk language. He later wrote a history of the Iroquois League, adding his account of the League's participation in the War of 1812.[5]

Brant sensed these talents many years before Norton's travels abroad. In 1796, after the conclusion of hostilities in the Maumee Valley and the British withdrawal from

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[2] To date, the best biographical study of Norton is Carl F. Klinck's "Biographical Introduction" (pp. xiii-xcvii) to the Journal of Major John Norton, 1809-1816 that Klinck and James J. Talman edited and published in 1970. Other biographical essays on Norton include: Klinck's "New Light on John Norton," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada IV(IV) (June 1966): 167-77, and J. McE. Murray's "John Norton," Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records XXXVII (1945): 7-16.

[3] John Norton's Speech to the Five Nations at Onondaga, Grand River, 12 February 1807, Norton Letterbook, Newberry Library, Chicago, Ayer Ms 654 (hereafter denoted "Ayer Ms"), 119; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, xxxiv-xxxv; Murray, 9; Klinck, "New Light on John Norton," 173.

[4] Thomas Scott to his brother, Sir Walter Scott, ca. 1815, John Norton Papers, Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario; Kinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, xx.

[5] In 1816, Norton gave and dedicated this volume, along with a journal of his travels to Cherokee country (1809-1810), to his friend, Hugh Percy, second Duke of Northumberland, but due to the Duke's untimely

their occupied posts in American territory, Brant, hoping to utilize Norton's abilities, recommended him for an appointment as an interpreter in the Indian Department, to be employed primarily in matters pertaining to the Grand River.[6] Subsequently, Norton accepted an offer to join the Department and took up residence near the newly constructed Fort George late in 1796. Brant envisioned a much larger role for the new appointee. By this time Brant had already experienced his falling out with Alexander McKee at the Foot of the Rapids, and Lieutenant Governor Simcoe had grown distant in all matters, including the Six Nations' attempts to secure a proper land patent. Therefore the chief anticipated that he could use another ally in the ranks of the Indian Department, and Norton demonstrated strong sympathies for the Native cause. Norton made such an impression on Brant that the latter adopted him as his nephew and made him his personal deputy and messenger while Norton was still serving the Indian Department as an interpreter.[7] By 1799 Brant and other leaders at the Grand River had named Norton as one of their war chiefs, after which Norton resigned his position in the Indian Department lest it cause a conflict of interest with his new role.[8]

Although some of Norton's critics and enemies would later attempt to undermine his authority as an adopted chief, claiming that Norton was an imposter and a usurping white man, by Iroquois standards he met the criteria that empowered him to function as

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death the following year, the manuscript remained unpublished in the Percy family library at Alnwick Castle until its publication in 1970.

[6] Kelsay, 538; Joseph Chew to James Green, Military Secretary, 19 September 1796, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 249, 340.

[7] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, xxxvii; Kelsay, 552. As Deputy for the Six Nations, Norton represented their interests publicly on at least two occasions when Brant sent him to meet with the governors of New York, (John Jay and George Clinton) in 1799 and 1802.

[8] Norton's Speech at Onondaga, Grand River, 12 February 1807, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 119-20.

their chief.[9] According to traditional Iroquois practice, whenever a civil chief died, top matrons of the deceased chief's clan would choose a successor, usually a son, to fill the vacated position.[10] However, men of significant bravery and skill could be named war chiefs, regardless of family or clan status. Therefore Norton, a Mohawk by virtue of his adoption by Joseph Brant, was eligible to be selected as a war chief independent of the clan matrons' selection process for creating civil chiefs. In a statement made in 1805, Norton implied that war chiefs generally possessed more talent and held more influence than civil chiefs, and that only those civil leaders with the best oratorical skills could aspire to the higher honor of becoming a war chief.[11] Perhaps Norton chose to present the distinction this way because of his own war-chief status, but his view was consistent with the great importance war chiefs had in the Six Nations' Grand River society. Initially a group of wartime refugees, the Natives living at the Grand River had always looked to war chiefs to handle their affairs after their removal from New York. Their principal chief, Joseph Brant, had never been named a civil chief, holding all of his authority and influence by virtue of his martial feats and former connections to the Johnsons and by his position as a captain in the Indian Department.[12] Technically both

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[9] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, xxxvii-xxxix, xl-xli.

[10] Snow, 64-65.

[11] See Norton's address at Trinity College, Cambridge, 12 March 1805, quoted in Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, xxxviii.

[12] Kelsay, 38-45, 109; Despite never having formally been selected a civil chief, Brant apparently had become considered a de facto civil chief at the Grand River by the time of his death. His widow Catherine, leading matron of the Mohawk Turtle clan, took the initiative to appoint her son (and Joseph's) as his successor. See Lydekker, 188-89.

Brant and Norton were war chiefs, but at the Grand River they handled all of the affairs that civil chiefs would have managed in the days of a united confederacy in New York.[13]

Though sharing much of Brant's vision for improvements at the Grand River community, Norton had hopes and expectations that transcended those of the elder leader.[14] Brant had at one time imagined an autonomous and self-sustaining Six Nations as independently allied to the British and situated at the helm of a united western Confederacy, a position he believed his people had enjoyed for generations prior to the American rebellion. Now with these hopes virtually dashed and his influence reduced, Brant concentrated his efforts on gaining full control over Iroquois land for the purpose of generating revenue through legal land sales and leases that would slow the growing poverty at the Grand River.

Norton shared this goal, but he also envisioned much more, desiring to wholly transform Native society. His schemes would come to resemble the assimilationist programs ordinarily associated with the Jeffersonian benevolence that the United States practiced during these early years of the nineteenth century in an attempt to transform Native cultures and lifestyles.[15] Although he was circumspect about revealing the details of his acculturationist ideas to the community at the Grand River, the chief made no secret of his plans when he petitioned the support of important leaders in England. In a lengthy letter to his friend John Owen, Secretary for the British and Foreign Bible

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[13] Address of the Six Nations to William Claus, 3 September 1806, York, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 62-63; Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 273-74.

[14] Kelsay, 650.

[15] Francis Paul Prucha, The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians, abr. ed. (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984 & 1986), 48-57; Anthony F. C. Wallace, Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans (Cambridge, MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), chapters 6 & 7.

Society, he described the Six Nations' plight and asked the Secretary and his colleagues to finance nothing less than the transformation of the Grand River community. To begin with, Norton proposed that the Society send "a Missionary or an Instructor, a Farmer, a Blacksmith, a Wheelright, a Spinster and Weaver, a Tanner[,] Saddle & Harness Maker" to the Grand River Reserve.[16] From this cadre of support, he continued,

> a good farm should be immediately formed, sufficiently stocked with Cattle & the means for carrying on its cultivation to perfection; the Young Men might be employed to work on it, & it be formed into a kind of seminary for the Boys & Girls who at the same time should be instructed in letters of those useful branches of industry.[17]

Norton's request also called for "some indulgence [to be] shewn their parents or relations to encourage them to be instructed, a little bribery used for the promotion of religion and industry may perhaps be excused and leave us only to regret that the blindness of the bulk of Mankind sometimes may reduce us to that necessity."[18]

Norton's description of a seminary and educational farm resembled the mission stations that the United States government encouraged among Native peoples at the time. Norton probably knew of the activities of Quakers, Moravians, and Presbyterians who ran government-supported missions among the Iroquois in New York, and among the Cherokees, Shawnees, Delawares, and Muskogees.[19] Furthermore, in attempting to

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[16] Norton to John Owen, 12 August 1806, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 30-31.

[17] Ibid., 31.

[18] Ibid.

[19] See Joel Martin, Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), chapter 4; William G. McGloughlin, Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), chapters 2 & 3; R. David Edmunds, "'A Watchful Safeguard to Our Habitations': Black Hoof and the Loyal Shawnees," in Native Americans and the Early Republic, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 162-99; Anthony F. C. Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, 217-36, 272-77; A. F. C. Wallace, Jefferson and the Indians, 180-205.

convince Owen of the benefits of such programs, the chief even praised "[t]he System of the United States to keep friendly & contented the Indians."[20]

This praise and optimism regarding United States Indian policy probably stemmed from Norton's knowledge of the successful transition toward an agricultural economy made by his father's people, the Cherokees. Just how much the American government was responsible for these developments among the Cherokees is debatable, but this half-Cherokee believed that the government had "sacredly observed and guaranteed the Treaty [of Hopewell –1785]" and with good results.[21] After Norton's visit to Cherokee country, he praised that nation for retaining "the appearance of Independence," and for making vast improvements in agriculture, including both "Cultivation" and "great herds of cattle." He also lauded Cherokee women for their skill in spinning and weaving.[22] The mixed-blood chief hoped to duplicate these successes at the Grand River, but he understood the fragility of developing societies, and he especially feared the external pressure that encroaching European settlements placed on Indian communities attempting to acculturate. Even for the mighty Cherokees, Norton predicted that it would require at least a century of uninterrupted development before "they might become a flourishing, civilized Nation."[23]

Norton's zeal for acculturationist reforms stemmed in large part from his genuine Christian faith. He considered himself an Anglican, as did many Mohawks, but Norton had internalized and personalized his faith to a much greater degree than most Mohawks.

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[20] Norton to Owen, 12 August 1806, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 29.

[21] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 59.

[22] Norton to Robert Barclay, Esq., 16 June 1810, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms., 130-31.

[23] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 60.

Wherever he went, he sought opportunities to worship with other Christians, and he was determined to eventually bring all Native peoples to the knowledge of the beliefs he had adopted. Shortly after his return from his first trip to England in 1804-1805, he distributed 500 copies of his translated Gospel of St. John at the Grand River, and when Norton later stopped at the Cherokee village of Willstown in present-day northern Alabama, he addressed the chiefs in council there, "[l]ay[ing] before them, that which is due from Man to God; the frailty of the one, the Great Mercy of the Other, a brief account of the Creation; the Fall, and the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus; with the duties he inculcates, and their application in life."[24] Also along this southern journey, Norton stopped at a Moravian mission in northern Georgia and "joined in the devotions of these worthy people." He described them as "Missionaries, who are blest with the feelings of true religion. May the Almighty, bless and prosper the pious labours of these worthy Christians, who sojourn with a strange nation."[25]

Despite Norton's enthusiasm for transforming Indian communities into Christian societies, a large number of Natives, both at the Grand River and elsewhere, did not embrace his ideas. In a letter to Owen, Norton confessed that "religion does not flourish as might be wished –there is too much catching at the shadow and neglecting the substance."[26] Part of the problem, as Norton later complained, was that "there is no proper minister to instruct them in the word of God." Since the leaders of Upper Canada and Whitehall had denied Brant's request for a resident clergyman in the late 1790s, an

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[24] Norton to an unknown recipient (probably Owen), January, 1807, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms., 142-43. For Norton's speech to Cherokee council at Willstown, see Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 72-3.

[25] Ibid., 68.

[26] Norton to Owen, 12 August 1806, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 36.

ordained minister visited them only about twice a year.[27] Norton feared that legitimate conversions would not occur on these rare occasions, because "it is only the ceremony that is perceived," and he lamented that "the established Church of England do not take upon themselves" the style of missions that the Moravians practice.[28] Rev. Clark Kendrick, a visiting minister from the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society, corroborated Norton's fears, exclaiming, "[Y]ou may see the natives returning from the whisky shops, when they appear and act more like incarnate devils than Christians."[29]

The lack of a resident clergyman at Grand River may have hindered the spread of Christianity, but other obstacles impeded this as well. The Grand River Reserve was an intertribal, multi-cultural community, containing a number of religious orientations. On a visit to the Grand River villages in 1800, Rev. Samuel Kirkland encountered a Mohawk prophet who experienced visions and prophecies from "the *Upholder of the Skies* [italicized in Johnston]." The Mohawk holy man also had reintroduced the Iroquois White Dog ceremony with considerable success at the Grand River and elsewhere. Brant was grudgingly compelled to permit this prophet's sacrifices and rituals, because the latter's teaching had "gained almost universal credit in the settlement."[30]

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[27] The State of Missions amongst the Iroquois about 1810, taken from a survey completed by John Norton, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 244.

[28] Norton to Owen, 12 August 1806, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 36-7; State of Missions amongst the Iroquois, 1810, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 244.

[29] The Rev. Clark Kendrick's Opinion of the Six Nations, 1809, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 243-44. For additional assessments regarding the state of Christian missions among the Indians of Upper Canada at this time, see Report to Lord Castlereagh, enclosure in Gore to Castlereagh, 4 September 1809, P.R.O., CO 42, 349, 94-95. Rev. John Strachan, Rector at York during this period, also made a very similar report corroborating Gore's findings. See Strachan's undated report on the Indians of Upper Canada, Ontario Historical Archives, John Strachan Papers, F983, Vol. 9 (Ms 35, Reel 9).

[30] The Rev. Samuel Kirkland's Account of Religious Practices on the Grand River, 26 February 1800, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 242.

The Mohawk's prophecies and practices bore similarities to the teachings of the Seneca prophet Handsome Lake, whose new religion had a significant impact throughout all Iroquois settlements in the same period. Handsome Lake viewed his teachings as a restoration and purification of a traditional Iroquois religion.[31] His tenets derived from a series of visions in 1799 and 1800 in which the Creator instructed Handsome Lake to revive a number of religious rituals that had nearly lapsed among the Senecas and other Iroquois nations. The Creator's revelations also entailed the observance of a strict moral code, calling for abstinence from drunkenness, wife abuse, infidelity, promiscuity, gambling, theft, witchcraft, bickering, and gossiping.[32] Handsome Lake's people needed to adhere strictly to the observance and practice of this modified faith, lest the world come to an end. These teachings appear to have gained some adherents at the Grand River.

Brant, Norton, and other Christians at the Grand River indirectly benefited from the spread of Handsome Lake's religion of the Longhouse, for the Seneca prophet espoused a number of the ideals regarding lifestyle and culture that the Christian missionaries also championed. In addition to his rigid moral code, Handsome Lake spread a message of peace, denouncing every form of conflict and warfare, and he even announced that Iroquois men should now take up agriculture for a living.[33] These precepts departed radically from Iroquois cultural practices of merely a generation before, when warfare had been a necessary component of Iroquois life in the ongoing struggle to preserve the League and extend the Covenant Chain, and when agricultural pursuits were

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[31] Anthony F. C. Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, 315-17.

[32] Ibid., 239-54, 278-85; Snow, 158-62.

reserved strictly for women. Handsome Lake further struck a blow at longstanding Iroquois tradition when he called for the formation of male-led nuclear families, which would mean an end to matrilocal family settings and a decreased significance of the matrilineal clan system.[34] While the new religion revolutionized Iroquois life and resembled elements of Christian culture, its purpose was to preserve its community intact against the onrush of that culture.[35]

In light of such sweeping changes by respected religious leaders from within the former League, Norton's own acculturationist schemes appear less radical. Like Handsome Lake, the adopted Six Nations' leader did not believe that agricultural labor diminished a warrior's honor and dignity. As Norton once remarked, "The most industrious at the plough, generally shew themselves the most persevering at the chase, when in Winter they throw aside the hoe and take up the gun."[36] Norton also believed, as he put it, that "possession of property is the basis of civilization," and that "little hopes can be entertained of their [the Six Nations'] improvement either in Christianity or agriculture" without the tribes' adoption of a private property system.[37] Norton, like Handsome Lake, was very concerned about the further loss of Native lands, and he feared that unless the Six Nations chose to adapt and privately use the land, they would eventually lose it to scheming people.

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[33] Ibid., 280-81.

[34] Ibid., 282-85; Snow, 161; Carl Benn, The Iroquois in the War of 1812 (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 24-25.

[35] Anthony F. C. Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, 266, 279-80, 301-02.

[36] Norton to an unknown correspondent, 10 August 1808, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 278; P.R.O., CO 42, 140, 176-77.

[37] Norton to William Wilberforce, 1 September 1808, P.R.O., CO 42, 140, 180; Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 278; CNA, RG 10, Vol. 27, 15823.

Norton resented the pattern of white encroachments and Native land dispossession that tended to accompany the Jefferson administration's assimilationist programs and Christian evangelization. The establishment of mission stations and forced land cessions always followed in the wake of Native defeats. But Norton rejected the idea that Natives could not become Christians while they were still thriving cultures and independent peoples. He believed that genuine Christian missions should attempt to bolster the Natives' quality of life and independence and prevent the Indians' slide into the status of wards. However, Norton believed that the negative white influence in undermining Native cultures had particularly prejudiced indigenous peoples against "the Light of *the Gospel* [as italicized in Klinck's edition]."[38] But the most striking difference between the young Mohawk chief's ideas and those of numerous others interested in acculturation programs was his view that the Indians should retain all of the land that they currently held, and that they should not be compelled to move.

Nevertheless, as a last resort, Norton contemplated the scheme of moving the Grand River community farther away from the whites in an effort to retain the integrity of the Six Nations' culture and political autonomy.[39] The prospect of building a modernized, agriculturally-based pan-Indian state had appealed to Norton for some time, and if positioned farther west, this intertribal community could be expanded to include the tribes of the Three Fires. In 1806 he wrote to John Owen, requesting that Owen and the Bible Society "without delay secure a patent" for the Ojibwas, Ottawas, and Potawatomis near Lake Huron in order to establish Christian schools and agricultural

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[38] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 48; Norton to Wilberforce, 1 September 1808, P.R.O., CO 42, 140, 180-81; Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 278-79; CNA, RG 10, Vol, 27, 15825.

missions among them before white encroachments severely tainted their communities.[40] Norton predicted that this "attempt at civilizing them" would "become a general benefit to the whole" of all the Indians living in the Michigan peninsula and Upper Canada. Norton also believed that the Six Nations, who relied more heavily on agriculture and who were more apt to think in terms of owning private property than the Three Fires, would play a significant role in the establishment of this society.[41] Here, Norton argued, the Six Nations could potentially unite with "Chippawas, Ottawas, Pontawattamies, Shawanons, Wyandots, Miamies and others from the Southward," forming a confederated Native state.[42] The mixed-blood leader further reasoned that his scheme would also benefit British interests, arguing that the assembled tribes of the upper country "would be more for the good of the Empire in case of war."[43] Such thinking, though noble and visionary, could never prevail at a time when the Crown feared Six Nations' sovereignty and Whitehall had taken pains to prevent any intertribal connections, as Brant had discovered.

Norton's ambitious scheme to create an independent confederacy of acculturated tribes illustrated the widening gulf between his thinking and that of British officials as both sides pondered the future role of Indians in Canada, and this gulf foreshadowed

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[39] Norton to an unknown correspondent, 10 August 1808, P.R.O., CO 42, 140, 175-76; Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 277.

[40] Norton to Owen, 12 August 1806, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 34.

[41] Ibid., 33-35.

[42] Norton to an unkown correspondent, 10 August 1808, P.R.O., CO 42, 140, 175-76; Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 277.

[43] Ibid., P.R.O., CO 42, 140, 177.

further conflict between Norton and the Indian Department.[44] The mixed-blood leader came to resent the Department as the primary obstacle preventing the process of acculturation and political autonomy for the Indians dwelling in Upper Canada. Furthermore, Norton had somehow gained knowledge of the Department's previous attempts to divide the Natives when Portland and Russell had issued secret orders to William Claus and his subordinate agents to foment as much division as possible between Upper Canada's tribes.[45] Much of the remainder of Norton's career at the Grand River involved an ongoing conflict with the Indian Department, a struggle that would eventually reach its climax in a leadership schism between Norton and Claus during the War of 1812.

As time passed, Norton's resentment of the Indian Department grew. He fully grasped the one-sided and incongruous relationship between Britain and her former Indian allies, one in which British leaders strove to reduce their Indian expenses and obligations while simultaneously continuing to assert their authority and influence in Indian affairs and refusing to recognize any actual Native sovereignty. He was also frustrated by the hierarchical structure of government in Upper Canada, which would not formally hear any grievances or complaints by the Indians unless they filed them

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[44] In a council held at York in early September, 1806, William Claus raised the concern that the Six Nations intended to destroy the Indian Department. Though a legitimate allegation, Brant denied it. See A Six Nations' Address to William Claus, 3 September 1806, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 274; Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 66.

[45] Norton to Lord Castlereagh, 23 July 1805, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 340, 123. In the case alluded to, recall that Whitehall's attempt to divide the tribes was primarily an effort to prevent Brant from gaining a position of ascendancy over a combination of tribes in Upper Canada. Lord Selkirk also recognized the conflict of interests between Norton and the Indian Department, admitting that Norton's plan, if successful, would render many of the Department's officers useless. Patrick C. T. White, ed., Lord Selkirk's Diary, 1803-1804 (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1958), 245. The best biography on Lord Selkirk (i.e., Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk) is John Morgan Gray's Lord Selkirk of Red River. Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1964.

specifically through the official channel, the Indian Department.[46] Hence, in dealing with an organization whose best interests lay in preventing reforms of the government's Indian policy, and without recourse for submitting appeals in Canada, Norton understandably saw the Indian Department as the primary impediment to reform, regardless of how much this Department merely represented an extension of the overall government's policies.

Without gaining adequate redress from officials in Canada, Norton articulately and colorfully aired his grievances to his friends in London. Writing to Robert Barclay in 1806, he described the Indian Department and its measures as running counter to all forms of advancement and philanthropy. He complained that this organization merely encouraged "idleness & corruption," and "unless the system is changed & its efforts be united with yours [that of Barclay & Owen] it will resemble two men jumping into a canoe & paddling against each other," causing the canoe "to remain in the same position."[47] Again writing to Barclay nearly four years later, Norton more pointedly described the Department, this time likening it to "a bad tree that not only brings forth poisonous fruit, but is also of such pernicious influence that even in its shade no wholesome plant can thrive."[48] Norton also presented these concerns to Owen, arguing that the Department's "principal object seems to be our ruin."[49] He asked the Bible Society's Secretary to use his influence with the government in order to, if possible, eliminate the Indian Department altogether, requesting that Owen "eradicate this

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[46] Norton to Castlereagh, 23 July 1805, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 340, 123-24; Six Nations' Address to Claus, 3 September 1806, York, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 66; Norton to Owen, 28 January 1807, ibid., 82.

[47] Norton to Barclay, 20 October 1806, ibid., 77.

[48] Same to same, 16 June 1810, ibid., 130.

[49] Norton to Owen, 12 August 1806, ibid., 26-27, 30.

opposition at the fountain head."[50] The Mohawk leader further suggested that the "Government...turn the vast expence [sic] of the Indian Department towards the end...of bettering the situation of the Indians," which would have entailed rechanneling all of the agents' current salaries into mission programs and material necessities for the Indians.[51]

Norton's struggle with the Indian Department eventually degenerated into a running battle between him and William Claus. Previously the two had always been at odds, and Claus had begun to evince his distaste for Norton as early as his [Claus's] appointment to the position of Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in 1800.[52] Norton had at one time worked as an interpreter under Claus at the Department's Fort George agency, and later while Norton was still working there, Brant appointed him his personal deputy in handling official Six Nations' affairs. This in itself must have annoyed Claus, who, as acting agent at Fort George, was technically the liaison between the Six Nations and the government. Norton in a rather short time gained the trust and confidence of the majority of the Indians at the Six Nations reserve. Fluent in as many as twelve Native languages and dialects, he functioned smoothly in multiple Native cultures, including Cherokee, Iroquois, and Great Lakes Algonquin societies.[53]

Conversely, the people who looked to the adopted Norton as their leader did not feel much affinity for Claus, a former regular army officer in His Majesty's 60th

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[50] Ibid., 27.

[51] Ibid., 28, 32.

[52] Charles M. Johnston, "William Claus and John Norton: A Struggle for Power in Old Ontario," Ontario History LVII(2) (1965): 103. Though informative, Johnston's essay is a less favorable assessment of Norton.

[53] Thomas Scott to Sir Walter Scott, ca. 1815, John Norton Papers, University of Western Ontario; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, xx.

Regiment, who had not spent much time among the Indians the way his grandfather and father had done.[54] Norton's meteoric rise and unexpected influence was a constant threat to Claus, who continued to visualize a leading and significant role for the Indian Department comparable to one it had achieved in the days of his family predecessors. By the time Claus became the Deputy Superintendent General in 1800, the Department had severely suffered from the government's retrenchment and from fiscal reductions in its Indian policy. But Norton's clamors (and Brant's) for Six Nations' sovereignty and his desire to completely transform Britain's Indian policy happened to come at the very time that Claus wanted to restore the Indian Department to its past glory, and the agent understood that Norton's schemes endangered the organization's very existence.

Shortly after his promotion in 1800, Claus warned Canadian officials of possible Six Nations' disloyalty and treachery after Brant had allegedly made a seditious speech to the Three Fires in Detroit. Regarding land matters, the Deputy Superintendent General firmly informed the Six Nations that any further sales or leases (than the six blocks previously confirmed by Peter Russell) were "quite out of the question" and "cannot be allowed."[55] But despite these bitter clashes between Claus and the Six Nations, the history and role of the Indian Department and the predicament of the Grand River nations would have probably caused a breach, regardless of who served as Deputy Superintendent General at the time. Given this conflict of interests and Claus's inherent bias against compromise, the Six Nations could expect few favors from him.

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[54] John Johnson and Daniel Claus, respectively.

[55] Claus's speech at Fort George, 17 August 1803, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 136; Kelsay, 631-32.

By February 1804, Norton was on his way to Britain, where he and Brant hoped he would obtain redress for all of the Six Nations' grievances. Claus and Lieutenant Governor Peter Hunter soon learned of Norton's mission, and these two officials bitterly resented the latter's attempt to circumvent their authority. Indeed, the breach separating Claus and the principal Grand River leaders became virtually irreparable once Norton began his diplomatic journey to the home government. Prior to this time, Claus's refusal to further listen to Six Nations' grievances had merely dampened relations between the government and the Indians at the Grand River. But once Norton departed, the Deputy Superintendent actively interfered in Six Nations' affairs, overstepping his authority in his eagerness to thwart Norton.

In the spring of 1805, with Norton still absent, Claus convened a meeting of various factions and Indians from the Grand River, most of whom were not chiefs, and many of whom Claus knew would relish an opportunity to challenge Norton's and Brant's authority, hoping that the council would disavow Norton and his mission.[56] The agent also invited dozens of Senecas from Buffalo Creek and various other Iroquois from the American side of the border, all of whom were openly hostile to Brant's leadership at the Grand River. Previously, Iroquois leaders still living within the United States never held any authority in matters pertaining specifically to the Grand River, but now Claus endeavored to use them against the Brant-Norton cadre of leadership at the Grand.[57] This dubious delegation from Buffalo Creek included Brant's longstanding rival, Red Jacket.

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[56] Lord Castlereagh to Sir James Craig, 8 April 1809, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 280; Norton's speech at Onondaga, Grand River, 12 February 1807, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 106. According to Norton most Grand River chiefs never succumbed to supporting Claus's scheme to discredit him or his mission.

[57] Kelsay, 636-37; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, cviii-cix.

While en route to Claus's council in early April 1805, this group, temporarily detained by ice on the Niagara River, waited on the American side at Fort Niagara, where four American officers later testified that they had heard these forty or so Senecas claim that "they were going into Upper Canada for the express purpose of breaking Captain Brant."[58] Most of the chiefs who supported Brant and Norton, and who by this time disdained Claus, refused to attend such a sham meeting, a decision that played into the agent's hands because it enabled him to secure the council's disavowal of Norton that he earnestly sought.[59]

Claus ordinarily did not interfere so blatantly in Native councils or manipulate their leadership to this degree. On the contrary, despite not advocating Native sovereignty, he generally respected the integrity and independence of the Six Nations' councils. But in this case Norton, by petitioning in person for support from powerful individuals in London, posed a serious threat to the status quo of Upper Canada's Indian policy and to the Indian Department itself. Brant had given Norton letters of introduction to the Duke of Northumberland, the Earl of Moira, and Sir Evan Nepean.[60] After his arrival, Norton became acquainted with several other leading figures in the British government, including the Earl of Camden, Lord Castlereagh, and William Wilberforce, and Camden worked to bring Norton's Grand River case before the Privy Council. The chief's petitioning also prompted Camden to write to Lieutenant Governor Hunter, instructing him to look into the Six Nations' affairs and to give them any redress to which

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[58] Certificate of Captain Leonard and others, 20 October 1805, Stone, Life of Brant, II: xxxiv. Also see Brant's letter to the Duke of Northumberland, circa 1805, explaining the events surrounding Claus's council, ibid., 417.

[59] Kelsay, 636; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, cviii-cix.

[60] Norton to Earl Camden, 20 July 1805, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 340, 122.

they were entitled.[61] While awaiting responses, Norton met Owen and Barclay and used his time to translate the Gospel of John into Mohawk. On Christmas Eve, 1804, he addressed the Bath and West of England Agricultural Society.[62] Having gained a hearing from and approval of some of the most powerful individuals in the country, Norton appeared on the verge of success.

Claus and Hunter sensed how close Norton was to succeeding and fought back. Lieutenant Governor Hunter responded to Camden, reporting Norton's public disavowal by the Six Nations' chiefs in council. When this news arrived in London in the summer of 1805, it raised many questions and virtually destroyed Norton's hopes of gaining the Six Nations' coveted title to the Grand River lands. The government's leading ministers, including Camden and the Privy Council, suddenly became more concerned with Norton's identity and his credentials than they were with the status of the Grand River lands. In July, Norton wrote detailed letters to Camden and Castlereagh, respectively, defending his position and qualifications, and he submitted a full report to the Privy Council, detailing the history of the Grand River case and the Six Nations' grievances.[63] Despite the chief's continued efforts, Camden and the Privy Council became evasive. Furthermore, Norton had failed to bring a copy of the Haldimand Grant at the outset of his journey from the Grand River, and the administrators in Britain informed him that

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[61] Kelsay, 635.

[62] Speech of Teyoninhokarawen The Mohawk Chief to the Bath & West England Agricultural Society on his being elected an Honorary Member on the 24th December 1804, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 141; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, li; Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 114.

[63] Norton to Camden, 20 July 1805, CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 340, 121-22.5; Norton to Castlereagh, 23 July 1805, 123-24.5, ibid., 123-24.5.

they could not make any decisions on the matter without a copy of the original grant.[64] With dwindling resources, the chief was soon compelled to return to North America, arriving in Quebec in mid-November 1805. The strategy of Claus and Hunter therefore had its desired effect, preventing the possibility of Six Nations' independent status, and indefinitely preserving the status quo of Indian Affairs in Upper Canada.

Back at the Grand River, Norton joined Brant in reasserting their authority over the Six Nations' affairs, and they disregarded any of the claims made by the Iroquois councils under Claus's auspices while Norton was in London. Brant, his authority temporarily undermined by the dozens of makeshift "chiefs" that Claus had briefly brought over from Buffalo Creek, now denounced these Seneca rivals for having received pensions from the American government, which, he argued, compromised their loyalty and disqualified them from issues pertaining to the Grand River. Claus disagreed, but Brant had the support of the majority of Grand River chiefs who had previously remained silent during the councils held with the Buffalo Creek faction. This show of support for Brant enabled him to continue as the Grand River's principal agent in spite of the wishes of the Deputy Superintendent General.[65] But apparently Brant never again visited any of the Six Nations at Buffalo Creek, and a permanent split developed between the two groups.

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[64] It seems odd that the British government could not produce a copy of such an important document, and one would tend to believe that they could have found a copy had they really wanted to do so. Furthermore, Simcoe and Dorchester both lived in England at the time of Norton's visit, and both men possibly had copies of the original Grand River Grant, but no evidence indicates that either of the retired administrators were ever specifically petitioned for the document.

[65] Kelsay, 639; Brant's complaints against Claus in council at Fort George, 28 July 1806, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 106-08.

Along with the reconfirmation of Brant as head chief and agent at the Grand River came the restoration of Norton's chieftainship, a necessary procedure since Claus's bogus councils had disavowed him. In council at York on 3 September 1806, Six Nations' leaders upbraided Claus, exclaiming, "You know that he [Norton] was made a Chief in a public manner, you received the Wampum on the occasion."[66] Five weeks earlier, in a series of heated speeches delivered at Fort George, another leader from the Grand River, Benjamin Okoghsenniyonte, rebuked Claus for meddling in Six Nations' matters, and he denied that Claus had the authority to create chiefs, particularly those from Buffalo Creek:

> Brother –The right of being chief according to our customs arise[s] either from hereditary line on the female side or from having distinguished by meritorious conduct so as to be accepted as such. This has not been the case in the last appointments you sanctioned –one of them [Red Jacket, or "Cow Killer" perhaps?] we know to whom you pay great regard has been distinguished in your opinion for some things we have not been accustomed to pay that respect to.[67]

In addition to this support, Norton drafted a twenty-six-page memorial, defending his qualifications, which he read as a speech during a council held at the Onondaga village, Grand River on 12 February 1807.[68] In this lengthy address, he noted that when the letter of the Six Nations' supposed disavowal of his activities in London arrived at Whitehall, he suspected "it to be some misrepresentation from Fort George [Claus's headquarters]."[69] He went on to praise "the greater part of the Grand River people,

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[66] Six Nations' speech to Claus at York, 3 September 1806, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 63; Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 274.

[67] Speech of Benjamin Okoghsenniyonte, 28 July 1806, Fort George, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 51.

[68] Norton's speech at Onondaga, Grand River, 12 February 1807, ibid., 98-123.

[69] Norton's speech at Onondaga, Grand River, 12 February 1807, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 116.

particularly those who were Chiefs," who "could not be led into the error" of supporting Claus.[70]

In spite of Six Nations' leaders' repeated rebukes, Claus continued to resist Brant's leadership and Norton's reinstatement. By early April 1807, shortly after Norton's speech at Onondaga, Claus wrote to Francis Gore, the new Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada who had replaced the recently deceased Peter Hunter. The agent wished to convey to Gore the identity of the man he believed was their primary antagonist in Indian affairs, asserting that "John Norton is such a Character that any thing he does will not surprise me."[71] Claus went on to deride all the Six Nations' leaders, ridiculing the headmen's claims that the Indian Department refused to relay their grievances to the Lieutenant Governor.[72] Most importantly, the Deputy Superintendent General repeated to Gore the vow he had made to an old Onondaga chief a year earlier: "I would not take notice of any thing from them [the Six Nations] in which Norton was concerned."[73]

Yet Claus would find it difficult to disregard Norton's claims to leadership. Only twelve days after Claus's letter to Gore, Norton delivered another speech at the Grand River, supporting Brant and expressing the Six Nations' grievances regarding the delays and poor handling of several land sales that Peter Russell had approved ten years before. Norton also admonished Claus for not recognizing the proper leaders at the Grand River, and concluded by expressing his hope that, as he put it, "a practice so improper may be

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[70] Ibid., 106.

[71] Claus to Gore, 2 April 1807, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 2, Series A, 562.

[72] Ibid., 562-63.

[73] Ibid., 563.

dropped for the future."[74] Judging from the council records of 1806 and 1807, and from numerous statements made by Brant and Norton during these years, it is clear that the majority of the Indians at the Grand River believed that Claus had overstepped by manipulating their councils, and that he had no right to discredit Norton or to discount the latter's status as chief. At the time of Brant's death in November 1807, therefore, Norton was poised to succeed Brant as chief of the Six Nations at the Grand River, and the majority of leaders there hoped for this succession.[75]

Prelude to War: The Grand River Community, 1807-1812

After Brant's death Norton became head chief at the Grand River. In May 1808, "the chiefs & principal Warriors of all the Five [i.e. Six] Nations living on the Grand River" appointed Norton "solely to be at the head of their Councils." Knowing that this decision would not be popular with Canadian authorities, Norton insisted that the tribal council "first make known to [the] Government this their determination." It was not the most promising beginning to what proved to be a long career as the Grand River community's leader, but it was a realistic gesture on Norton' part given, as he put it, "how obnoxious I am to [the] Government."[76]

One thing, however, was not realistically possible. Norton would not be recognized as Brant's successor as the Six Nations' agent in the Indian Department.[77] This mattered not at all to Norton because his view of the Department was so negative

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[74] Norton's speech, Grand River, 14 April 1807, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 27, 15699.

[75] Brant to the Duke of Northumberland, 24 January 1806, Stone, Life of Brant, II: 425.

[76] Norton to John Owen, 10 August 1808, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 128-29.

[77] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, lviii-lix.

that he had no wish to be associated with it. Moreover, neither he nor Claus could have tolerated working with each other as fellow agents. Initially, therefore, the chief did his best to avoid further direct confrontations with either Claus or Gore. What Norton did do to try to influence British policy was to write letters to friends in London, continuing to petition for their support of his plan to evangelize and acculturate the residents of the Grand River Community. Although never sufficient by themselves to bring about the kind of Indian society that the chief envisioned at the Grand River, these letters brought the plight of the Six Nations to the attention of some of the highest-ranking leaders in the Empire and thereby did much to keep the pressure on the home government to compel Canada's administrators to relieve the Indians' distress.

The impact of Norton's efforts and those of his supporters in Britain was most evident when Secretary of War Lord Castlereagh wrote to Governor General Sir James Craig in April 1809, inquiring as to the status and condition of the Indians of Upper Canada. The tenor of Castlereagh's letter indicated that he did not personally trust Norton, referring to him as someone "who calls himself an Indian," who had come to Britain "without any regular Deputation, and without any previous Communication with the Lieut. Governor of Upper Canada." The Secretary further alluded to Claus's report, in which "the Indian Chiefs disavowed Mr. Norton's Journey and the objects of it."[78] But in spite of his skepticism regarding Norton's identity, Castlereagh went on to indicate that Norton had powerful supporters in the government and that those lobbying for him were on the verge of success. According to Castlereagh, several of the King's Ministers wanted to investigate the Haldimand affair to determine the feasibility of implementing

[78] Castlereagh to Craig, 8 April 1809, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 279-80.

significant reforms among the Indians, possibly even to the extent that Norton and Brant had long envisioned.[79]

Despite this apparently renewed interest on the Grand River case, Castlereagh's instructions to Craig contained a request that indicated his reluctance to undertake any substantial reforms. The War Secretary sought the opinions of the top officials in both Upper and Lower Canada regarding the proposed reforms, indicating that the home government was not prepared to impose radical reforms in Canadian Indian policy over the objections of their administrators there. For their part, Claus and Gore were resolutely opposed to such sweeping reforms. From their perspective Upper Canada remained simply too weak to allow any significant degree of autonomy or union among the Indians. Gore predicted that if the Indians had sovereign control over their lands they would fall victim to "an unprincipled set of Land Jobbers, who in their unrestrained Intercourse with the Indians, would in the first Instance, teach them to despise the Government that protected them, and in the next, would defraud them of their Land."[80] With much of the populace of Upper Canada already possessing less than a lukewarm loyalty towards Britain, and with more American immigrants constantly streaming across the border, the government in Canada could ill afford to relinquish sovereign control over Native territory.

These concerns represented only a portion of Gore's response to Castlereagh. Since Castlereagh had asked for their opinions, Gore and Claus seized this opportunity to

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[79] Ibid., 280.

[80] Gore to Castlereagh, 4 September 1809, P.R.O., CO 42, 349, 90-91. This important letter, Gore's response to Castlereagh, is also found in the CNA, MG 11, CO 42, 349, 88-92, and the Ontario Historical Archives, John Norton Papers, F440, Ms 94. Johnston's Valley of the Six Nations contains a fragment of it on pp. 112-13.

further discredit Norton, taking their revenge on him for reasserting his rights as chief upon his return from Britain. The prospect of placing the Natives under the supervision or control of Norton was precisely what Upper Canada's leaders wished to avoid. Consequently, Gore cast Norton as an imposter of humble birth, stressing that "he is a Scotsman by Birth and came to Canada, a private soldier."[81] In addition to attempting to demean Norton's identity, Gore (basing his allegations mainly on information provided by Claus) proceeded to suggest that Norton had corrupt motives for attempting to handle the Grand River affairs.[82] Gore alleged that Norton, like the late Brant, practiced "extensive sums of corruption," hoping to pocket much of the revenue generated from forthcoming land sales if the Six Nations could begin to alienate their lands.[83]

Gore's allegations against both Brant and Norton were very serious. In truth, Gore had only lived in Upper Canada for a short time, and he consequently knew little about the matter; he merely relayed information that Claus had given him. The fact was that Brant had handled his business affairs too poorly to have had any great chance of succeeding at the large-scale intrigues of which he stood accused. Without adequate education or the experience necessary to engage in the sophisticated type of business that he had attempted to transact in the sales of the approved blocks of land at the Grand River, the late chief often became confused and worked at odds against his appointed trustees.[84] For his part, Norton exhibited even less of a desire to accumulate wealth than

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[81] Ibid., 89.

[82] In the final sentence of his letter to Castlereagh, Gore indicated that much of his information had come from Claus. Ibid., 92.

[83] Ibid., 89, 90, 91.

[84] Kelsay, 631-32. Like Claus, Brant was also bewildered as to where the Six Nations' land revenue actually went, and during a council held in July, 1806, he publicly blamed the agent for having

Brant had, and at certain times the younger chief demonstrated apparent lapses of thought in financial matters. He had previously fallen into debt to his former employer, trader John Askin, and he also ran up big debts during his trips to Great Britain.[85] Even when he permanently left the Grand River in 1823, he showed no concern about collecting his continuing pension payments.[86] Claus and Gore never understood Norton, nor did they discern his true motives. They probably remembered the cases of Matthew Elliott and John Dease, both of whom embezzled Native goods, and they assumed that almost anyone would practice such graft, or worse, if only given the opportunity. Thus, they failed to see any difference when Brant and Norton clamored for Six Nations' sovereignty and control over Grand River lands.

In addition to this distrust of Norton's motives and concerns for Upper Canada's security, the government had another reason for being unwilling to allow Indian autonomy or to permit any significant reforms at the Grand River, and this was their skepticism regarding the Native capability of maintaining intertribal unity. In his letter to Castlereagh, Gore discouraged alterations in Whitehall's Indian policy, arguing, "It is impossible for a large body of Indians to subsist together, for any Considerable time, in any one part of the Country –they would soon disperse, and form themselves into small

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appropriated $38,000 of the Six Nations' supposedly-missing funds. Brant's unfounded allegations against Claus did more to reveal the sachem's ignorance and lack of accounting skills than it did his perfidy. Upon hearing Brant's accusation, Claus abruptly left the council. Brant's speech in council at Fort George, 28 July 1806, Norton Letterbook, Ayer Ms, 45; Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 108; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, cx.

[85] John Askin to Thomas Smith, 5 January 1793, and Smith to Askin, 3 March 1793, Quaife, John Askin Papers, I: 457, 466-67; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, xxxiv, lxxxvi-lxxxvii; Kelsay, 637; Murray, 15.

[86] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, xcv-xcvii.

Bands."[87] Gore's thoughts may have contained an element of truth regarding the Natives' reluctance to abandon their former lifestyles and take on a sedentary existence, but he showed no desire or willingness to ever give Grand River's residents a choice. Furthermore, the tone of his remarks, often cynical, indicated that he had no confidence in the Indians' ability to adapt, and the Lieutenant Governor offered no sort of alternative plan to help foster Native people's future survival. Gore's opinion stood in stark contrast to Norton's; the latter believed that his people at the Grand River, like the Cherokees, would make any changes necessary for their future survival and integrity as a confederacy. But the administrator derided the efforts of the philanthropists in London and spoke condescendingly of the Indians in his province. Writing to Lord Camden's undersecretary, Edward Cooke, M. P., Gore complained,

> I only wish Mr. Wilberforce and his benevolent associates, had a little practical knowledge to guide them in their philanthropic views respecting these Peoples – They would soon be satisfied, that these Gentry [i.e. the Indians] would consider themselves very little obliged to them for any attempt to abridge their National or Personal Independence;.... – To gain their Lands individually, with the unrestrained Power of Alienation, would be to supply them with the means of gratifying their Passion for Rum.[88]

Gore, while resisting any significant measures of reform, at least acknowledged the failure of the prevailing Indian policy that Whitehall had implemented after 1796. As discussed in earlier chapters, the peacetime policy of retrenchment, entailing a significant reduction in Indian expenditures, simply could not strengthen British-Indian ties while simultaneously ending British obligations to their former allies. The Lieutenant Governor bluntly stated that "the System of gradually reducing the Presents to the Indians

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[87] Gore to Castlereagh, P.R.O., CO 42, 349, 91.

[88] Gore to Edward Cooke, Esq., ca. 1810, P.R.O., CO 42, 349, 186.

of Upper Canada...preceding my arrival, appears to me, neither to have been founded on a sound Policy, nor agreeable to justice." According to Gore, Native leaders were not shy in telling him, "You are very kind, when you want us to fight for you but when that Service is performed, you shut the Store door in our Faces."[89] Apparently the gifts had dwindled to such small portions that "very many of the most respectable and gallant Nations" no longer even bothered to visit "the King's Posts to receive the trifling quantity."[90]

Gore's observations about the negative consequences of the shortcomings and inconsistencies in British Indian policy were made as tensions rose once again between the United States and Britain. In 1807, the British warship HMS *Leopard* violated American maritime rights and nearly ignited a war in the so-called Chesapeake Affair by violently seizing four naval deserters off of an American vessel and killing three American sailors. In December of the same year Jefferson's economic embargo was a hard-line response to both Britain's and France's restrictions on American merchant shipping.[91] This growing international crisis led Gore to seek measures to reduce Upper Canada's internal instability and to prepare his province for the possibility of war. Logically, then, the Governor wished to try to appease the Indians, even if merely by increasing their gifts, lest the latter take advantage of Britain's weakness in a time of war in order to secure their own sovereign independence.

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[89] Gore to Castlereagh, 4 September 1809, P.R.O., CO, 42, 349, 92.

[90] Ibid. Gore also confessed that "[a]t present there is not a Blanket for every Seventh Person, which is the occasion of a good deal of remark and observation, on our breach of faith towards them in this respect." Points to which Lord Castlereagh desires to be informed, 4 September 1809, ibid., 94.

[91] For good discussions on these events, see Donald R. Hickey, The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 17-24, and Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, 3rd ed. (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1946), 115-23.

Such an outcome stood as a distinct possibility in Upper Canada at the time. With the bulk of the British army having just begun a difficult campaign under the Duke of Wellington in the Iberian Peninsula in 1807, Canada's Upper Province was virtually unprotected. Fewer than 1,400 British regulars remained in Upper Canada.[92] Judging by such minimal troop strength, the British government had obviously not given significant forethought to the defense of the province, and as early as 1807 Governor General Sir James Craig even considered the possibility of withdrawing the British presence from Upper Canada in the event of war, abandoning it to the Americans. Acting on orders from Castlereagh, Craig considered "the preservation of Quebec as the object of my first and principal consideration, and that to which all others must be subordinate." Furthermore, the Governor General predicted that "if the Americans are really determined to attack these Provinces, and employ those means which they may so easily command, I fear it would be vain for us to flatter ourselves with the hopes of making any effectual defence of the open Country."[93] Having therefore conceded that any British forces stationed in Upper Canada could not ward off an American invasion, Craig and others concluded that the only hopes of preserving that sector would depend on Canadian militias and, most importantly, support from Britain's former Indian allies scattered throughout Upper Canada and the Great Lakes. Craig and Castlereagh both believed that "[i]f a war takes place," the Indians "will not be idle –If We do not employ them, there cannot exist a moment's doubt, that they will be employed against us, and in that

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[92] Distribution of the Forces in Upper Canada serving under Lieutenant General Peter Hunter, 1 December 1801, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 1209, 108a. Also see Allen, The British Indian Department and the Frontier in North America, 1755-1830, 67, and Allen, His Majesty's Indian Allies, 119.

[93] Craig to Gore, 6 December 1807, P.R.O., CO 42, 136, 153-54; Castlereagh to Craig, 1 September 1807, P.R.O., CO 43, 22, 110.

event…The chain of our Connexion [sic] which has subsisted for so many years [with them] would be broken."[94]

Accordingly Gore, in compliance with Craig's wishes, began to make efforts to determine the temper of the Indians throughout the Great Lakes. In addition to increasing the Crown's gifts to the Indians in his province, Gore sought to reestablish ties to Britain's former allies who dwelt on the American side of the border. He dispatched Claus to Amherstburg early in 1808 to summon leaders of the various nations to council in hopes of reestablishing the old Chain of Friendship that had nearly lapsed after Fallen Timbers fourteen years earlier. Claus did not have to petition very hard; Indians throughout the Lakes, northern Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan rapidly answered the King's call. Throughout the spring various groups continued to filter in. In June the Shawnee leader Tecumseh and some of his followers also visited the post where they met Claus, opening communication between the Indian Department and the growing intertribal confederacy at Prophetstown on the Wabash, which gave the British a link to the multiple nations living there.[95] The next month Gore personally held a council at Amherstburg where he addressed approximately 1,000 warriors and 100 chiefs, including Tecumseh who had returned with many of his followers from the Wabash.[96] After Gore's meeting,

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[94] Craig to Gore, 6 December 1807, P.R.O., CO 42, 136, 155; Castlereagh to Craig, 8 April 1809, P.R.O., CO 43, 22, 135.

[95] Claus Journal at Fort Malden, 13 & 14 June 1808, CNA, MG 19, F1, Claus Papers, Vol. 9, 206; MPHC, XXIII: 53. According to his journal, Claus spoke with Tecumseh for three hours during this first meeting.

[96] Allen, The British Indian Department and the Frontier in North America, 1755-1830, 68. For records and speeches in this council, see CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 11, 9884-9904.

Native visits to the post continued to increase dramatically, and nearly 5,000 Indians arrived at Amherstburg that autumn.[97]

The positive response of Natives living in the United States to British overtures was not immediately shared by those living at the Grand River. American expansion seriously endangered the future of the tribes beyond Canada's borders. By contrast, the Six Nations at the Grand River did not face an immediate territorial threat, and therefore had much less incentive to fight for the Crown. As Gore had commented in his lengthy letter to Castlereagh in 1809, many of Upper Canada's resident Indians hardly bothered any more to visit the posts in order to receive the King's bounty.[98]

Precarious conditions in Upper Canada –namely the uncertainty of the Six Nations' support and the question of the loyalty of the militias– caused a curious aberration in Sir James Craig's Indian policy. Canada's administrators and agents knew that they could rely on Indians from across the border, but they now needed to be careful that those aggressive-minded groups did not drag Britain into a war with the United States too soon, particularly when Canada's leaders did not have the internal support necessary to hold the upper province. As a matter of necessity, then, Craig and Gore ended the policy of peacetime retrenchment and adopted a wartime stance in their dealings with the Indians.

For the Natives at the Grand River the new policy temporarily meant additional gifts, and for Norton it eventually led to a wartime commission and significant autonomy as agent and commander of the Six Nations during the upcoming conflict. Though Claus

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[97] Claus to Prideaux Selby, 18 January 1809, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 256, 5; MPHC: XXIII: 66-67.

[98] Gore to Castlereagh, 4 September 1809, P.R.O., CO 42, 349, 92.

and Gore both despised him, they recognized that Norton continued to hold considerable influence over the Six Nations, and they temporarily avoided provoking or alienating the chief any further lest he discourage those at the Grand River from supporting Britain in its anticipated struggle. As a result, Upper Canada's leaders avoided interfering significantly in Grand River affairs between 1810 and 1812.

Just how far would the British government go to gain Indian support, particularly that of the Grand River nations, in the face of the new international crisis? Certainly, some type of fair and permanent understanding with the Indians was desirable; British leaders did not wish to have to periodically rely on questionable Native fidelity every time a crisis arose. As war drew near, all hopes of compromise grew dim, and the Indian agents in Canada reverted to their old practice of increasing Indian gifts and tenaciously pressuring the Indians to fight for the Crown if necessary. As always, this policy tended to blur the extent of mutual obligations in the Anglo-Native relationship. Were the Indians subjects or allies? Craig continued to pursue the dual stance of telling the Indians to prepare themselves for war, while informing the Americans of his country's neutrality.[99] These contradictory actions could only lead to further distrust on the part of either the Natives or the Americans, or both.

The approach of war also brought other changes in Canada. In the autumn of 1811, Norton received favorable news regarding a change in Upper Canada's leadership. In his journal Norton stated that Major General Isaac Brock "arrived at York, to take the

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[99] Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 230. Craig not only proclaimed British neutrality to the Americans, but early in 1811 he attempted to make his claims even more convincing by warning the American government of imminent Indian attacks along the country's frontiers. This crafty attempt to absolve Britain of responsibility for an Indian war failed to convince American leaders, as seen in President Madison's reasons for asking Congress for a declaration of war against Great Britain in June, 1812. See Wesley Turner, The War of 1812: The War that Both Sides Won (Toronto & Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1990), 33.

command of the Troops in the Upper Province,—and also assume the civil Government under the Title of President, at the same time that Francis Gore Esqr.—Lieut. Governor, took his Departure for England." Regarding this transition, which entailed the removal of Gore, one of Norton's principal antagonists, the chief wrote, "This change was very well received throughout the Province." Further emphasizing the contrast between Gore and Brock, Norton added that Brock displayed "discernment, candour & rectitude," qualities which "confounded the spirit of Party, and exposed the Mystery of Calumny."[100] Brock's arrival may have prevented Norton from leaving Canada. Discouraged by the belief that his vision of reform would never occur under Gore's leadership, Norton had decided, as he put it, "to retire to the South West, to prepare an establishment where we might live undisturbed by factious disputes."[101] But Brock's arrival gave Norton new hope, and soon after, the General summoned the headman to York to discuss the mood of the Indians at the Grand River and to ascertain what was needed to secure their aid should war break out.

Norton seized this opportunity to apprise Brock of the Six Nations' history and grievances at the Grand River, informing him that the people there desired, above all else, a proper land title. Though the General remained noncommittal, he maintained a "favourable Disposition" towards the Grand River people, and in a subsequent letter to Norton he expressed a "disposition to favour their requests" as much as was in his power. Claus once again attempted to prevent the Six Nations' leaders from submitting the land question to Brock, but Norton claimed that "this time" the agent's intrigues were

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[100] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 286.

[101] Ibid., 287.

"without effect."[102] Perhaps for the first time since the creation of the upper province more than two decades earlier (1791), the Six Nations' leaders at the Grand River had the opportunity to address a lieutenant governor who earnestly desired to hear their pleas, and to do so without interference from the Indian Department. Norton was quite taken by Brock's caring and thoughtful response, and upon hearing the general give his honest assessment in interpreting the Haldimand Grant as a full, exclusive land title for the Six Nations, the chief immediately threw his support behind the military governor. "From the time that he made this candid avowal," Norton wrote, "I became opposed to insisting any further on the Land Matters, until we should see the end of expected hostilities."[103]

Norton was probably a bit surprised by the officer's verbal concession on the point of Six Nations' land rights. Brock may have been the first British leader ever to acknowledge Six Nations' sovereign rights over the Grand River lands, if that is in fact what he intended to say when he spoke with Norton. Norton's unhesitating devotion to Brock also rested in the fact that the General confided in the chief, looking to him to provide key information regarding the sentiments of the nations dwelling at the Grand River, and the General hoped that the chief's loyalty would inspire those who continued to waver.[104] In choosing to deal directly with Norton and the Six Nations, Brock circumvented the Indian Department, and Norton leapt upon this rare opportunity.

Not all residents at the Grand River shared Norton's enthusiasm for supporting the British in another conflict. A division among them became apparent in June 1812 after a deputation of Iroquois chiefs from within the American boundary arrived at the

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[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid., 288.

Grand River, hoping to dissuade their northern brethren from going to war. This delegation argued, "Why should we again fight, and call upon ourselves the resentment of the Conquerors? We know that neither of these powers have any regard for us." "In the former War," the speaker continued, "we espoused the cause of the King, We thought it the most honourable.... Experience has convinced us of their neglect, except when they want us. Why then should we endanger...the existence of our families, to enjoy their smiles only for the Day in which they need us?"[105] The delegation then repeated the uselessness of joining in the conflict on either side, since the Americans claimed not to need their services, and if they were to join the British, their people living in New York would suffer reprisals from the American government. "We are in their [the Americans'] power," added the deputation's spokesmen.[106] These arguments had a strong effect, causing the people of the Grand River to hesitate for two days in forming a response. Ultimately, a majority chose to remain idle, hoping that peace might continue.[107]

Challenging this opposition, Norton did his best to rally the Grand River consensus in favor of the Crown. Arguing eloquently, the mixed-blood leader acknowledged that the Iroquois peoples living on the American side of the border should remain at peace, but with regard to the Canadian Iroquois, he maintained, "Our situation is very different." For those at the Grand River, it was a matter of honor and security to resist an American invasion, and Norton alluded to the Americans' past treatment of Indians, even of those who attempted to remain neutral, reminding his audience that the

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[104] Ibid., 288, 293, 295-96.

[105] Ibid., 289.

[106] Ibid., 290.

[107] Ibid., 290-92.

Americans "have always been the Enemies of the Aboriginal Nations."[108] He added that an American conquest of Upper Canada would destroy the Grand River Reserve, despite its inhabitants' claims of neutrality.

Ultimately, Norton's attempts at persuasion proved futile. Until the British government satisfactorily resolved the question of the status of the Grand River lands, little support could be expected from the Six Nations in Upper Canada. Without a clear title to their land, the warriors at Grand River had little incentive to fight. And, as always in Iroquois societies, each man would individually decide whether or not to take up arms, based mostly on how he perceived this affecting his personal best interests. When the war began, Norton and a mere sixty warriors, representing only a small minority of the Grand River's 400-plus able-bodied men, arrived at Niagara in July 1812 to help repel an anticipated American attack. Cheered to see Norton, Brock eagerly inquired as to the current general sentiments at the Grand River, but the chief could only reply: "They are unfortunately divided into parties, and there are some plausible men, who succeed in retarding their coming forth,—but when they engage, I have no doubts they are not so depraved as to be faithless."[109] Norton's predictions would later prove correct, but until then, neither he nor Brock could depend on the majority of the Six Nations's warriors. When the chief and his small party of warriors departed from Niagara to assist in the upcoming brief siege of Detroit, his followers dwindled yet further, and by the time his band reached the Moravian mission of Fairfield on the Thames, only thirty-eight men still

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[108] Ibid., 291.

[109] Ibid., 293.

accompanied him.[110] The majority of the Six Nations' leaders and warriors chose to remain neutral at the war's outset, and the Mississaugas followed suit, withholding their warriors as well.[111]

Although Brock thought highly of Norton and respected his efforts, he interpreted the Six Nations' lukewarm response to British overtures in a highly negative way. Despite the loyal chief's optimism that the bulk of the Six Nations would yet prove faithful to Britain, Brock remained unconvinced. Judging by the small turnout of warriors at Niagara, the commander correctly reasoned that the Natives living in Upper Canada had little confidence in Britain's ability to protect the province against American aggression. Their unwillingness to fight infuriated Brock, who trusted neutral Indians even less than he did the many potentially disloyal whites in his province. He, like his predecessors, believed that Indians could never remain idle during warfare and assumed that they would eventually join one side or the other. "[T]o expect that this fickle race would remain in the midst of war in a state of neutrality," Brock wrote, "is truly absurd."[112] The Indians' refusal to fight further complicated Brock's problems, because most of the available white male inhabitants who lived near the Grand River refused to join the militia once they learned that the majority of the Six Nations' warriors had refrained from entering the contest. The white inhabitants, like Brock, believed that the Indians would not remain neutral for long, and that the warriors of the Grand River would

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[110] Benn, 48; Entry for 5 August 1812, Linda Sabathy-Judd, ed., Moravians in Upper Canada: The Diary of the Indian Mission of Fairfield on the Thames, 1792-1813 (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1999), 483-84.

[111] Benn, 51.

[112] Brock to Sir George Prevost, 26 July 1812, Cruikshank, ed., The Invasion of Canada and the Surrender of Detroit, 1812 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1912), 91; Benn, 46-47.

soon take up arms against whichever side stood at a disadvantage. The whites, as Brock put it, were "unwilling to leave their families to the mercy of 400 Indians, whose conduct affords such wide room for suspicion."[113]

Brock's feelings stemmed from the fact that he, contrary to the Native perspective, viewed all Canadian Indians as British subjects, rather than independent people who could freely enter the conflict as the King's allies, if and when they chose to do so. Shortly after Norton first informed Brock of the Six Nations' reluctance to fight, the General met with Upper Canada's Executive Council on 3 August 1812, requesting permission to impose martial law. Among his reasons for seeking such a measure, Brock included the seditious conduct of both whites and Indians, specifically claiming "[t]hat the Indians on the Grand River…had withdrawn from their Volunteer Services and declared for a neutrality, which, in respect of them, was equally inadmissable [sic] as with the King's other subjects."[114] In viewing the Indians as reneging subjects, Brock seemed to believe that, unless they fulfilled their duty, the Natives should forfeit the rights and protection that they possessed under the Crown. On 4 August, the day after the Executive Council voted to suspend habeas corpus, giving Brock virtual dictatorial powers, the General wrote to a fellow officer, suggesting that as soon as the government had it in its power, "the first step ought to be to expel the Indians from their present residence and place them out of the reach of doing mischief."[115]

Norton probably never knew of Brock's strong sentiments regarding the Indians, their obligations, and perhaps most important, the military governor's conception of the

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Council minutes at the Government House, York, Upper Canada, 3 August 1812, P.R.O., CO 42, 352, 109.

Indians' status with respect to the British Empire. Clearly, the commander believed that the Native warriors living in Canada had a moral obligation to defend the King's territories and interests, a duty that stemmed primarily from their hypothetical status as British subjects. Such an interpretation of the Natives' situation indicates that Brock had not fully grasped the meaning of the Grand River council's earlier stipulations regarding their control and possession of land that the council proclaimed as the necessary prerequisites needed to induce them to take up the King's cause. At that time it probably did not occur to Brock that the Indians' request for a land title in fee simple also entailed the distinctive free and independent status that Brant and Norton had always espoused. But Norton's unhesitating devotion to Brock from that point forward suggests that the chief also misunderstood British policy, insofar as he believed that Brock agreed with him on the issues of land, sovereignty, and the Six Nations' legal status. Convinced that Brock understood "the true Intent and meaning of General Haldimand's Grant," Norton was content to trust the commander, and thus the Mohawk leader decided not to raise the issue of Six Nations grievances again, "until we should see the end of the expected hostilities."[116] Due to the General's untimely death at Queenston Heights a few months later, this misunderstanding never surfaced, and Brock went to his grave much admired by Natives and whites alike.[117]

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[115] Brock to Colonel Baynes, 4 August 1812, Cruikshank, Invasion of Canada, 120.

[116] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 288.

[117] After Brock's death, the Six Nations honored him in a traditional Condolence ceremony, recognizing the fallen general for "his kindness towards us," and expressing hope that Brock's successor's "heart is warmed with similar sentiments of affection and regard towards us." A General Council of Condolence held at the Council House, Fort George, 6 November 1812, War of 1812 Collection, Folder 6a, McCord Museum, Montreal.

Brock's rationale in dealing with the Indians was based on several factors. While regarding the Indians in Upper Canada as British subjects, he sincerely wished to address their grievances, but more than this, his situation was quite desperate.[118] Perhaps as many as sixty percent of Upper Canada's population were either born in the United States or were direct American offspring.[119] As Brock wrote to a fellow officer, "My situation is most critical, not from anything the enemy can do, but from the disposition of the people.... The population, believe me, is essentially bad.... A full belief possess them all that this Province must inevitably succumb."[120] Given these dire circumstances, Brock was extremely anxious to gain Native support, and he would have been inclined to agree to nearly anything Norton said in council regarding the Haldimand Grant.

Knowing that the opening phase of the war could prove pivotal, and realizing that numerous Natives and whites alike needed to have a sense of anticipated victory before committing themselves to the conflict, Brock boldly took the initiative. He believed that if he could provide a psychological lift to the inhabitants of Canada, they would rally to the King's cause. Accordingly, the immediate captures of Michilimackinac and Detroit in the summer of 1812, combined with the destruction of Fort Dearborn in mid-August, provided the inspiration that Canadians sorely needed, and to Norton's relief, the Six Nations finally lived up to his prediction that they were "not so depraved as to be

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[118] Fred Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier (Toronto & New Haven: Ryerson Press & Yale University Press, respectively, 1941; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967), 28.

[119] George Sheppard, Plunder, Profit, and Paroles: A Social History of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada (Montreal & Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 18; Brock to Prevost, 12 July 1812, William Wood, ed., Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, 3 Vols. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1920-1928), I: 352.

[120] Brock to Colonel Baynes, 29 July 1812, Wood, I: 396.

faithless."[121] Brock's bold strategy immediately galvanized the Grand River chiefs and warriors, and by the beginning of September 1812, the Six Nations' leaders were nearly unanimous in rallying to the British cause.[122] Nothing more was said about neutrality, and Brock believed that the Indians, embarrassed by their earlier refusal to fight, now "appear ashamed of themselves, and promise to whipe [sic] away the disgrace into which they have fallen by their late conduct." Barely two weeks after the Americans had surrendered Detroit, most of Upper Canada's Native warriors turned up at Fort George. The Major General commented that three hundred Indians had arrived at the post, and he anticipated the arrival of two hundred more.[123] These figures account for nearly all of the available fighting men at the Grand River, combined with some Mississaugas and Moravian Indians as well.

Although Brock believed that his military successes, especially the capture of Detroit, had shamed the Six Nations into fulfilling their duty to the King, the sudden shift in attitude at Grand River, while remarkable, does not necessarily convey a growing sense of obligation on the Indians' part. At no time did one hundred percent of the Grand River's warriors fully embrace the King's cause.[124] The delayed decision to fight the Americans did not indicate that the Indians suddenly acknowledged their status as subjects; it merely meant that the Six Nations, acting as a neutral power, needed time to assess the fortunes of war before determining how to best safeguard their own land and

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[121] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 293.

[122] Joseph Willcocks to John MacDonnell, 1 September 1812, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 196-97.

[123] Brock to Sir George Prevost, 7 September 1812, ibid., 197; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 302.

[124] Benn, 110-12.

liberties. After the initial hostilities opened in favor of the British, the Six Nations, still regarding themselves as an independent force, deemed it best for their future status and landholdings to ally themselves to the British.

The ensuing war extinguished the final glimmer of hope for the Indians of Upper Canada to attain an autonomous status. After their initial hesitation prior to the capture of Detroit, the Six Nations fought with a purpose, distinguishing themselves on multiple occasions. These included some of the most critical moments of the war for Upper Canada, particularly the battles of Queenston Heights in October 1812, and Beaver Dams the following summer, in which the Indians were instrumental in twice thwarting enemy invasions.[125] On the former occasion Brock lost his life, but Norton's contingent of warriors turned the tide against a far superior army of Americans, leading to the destruction or capture of the entire invading force. The famed Winfield Scott was among the nine hundred American prisoners taken at Queenston.

The war and its inconclusive outcome mirrored the Six Nations' fortunes and status in Canada. After a difficult struggle, little was resolved. When the Anglo-American powers agreed to cease hostilities in accordance with terms amounting to *status quo ante bellum*, the Six Nations lived under the same nebulous conditions that they had known prior to the war. Moreover, with the advent of peace, the independent status and land patent which the Grand River people had coveted for so long were now out of reach. At war's end, the British government had less reason than ever to grant these terms. In 1816 the Crown once again placed Indian affairs in Canada under military jurisdiction, a

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[125] Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, cvi-cxx, 299-370; Benn, 86-173; G. F. G. Stanley, "The Significance of the Six Nations Participation in the War of 1812," Ontario History LV(4) (1963): 218-31.

branch of government that faced another peacetime period of retrenchment. As the white population around them grew increasingly dense, the Six Nations could only try as best they could to maintain their collective integrity. Years later, in 1841, as squatters increasingly encroached on Iroquois lands along the Grand River, the government eventually saw the necessity of consolidating the remaining lands of the Haldimand Grant in order to protect the remnants of the Reserve; by 1848 the Crown assigned one hundred acres to each male head of household among the Six Nations there.[126] The Indians of Upper Canada had effectively been absorbed as British subjects, though they would periodically continue to deny this status.[127]

Although the Six Nations never realized the dreams of sovereignty to the extent that Brant and Norton had so tenaciously pursued (and believed Haldimand had intended), they nevertheless achieved much of what those leaders had envisioned. In 1827, the Reserve finally acquired a resident clergyman, albeit thirty years after Brant's request, and in the ensuing decades children there were educated in missionary schools, which certainly would have pleased Norton.[128] By the early 1820s, nearly all of the Six Nations spoke English and many had achieved English literacy.[129] Furthermore, by the 1830s most Indians at the Grand River thrived as farmers.[130] Most importantly, the Grand River Six Nations continued to operate under a council of chiefs, which became an

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[126] Weaver, 526-27; Clark, 19; Malcolm Montgomery, "The Legal Status of the Six Nations in Canada," Ontario History LV(2) (1963): 93-103.

[127] Weaver, 532-33.

[128] Ibid., 526.

[129] By 1822 Norton had little desire to continue translating the Gospels into Mohawk, since most of his people had already incorporated the English language. See Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, lxxxvi.

[130] Weaver, 525.

elected body after 1924, and the Indians there never relinquished their sense of identity and heritage.[131] Hence, through selective assimilation, the Natives at the Grand River emerged from a time of traumatic change in the early nineteenth century with much of their culture and livelihood intact.

[131] Ibid., 532-36.

CHAPTER 6

RESTORING THE CHAIN OF FRIENDSHIP IN THE WEST AND IN THE NORTH, 1801-1812

After the turn of the nineteenth century, as Joseph Brant and John Norton continued their struggle for autonomy at the Grand River, British-Indian relations elsewhere proceeded along different lines. As a result of their defeat and subsequent events that occurred in the 1790s, tribes residing in northwest Ohio and the Wabash Valley depended less on the British. The former Western Confederacy of the Maumee Valley, including significant numbers of Shawnees, Wyandots, Miamis, and Delawares, sought not only peace with the Americans, but in some cases also a degree of acculturation to Euro-American lifestyles. By the commencement of the War of 1812, very few of the Native leaders who once supported British interests in rallying the Western Confederacy against the Americans in the late eighteenth century could still be counted among Britain's supporters.[1] By contrast, renewed Native resistance to American expansion developed more extensively from within the ranks of tribes situated farther west, including Potawatomis of Illinois, northern Indiana, and southern Michigan; Kickapoos from Illinois; and Winnebagoes in Wisconsin. These were joined by militant Ojibwas and Wyandots from the region surrounding Detroit and Brownstown, and together they formed a new alliance that gained much of its early unity and strength from the Shawnee Prophet's revitalization movement, between 1805 and 1811. These changes represented a revolution in Indian leadership along the Wabash Valley and Detroit

[1] The Wyandot leader Roundhead was the only signer of the Treaty of Greenville in 1795 to later join the Native resistance movement.

frontier, causing further uncertainty in the already nebulous state of Britain's relations with the Natives of that region.

Conversely, British relations with the northern Ojibwas and Ottawas dwelling in the northern Great Lakes, and with the Sauk, Fox, and Menominees in northern Wisconsin and the upper Mississippi Valley, generally continued as they always had. Hardly affected by Anthony Wayne's defeat of the Ohio tribes in the 1790s, these nations maintained closer ties to British traders and agents in the northern country and Upper Mississippi Valley. The expanding fur trade, conducted primarily by the North West Company, the XY Company, and a handful of private British and French interests during this period, increased Native economic dependency without presenting an immediate threat to the cultures and social structures of those nations involved. Their increasing commercial ties to the British, coupled with a greater distance between them and the Americans, placed these northern nations in a position nearly opposite to that of their Native brethren to the south, who, after 1808, gathered on the Wabash in support of the Shawnee Prophet and his brother Tecumseh. In fact, most northern Natives eventually spurned the Shawnee brothers' revitalization movement altogether, giving British-Indian relations in the North further continuity and greater stability.

An Uncertain Alliance: Amherstburg, Brownstown, and the Wabash Valley, 1801-1806

In 1801 the British leaders at Amherstburg continued to strictly observe the government's Indian policy of retrenchment, attempting thereby to further reduce Britain's obligations to its former Native allies. Captain Hector McLean, still serving as the post's commandant, kept a tight control over Indian affairs there, and his superiors in Quebec and at Whitehall never wavered in their support of his control over

Amherstburg's branch of the Indian Department. Indeed, all authorities continued to support McLean's earlier decision to dismiss veteran Indian agent Matthew Elliott, and none granted Elliott the dignity of either a formal inquiry or a public hearing. In this political climate, the commandant enforced a parsimonious accounting of Indian goods, and, as much as possible, he discouraged Native visits to his post. While McLean served at Amherstburg, the average number of Indian visitors to the post remained steady at a little more than 5,000 per year.[2]

During McLean's command the post experienced fewer visits from those tribes with whom the British had been more closely associated prior to the Western Confederacy's defeat at Fallen Timbers in 1794. Very few Miamis continued to receive British gifts, and there is no record of any Delawares at Amherstburg between 1798 and 1803.[3] Moreover, the Shawnees and Wyandots had fragmented, and while several bands still visited Amherstburg each year, most of them resided within United States territory, and both nations came to rely more heavily on U.S. annuity goods.[4] Several of these Shawnee groups had formed a new pro-American community at Wapakoneta, Ohio, under the leadership of the village chief, Black Hoof.[5] In addition to Black Hoof's village, other former war leaders such as the Miami Little Turtle, the Delaware

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[2] Indians Served at Amherstburg, 1798-1803, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 10, 9369.

[3] Ibid.

[4] The American government made large annuity distributions from Detroit, where the British had formerly distributed gifts, weapons, and supplies. By replacing the British in this capacity at Detroit, the U. S. government hoped to further undermine the connection between Britain and her former Native allies. In 1802 Miami leader Little Turtle and Five Medals, a Potawatomi, convinced President Jefferson and Secretary of War Henry Dearborn to also begin making annuity payments at Fort Wayne. See Edmunds, The Potawatomis, 160-61.

[5] See Edmunds, "'A Watchful Safeguard to Our Habitations': Black Hoof and the Loyal Shawnees," in Native Americans in the Early Republic, eds. Hoxie, Hoffman, and Albert, 162-99.

Buckongahelas, the Wyandot Tarhe, and the Potawatomi Five Medals had all come to favor accommodation with the Americans after 1795. Finally, significant numbers from within these formerly confederated nations had begun migrating west to communities along the Mississippi River during the 1780s and 1790s, further decreasing British contact with the Crown's staunchest Native allies of previous decades.

While these old allegiances weakened, British Indian agents at Amherstburg continued their communication with Wyandot leaders directly across the Detroit River at Brownstown, the symbolic center and council fire for the former confederacy. From this site longtime Wyandot peace chief Adam Brown remained firmly attached to British agents and leaders. In September 1803, after a year of bad crops throughout the Detroit region, agent Thomas McKee specifically requested that additional provisions be sent to Brown and a few others still residing at Brownstown whom he considered "deserving of His Majesty's bounty."[6] Four years later, when another Anglo-American war seemed imminent in the wake of the Chesapeake crisis, Adam Brown warned McKee and his fellow agents that the Americans intended to execute any captured member of the British Indian Department in the forthcoming conflict. Since Brown considered "Captain McKee…a very good man" who "had always treated him in the handsomest manner, he [Brown] would do everything in his power to have his [Mckee's] life saved."[7] Although the Brownstown community would profess an official stance of neutrality as the War of 1812 approached, these enduring ties between British agents and influential leaders at Brownstown would prove crucial to Britain's prospects of retaining Upper Canada.

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[6] McKee to Lt. Colonel Vincent, 9 September 1803, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 254, 143-44.

[7] Adam Brown's statement relayed to Thomas McKee, 3 December 1807, ibid., Vol. 255, 139-40; MPHC, XXIII: 42.

Despite maintaining close ties with some of the bands in the region of Brownstown, the British had no way of gauging the degree of allegiance the Natives would show them in the next war. Although Brownstown still served as a central meeting place, the Brownstown confederacy no longer existed in the form that it once had, and the Indians were less inclined to view their British Father in the same manner that they had when Britain participated in that confederacy. Consequently, British Indian agents rarely attended the councils still held at Brownstown, and British officials found that the only remaining Native confederacy worthy of the name to be represented at Brownstown's councils was the one emerging among Indians who dwelt further west, usually along the Wabash, Illinois, and Mississippi Rivers. In June of 1801 British agent George Ironside informed his superiors of a possible restoration of the Brownstown council fire, only this time the proposed confederacy would be composed of Sauks & Foxes, Potawatomis, Shawnees from the Wabash and Mississippi, and even a few western Cherokees. The former Shawnee war leader Blue Jacket, apparently envisioning a return to the days of his past glory, worked to bring this about.[8]

Although British leaders in Canada did not yet seek a restored intertribal confederacy (an indifference which contributed to the failure of Blue Jacket's scheme), this brief attempt at Indian unity in 1801 foreshadowed the restored British-Indian alliance of the future that would derive more from regions further west and north of the core of the former alliance. From the late 1790s, British agents had worked to maintain ties with the leaders of the Three Fires, which included Potawatomis who lived along

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[8] Ironside to Claus, 11 June 1801, and same to same, 12 June, 1801, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15368-73; Ironside to Selby, 15 June 1801, CAN, MG 19, F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 8, 150; White, The Middle Ground, 510-11; Sugden, Blue Jacket, 221-25.

Lake Michigan's southern tributaries.[9] By 1801 the Potawatomis who dwelt near Chicago and Peoria learned of American intentions to erect a post at Chicago, and they appealed to officials at Amherstburg for advice and support. They also requested that their British Father "would be as indulgent to us as to those of your children who live nearer [to you]."[10] In subsequent years Potawatomi delegations from this region continued to appeal to their British Father at Amherstburg, making allusions to past alliance obligations and their own proven loyalty.

In the summer of 1805 the Potawatomis from Chicago returned to Amherstburg, this time accompanied by a delegation of Sauks, Fox, and northern Ottawas. A Sauk speaker opened the council, giving the British a message from the Sioux of the Upper Mississippi region; a symbolic war pipe accompanied the Sioux message. The Sioux sought to unite all of the tribes against the encroachments of "[t]he new white Nation," and they informed their British Father: "Your answer will govern the conduct of the young warriors who are anxiously waiting for it."[11] The Sauk speaker then added that their confederacy "now consists of Ten Nations," and the Potawatomis from Chicago and Ottowas from Arbre Croche reported that their village chiefs had turned over tribal affairs to their war leaders, who now stood poised to join with the Sioux, Sauks, and the others.[12] All must have been disappointed when Thomas McKee answered two days later,

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[9] Goods Recommended to be Given to the Indians, Fort Malden [i.e. Amherstburg], 20 September 1797, Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 3, 188-90; MPHC, XX: 545-47.

[10] Speech Potawatomi chief Wawickasa at Amherstburg, 1 June 1801, in Ironside to Claus, 11 June 1801, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 26, 15369.

[11] A meeting with the Saakies, Foxes, Northern Ottawas, Poutawatomis held at Amherstburg on the 8th June 1805, ibid., Vol. 10, 9601-02.

[12] Ibid., 9602-04. Also see Claus to Major James Green, 24 July 1805, ibid., 9616, and White, The Middle Ground, 512.

explaining, "[Y]our great Father has strenuously recommended peace and good neighbourhood between the Indians of this Country and the peoples of the United States."[13]

The new American presence along the Mississippi River and at Fort Dearborn near the mouth of the Chicago River served to unite the tribes there even as it presented the British with an opportunity to lead a new Western Confederacy. Soon after the Amherstburg council of 1805, trader Robert Forsyth of St. Louis wrote to Thomas McKee, informing the agent that anti-American sentiment in the West was spreading and that now the Kickapoos also "did not like the Americans and…were determined to strike them."[14] The following summer a delegation of western Potawatomis again visited Amherstburg, reminding the British that they still awaited their Father's instructions, pleading that "our eyes [are] always turned towards you."[15] There was little of a specific nature that McKee could say to Native delegations seeking a renewed British-led alliance. This time the agent answered that he had indeed forwarded their request from the previous year to Upper Canada's governor at the time (i.e. Peter Hunter), but as McKee explained, "It has pleased…the Master of Life to remove him [Hunter] from this world before he had an opportunity of sending his directions and answer which you expected."[16] McKee's creative response temporarily succeeded, but the British could not

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[13] A meeting with the Saakies, Foxes, Northern Ottawas, Poutawatomis held at Amherstburg on the 8th June, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 10, 9605.

[14] Robert Forsyth to Capt. McKee, 19 May 1805, ibid., 9598. For more on the increasing frequency of Kickapoo depredations at this time, see Arrell M. Gibson, The Kickapoos: Lords of the Middle Border (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 52-57.

[15] Speech of the Saakies and Potawatomies at Amherstburg, 28 June 1806, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 1, series A, 417.

[16] Answer to the Chiefs of the Saakies and Potawatomies, 28 June 1806, Ibid., 419.

demur forever. They now had a growing Native confederacy on their hands, one that was nearly ripe for hostilities long before any of them could have anticipated another Anglo-American war.

Both the nature and the timing of these continued Native visits to Amherstburg are significant for several reasons. First, they demonstrated a growing anti-American disposition among the Natives throughout Illinois, Wisconsin, and the Mississippi Valley long before British leaders in Upper Canada became cognizant of what was happening there. As of yet Britain had not done anything to encourage a renewed alliance with any of those nations to the west, and agents and officers in Upper Canada had in fact done their best to discourage such an arrangement. When William Claus learned that the Dakota Sioux from the upper Mississippi contemplated sending a delegation to Amherstburg in 1805, the Deputy Superintendent advised them "not to venture a visit to their English Father at present."[17] Leaders in Canada and Great Britain did not want any further trouble with the Americans, particularly after the resumption of their wars against Napoleon in 1803, only a year after the signing of the short-lived Peace of Amiens. Initially, it was the Indians, not the British, who sought a renewed alliance.

American leaders, however, thought that the British were the source of Native exasperation and hostility. As early as 1805, Indiana's territorial Governor William Henry Harrison, who no doubt keenly remembered British involvement with the Indians in previous wars, spoke of the necessity of "cutting off" the Indians' "communication

[17] Claus to Prideaux Selby, 1 February 1805, CNA, MG 19, F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 9, 75.

with every foreign power."[18] In June of the following year, U.S. Indian agent William Wells wrote to Harrison, warning him of a growing anti-American confederacy led by the Three Fires and instigated by the "perturbation" and "intrigues of British agents and other mischief makers."[19] Already suspicious of British frontier activity, American leaders became convinced of its existence after the Chesapeake crisis in June of 1807. Governor Harrison publicly warned his fellow citizens, exclaiming,

> for who does not know that the tomahawk and scalping knife of the savage are always employed as the instruments of British vengeance. At this moment, ...as I sincerely believe, their agents are organizing a combination amongst the Indians within our limits, for the purposes of assassination and murder.[20]

Harrison's words deeply impressed numerous Americans, many of whom tended to imagine British intrigue at the root of every Indian depredation committed on the frontier. In subsequent years such American political and military leaders as Henry Clay, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Andrew Jackson adopted this rhetoric in order to justify a forced expulsion of British presence from North America. Theoretically, once Canada rested safely in the hands of the new Republic, the Indians would live harmoniously with its frontier inhabitants.[21] Neither the Americans nor the British fully grasped the degree and the cause of the growing Native discontent, but the Americans understood it the least.

In retrospect, the Native solicitations of British support at Amherstburg between 1801 and 1806 not only tend to diminish the credibility of American allegations of British

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[18] Governor Harrison's Address to the Indiana General Assembly, 29 July 1805, Logan Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, 2 Vols. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1922), I: 153.

[19] William Wells to Harrison, 19 June 1806, E392. H3 1994, William Henry Harrison Collection, Reel 2, 572, Indiana Historical Society.

[20] Governor Harrison's Message to the Indiana Legislature, 17 August 1807, ibid., I: 236.

manipulation among the Indians during these early years, but are also significant in other ways. The Indian councils held at Amherstburg indicate that the western nations, namely the Potawatomis, Kickapoos, Sauks, Dakota Sioux, and Winnebagoes, sought to form a militant confederacy and a British alliance before the religious revitalization movement of Tenskwatawa, or the Shawnee Prophet, and his brother Tecumseh had gained much momentum. For example, the Amherstburg councils of 1805 and 1806 occurred before Tecumseh began his journeys to augment the number of converts in his brother's fledgling prophetic movement. The western nations that had previously begun to discuss a new confederacy needed only a unifying agent to bring it to fruition. When the British refused to fulfill this role, remaining non-committal and attempting to placate the war-minded tribes that solicited their support, these nations became fertile ground for the spread of the subsequent nativistic religious movement, and the Prophet gained many converts from among them. A bit later, in 1810, William Henry Harrison recognized the increased devotion that the Shawnee Prophet enjoyed among the tribes to the West. The Governor informed Secretary of War William Eustis that "the Prophet's principle, that their lands should be considered common property, is either openly avowed or secretly favored by all the Tribes west of the Wabash."[22] Like Harrison, the British did not fully grasp the far-reaching extent and significance of the religious movement's impact among the western nations until 1810 or 1811. But by then British officials in Canada had come to view the growing confederacy as a potential asset in wartime, rather than a peril to

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[21] See Bradford Perkins, ed., The Causes of the War of 1812: National Honor or National Interest? (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), 116-17; Bailey, 129-36.

[22] Harrison to Eustis, 24 December 1810, Esarey, Messages and Letters, I: 497.

continued peace, and while still cautious, the British no longer spurned Native pleas for support.

Spiritual Revitalization and Political Revolution along the Wabash

While several of the tribes from Illinois, Wisconsin, and the Mississippi River Valley sought British support in the early years of the nineteenth century, British relations with Natives from northwest Ohio and the Wabash Valley remained negligible. Much of this neglect resulted from the westward migration of some of those bands, but the primary reason for the diminishing ties between Britain and its former allies was the American policy of acculturation that followed the Treaty of Greenville and the resulting social upheaval that led to a revolution in leadership within the tribal ranks. The American annuities were insufficient to fully sustain even those Native communities that sought acculturation, causing further dissatisfaction. As the Indians' impoverished condition grew worse in the first years of the nineteenth century, they became increasingly disillusioned with any leaders who seemed to benefit by cooperating with the Americans. Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet successfully wooed thousands of followers who no longer recognized the authority of such chiefs as Little Turtle, Black Hoof, Tarhe, Five Medals, and Buckongahelas.

The open rebellion against these traditional leaders crystallized in the form of the Shawnee Prophet's nativist revitalization movement, which began with his visions along the White River in the spring of 1805.[23] The Master of Life warned the Prophet of the Indian peoples' pending destruction if they did not return to their pristine lifestyles that

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[23] R. David Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 28-29, 33-34. Tenskwatawa's first visions occurred in early April, 1805, near present-day Anderson, Indiana.

they had abandoned due to their contact with whites. An explicit target of this critique was the leadership of the chiefs who signed the Treaty of Greenville and favored agricultural development via government-sponsored "civilizing" missions, and who had grown increasingly dependent on annuity distributions from the American government.[24] In obedience to the Great Spirit, Tenskwatawa lashed out against these government chiefs, depicting them as wicked traitors and minions of the Americans, whom he considered "children of the Evil Spirit."[25]

Several incidents between 1806 and 1810 document the rapid expansion of the nativist prophetic movement and the Prophet's growing influence in tribal affairs and the threat he posed to the traditional chiefs' standing. In 1806 Tenskwatawa presided over the execution of four pro-American Indians who lived along the White River and closely fraternized with the Moravian missionaries there. One of the executed, the Delaware leader Tatapaxsit, had signed the Treaty of Greenville and subsequently made further land cessions to the Americans; like the other prominent government chiefs, Tatapaxsit also favored the government's civilizing missions.[26] In 1807 the Prophet determined that the pro-American Shawnee leader Black Hoof was a witch, and Tenskwatawa's followers assassinated two of the old chief's villagers from Wapakoneta.[27] Similarly, other tribes also conducted purges, and in 1810 the Wyandots executed three accused witches,

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[24] Gregory Evans Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 131-39.

[25] Speech of La Maigouis, or the Trout, at Arbre Croche, 4 May 1807, CNA, MG 19 F 16, Alexander McKee Papers, 13-15. La Maigouis acted as the Shawnee Prophet's messenger in the northern country.

[26] Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 137; Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 43-46; Jay Miller, "The 1806 Purge among the Indiana Delaware," Ethnohistory 41(2) (Spring 1994): 254-62. For the Moravian missionaries' account of these executions, see Gipson, 411-21.

[27] Gregory Dowd, "Thinking and Believing: Nativism and Unity in the Ages of Pontiac and Tecumseh," American Indian Quarterly 16(3) (Summer 1992), 320; Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 137-38.

including Leather Lips, a prominent peace chief who had also signed the Treaty of Greenville.[28]

Of all the events indicating the shift in power away from the institutional chiefs to the Prophet's nativists, none was more important than the brief encounter between Little Turtle, the most powerful pro-U. S. government chief, and Tenskwatawa near the Mississinewa River early in 1808. Determined to prevent the Prophet's entourage from moving to the Wabash, Little Turtle threatened to kill Tenskwatawa if he and his followers made the proposed move.[29] Not the least bit intimidated, the Prophet scoffed at Little Turtle and condemned all the "Chiefs [who] had abandoned the Interests of their respective nations and sold all the Indians['] Land to the united States."[30] According to Little Turtle, the Prophet added that "his plans had been…santioned[sic] by the Great Spirit and that it was not in the power of man to interrupt them…nothing could stop him."[31] Little Turtle's meeting with Tenskwatawa had quite the opposite effect from what the older chief had anticipated. It confirmed the success of the Prophet's *coup d'etat*, and it did nothing to slow the expansion of the revitalization movement, which continued to eclipse the influence of the government chiefs for the next several years.

The nativists' revolt against conventional tribal authority reflected a rift between the chiefs and their followers that had been widening for years. As early as 1801 William

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[28] For a list of the chiefs who signed the Treaty of Greenville, see MPHC, XX: 416-18.

[29] Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 138; Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 69-70. The Potawatomi leader Five Medals accompanied Little Turtle to this meeting with the Prophet. Also see William Wells to Henry Dearborn, Secretary of War, 2 April 1808, Clarence E. Carter, ed. The Territorial Papers of the United States, 26 Vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1934-1962), VII: 541.

[30] Wells to Dearborn, 23 April 1808, ibid., 560.

[31] Same to same, 22 April 1808, ibid., 558.

Henry Harrison noted that the tribes on the lower Wabash had murdered a number of their headmen, lamenting that the "Chiefs and…nearest relations fall under the strokes of their [followers'] Tomhawks [sic] & Knives." The Governor further emphasized that "there is scarcely a Chief to be found amongst them."[32] Harrison's attempt to remedy the instability of the Native communities entailed efforts to make the Indians more dependent on the United States, which meant an increase of Native debts followed by a series of rapid government land acquisitions.[33] However, the flurry of treaties that Harrison negotiated not only failed to reduce U. S. – Indian tensions but the agreements intensified Native frustration with their leaders.[34]

Of all of Harrison's treaties with the Natives in Indiana Territory, his fifth and final pact as governor proved to be the most damaging to U. S. – Indian relations. Negotiated at Fort Wayne in the autumn of 1809, this treaty involved the Delaware, Miami, Potawatomi, and Eel River nations, and it entailed a land cession of nearly three million acres, a portion of which extended west of the Wabash River, cutting an enormous swath from the remaining Native territory in Indiana and southern Illinois. Only a year earlier, the Prophet and Tecumseh and their followers had moved to the new village of Prophetstown near the confluence of the Wabash and Tippecanoe Rivers,

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[32] Harrison to the Secretary of War, 15 July 1801, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 29.

[33] Harrison's superiors also advocated this strategy. In a well-known letter, President Thomas Jefferson in 1803 instructed the Governor to "push our trading houses, and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them run in debt, because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by a cession of lands." Jefferson to Harrison, 27 February 1803, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 71.

[34] For Harrison's Indian treaties, see Charles J. Kappler, ed., Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, 2 Vols., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), II: 64-68, 70-77, 80-82, 89-90, 101-07, 117-18; Francis Paul Prucha, American Indian Treaties, 116-23, 451-55, 456. For proceedings and Indian responses, see Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 117-18, 121-23, 137-39, 358-78. Also see Indiana Historical Society, E 392. H3 1994, William Henry Harrison Collection, Reels 1-3, 10.

largely for the purpose of guarding these very lands. In fact, Tenskwatawa had told Little Turtle that the Indians intended to unite at the new location, where "they would then be able to watch the Boundry [sic] Line between the Indians and white people—and if a white man put his foot over it that the warriors could Easly [sic] put him back."[35] The cession under the Treaty of Fort Wayne of such a large area that the growing nativist confederacy specifically hoped to retain produced an angry response among the Prophet's followers and led the prophetic movement to become even more militant. The following spring, while in a heated discussion at Black Hoof's village, Tecumseh angrily snatched a letter written by Harrison (addressed to the Shawnees) from the hands of Baptist missionary Stephen Ruddell and threw it into the fire. The war leader then declared that he would do the same to Harrison if the Governor were present. After convincing a few of the formerly pro-American Shawnees to join the gathering confederacy, Tecumseh continued his recruiting efforts among the Wyandots.[36] Then in late August, while speaking in council with Harrison at Vincennes, Tecumseh threatened "to kill all the chiefs that sold you the land."[37]

Clearly, the Treaty of Fort Wayne had further impaired relations with the Indians, and the nativists had no intention of honoring any agreement made by leaders whom they considered to have abdicated. But the aftermath of the treaty also marked a more significant turning point within Native politics. It represented the moment at which the

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[35] Wells to Dearborn, 22 April 1808, Carter, Territorial Papers, VII: 558.

[36] See John Johnston to Harrison, 24 June 1810, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 430; Sugden, Tecumseh: A Life, 180-81; R. David Edmunds, Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984), 126-27; Edmunds, "A Watchful Safeguard: Black Hoof and the Loyal Shawnees," 172-73; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 174-75.

[37] Tecumseh's speech at Vincennes, 20 or 21 August 1810, Carl F. Klinck, ed., Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction in Early Records (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1961), 71; Esarey, Messages & Letters, 466.

nativist confederacy began to wield its maximum political strength, and the moment at which the majority of Natives throughout southern Michigan, Indiana, western Ohio, and Illinois fully rejected the authority of the government chiefs, giving allegiance to the Shawnee brothers and the prophetic movement on the Wabash. Prior to this time the fiber of the confederacy had been mainly spiritual, but after 1809 the prophetic movement began to also crystallize and function as both a political and military entity. In 1810, Tecumseh, without any hereditary authority as a village chief, boldly proclaimed to Harrison, "I am authorized by all the tribes....I am the head of them all." The Shawnee leader also explained that his nativist followers needed to "destroy [the] village [i.e. government] chiefs," in order "to let all our affairs be transacted by [genuine] Warriors."[38]

Some scholars argue that the nativist movement became secular and political after the Treaty of Fort Wayne, and that Tecumseh eclipsed his brother's authority at this point.[39] However, Gregory Dowd replies that while Tecumseh did indeed gain influence, indicating a stronger intertribal political structure within the confederacy in the aftermath of the Fort Wayne Treaty, this did not necessarily coincide with a decrease of either his brother's status or the spiritual revitalization movement in general.[40] In fact, Tecumseh's increasing popularity after 1809 indicated the growing disillusionment of the younger warriors with the government chiefs, and not so much a shift in the confederacy's

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[38] Tecumseh's speech at Vincennes, 20 or 21 August 1810, Klinck, Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction, 71; Esarey, Messages & Letters, 465-66.

[39] Sugden, Tecumseh: A Life, 187-89; Edmunds, Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership, 124-25; Reginald Horsman, Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812 (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967), 152-53, 166-67.

[40] Dowd, "Thinking and Believing: Nativism and Unity in the Ages of Pontiac and Tecumseh," 322; Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 139-40.

ideology; Tecumseh's rise did not alter the Prophet's original tenets and prophecy that dated from the movement's origins on the White River.

Since the confederacy grew out of a religious revitalization movement, its principal war chiefs were generally thought to possess the spiritual powers required to act as leaders in such a movement, or, at the very least, they were loyal followers of the Prophet, who directly foretold their fate. Tecumseh, while often thought of as a political and secular war chief, was perhaps the greatest proponent of the revitalization movement. More than merely possessing talents of warfare and inspirational rhetoric, Tecumseh also purportedly wielded much spiritual power; those who followed him believed that the Great Spirit and the manitous favored the war leader. Throughout Tecumseh's southern journey in the autumn of 1811, Creeks and Seminoles claimed to have witnessed his rituals, miracles, and even his immense "power to deal with the evil spirit."[41] In the North, the Winnebagoes also regarded Tecumseh as an invincible war leader.[42]

Other important war leaders during this era also functioned as both war chiefs and shamans. Some of these included Main Poc and Josiah Francis, and perhaps to a lesser extent Shabonee, Roundhead, and Black Hawk. The Potawatomi Main Poc held

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[41] Tustenuckochee to Lyman Draper, 22 August 1883, Tecumseh Papers, Draper Mss., Vol. 4YY2; John Juniper to Lyman Draper, 11 January 1882, ibid., vol. 4YY16-16.1; Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 197.

[42] Narrative of Spoon Decorah, WHC, XIII: 459. Generations after the famed Shawnee's death at Moraviantown in 1813, the older Winnebagoes still spoke often of Tecumseh, recounting his miraculous feats. Although Tecumseh's violent death might have seemingly undermined the notion of his omnipotence, his followers did not view this as Tecumseh's loss of power; but rather, they interpreted the event as the Great Spirit's wrath against them for having compromised their nativist ways. The famed Sauk leader Black Hawk, who allegedly saw Tecumseh die, later recalled, "As soon as the Indians discovered that he was killed, a sudden fear came over them, and thinking the Great Spirit was angry, they fought no longer, and were quickly put to flight." See The Death of Tecumseh: Black Hawk's Account, Klinck, Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction, 209; Benjamin Drake, Life of Tecumseh, and of His Brother the Prophet; With a Historical Sketch of the Shawanoe Indians (Cincinnati: E. Morgan & Co., 1841; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 202. Today the Shawnee people remember Tecumseh as one of their greatest prophets. James Howard, 211.

significant sway over the Indians in Indiana and Illinois territories; many feared him, since his followers claimed that their leader "was not born of a woman but that he was got by the Great Spirit and sprang out of the ground."[43] As a wabeno, or the most powerful type of shaman short of being a prophet, Main Poc allegedly could change the weather.[44] Although Main Poe never joined the Shawnee Prophet's following, he invited the Prophet, Tecumseh, and their entire entourage to move from Ohio to what became the site of Propetstown near the confluence of the Wabash and Tippecanoe Rivers early in 1808. At about the time that the Shawnee Prophet and his devotees made this move, U.S. Indian agent William Wells at Fort Wayne considered Main Poe "the greatest warrior in the west...the pivot on which the minds of all the Western Indians turned...[he] has more influence than any other Indian."[45] Thus Wells believed that the key to good relations between the United States and the Indians depended on the government's dealings with Main Poc, and that he could control the nativists in the Wabash prophetic movement by controlling Main Poe. Ultimately, the Potawatomi wabeno became an important British ally along the Detroit frontier in the War of 1812.

Among the other key figures mentioned above, the Creek prophet Josiah Francis, also know as Hildis Hadjo, led the Muskogee religious revitalization movement between 1811 and 1814. Known as the "Redsticks," Francis's Creek followers had initially drawn much of their inspiration from Tecumseh, and these militant revivalists initiated a civil

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[43] Draper's notes, 1882, taken from Thomas Forsyth's notes, Tecumseh Papers, Draper Mss., vol. 8YY54.2.

[44] R. David Edmunds, "Main Poc: Potawatomi Wabeno," in American Indian Prophets: Religious Leaders and Revitalization Movements, ed. Clifford E. Trafzer (Sacramento, CA: Sierra Oaks Publishing Co., 1986), 21-22; Edmunds, The Potawatomis, 20.

[45] Wells to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, 20 April 1808, Carter, Territorial Papers, VII: 556; Wells to Dearborn, 7 January 1808, GABLA.

war among the Creek towns who did not join their religious movement and cultural revolt.[46] Francis, a mixed-blood, became perhaps the most important Native prophet in the South during not only the Creek civil war but also during the War of 1812, when the Redsticks ardently resisted white culture and American expansion.

In the North, Shabonee and Roundhead both became mystic war leaders within the context of Tenskwatawa's prophetic movement. The Ottawa leader Shabonee relied on spiritual power for victory, and, like Black Hawk at the Thames in 1813, interpreted the Native defeat at Tippecanoe two years earlier as the will of the Great Spirit.[47] The Wyandot headman Roundhead, the only signer of the Treaty of Greenville to participate in the Native resistance during the War of 1812, joined the Shawnee Prophet's movement by 1807, even before the Prophet and his converts moved to Tippecanoe.[48] In September 1812, Roundhead, Tecumseh, and Main Poc, along with their warriors, accompanied Major Adam Muir on the abortive British expedition up the Maumee River in an attempt to capture Fort Wayne. When Muir decided to retreat after learning of an advancing American army, Roundhead urged him and his soldiers to continue the campaign because the divinations of Main Poc and other "conjurers" portended success against the Americans.[49] Furthermore, Tecumseh respected Roundhead as the most prominent leader

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[46] Frank L. Owsley, Jr., "Prophet of War: Josiah Francis and the Creek War," American Indian Quarterly 9(3) (Summer 1985): 277; Martin, 126, 134; Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 169-70.

[47] "Shabonee's Account," in Battle of Tippecanoe: Conflict of Cultures, ed. Alameda McCollough (Lafayette, IN: Tippecanoe County Historical Association, 1973; fifth printing, 1991), 9.

[48] Sugden, Tecumseh: A Life, 4, 132-33; Edmunds, Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership, 96. For Roundhead's signature, see the Treaty of Greenville, MPHC: XX: 416. He is listed as "Staye-tah" under the Wyandot section of signatures. For Roundhead's support of the nativists in 1807, see his speech against Black Hoof's faction; 6 June 1807, Tecumseh Papers, Draper Mss, 3YY72-73.

[49] Major Muir's Official Report of the Expedition to Fort Wayne, 30 September 1812, Appendix I, Alexander C. Casselman, ed., Richardson's War of 1812 (Toronto: Historical Publishing Co., 1902), 298-99; Edmunds, "Main Poc: Potawatomi Wabeno," 29.

in the nativist movement. A month earlier at the British-Indian capture of Detroit, General Isaac Brock demonstrated his gratitude to Tecumseh by giving him his personal scarlet sash. Tecumseh acknowledged Roundhead's rank and prestige by giving Brock's sash to the Wyandot, explaining that Roundhead was "an older, and…abler warrior than himself."[50] This cadre of leaders tended to have common goals, and they viewed themselves as members of a unified movement to restore a threatened culture and religion. Unlike the Native leaders who sometimes acted as culture brokers for Euro-American lifestyles among their people, the nativist war chiefs of the revitalization era did not accept leaders who sought compromise and accommodation.[51]

After this radical shift in leadership among the nations in the southern Great Lakes and Wabash Valley, British officials in Upper Canada, especially those at Fort Malden (i.e., Amherstburg), were compelled to cultivate ties with the nativist faction, or have no relations at all with the most vital elements in Native communities. Since most of these warriors had not served as Confederacy war leaders at the former Brownstown council fire, British attempts to restore their former alliance involved the challenge of reestablishing diplomatic ties with tribes that had ousted their institutional chiefs. From the years of the American Revolution through the mid-1790s all tribal factions in the Old Northwest had generally been allied to Britain, but after the revitalization movement had brought about a new confederacy and new sachems, British agents really did not know where they stood with their former allies. Furthermore, Whitehall's policy of

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[50] William James, A Full and Correct Account of the Military Occurences of the Late War Between Great Britain and the United States of America, 2 Vols., (London: printed for the author, 1818), I: 291-92; Klinck, Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction, 158-59; Edmunds, Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership, 180; Sugden, Tecumsh: A Life, 308, 447.

[51] Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 21, 183.

retrenchment in the Indian Department between 1796 and 1807, as implemented by Captain Hector McLean and other army officers, had drastically cut the practice of gift-giving that had long sustained British-Indian ties.

Having distanced themselves from the Natives of Ohio and Indiana for more than a decade, British officials, no less than the Americans, were mystified by the Prophet's charismatic movement. Late in 1807, William Claus, Deputy Superintendent General of British Indian Affairs, held the opinion that "that Rascal the Prophet" was a French agent.[52] Ironically, while Claus suspected French treachery, the Americans believed that the Prophet was a pawn of British intrigue.

Although Claus badly misread the prophetic movement, his suspicions of French involvement indicate that the Deputy Superintendent General had not fully dismissed rumors of French invasions from the West. Years earlier, leaders in Upper Canada had ridiculed Joseph Brant for supposedly fabricating stories of French incursions in order to further his own cause and perhaps gain Six Nations' sovereignty at the Grand River. Now Claus thought it best to seriously consider the plausibility of growing French influence among the Indians.[53] The agent was cognizant of Napoleon's stunning successes against the allied nations of the Third Coalition during the years 1805 through 1807. And, despite the fact that Nelson had previously demolished the enemy fleets at Trafalgar, Claus knew that Britain's growing military commitments on the European continent meant that Upper Canada could expect virtually no reinforcements from home in the event of a Franco-Indian insurrection in the Great Lakes.

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[52] Claus to John Johnson, Superintendent General, 2 November 1807, CNA, MG 19, F 1, Claus Papers, 9, 161-62; Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 63.

The mood of the hotheaded Americans in the wake of the Chesapeake affair gave Claus an additional incentive to begin making friendly overtures to the Prophet and other leaders associated with him. Harrison and the Americans were mistaken in their belief that the naval tragedy was somehow linked to British-Indian dealings on the frontier, and although the incident ironically did precipitate closer British-Indian ties, this came only as a defensive measure after hawkish American sentiments led the countries to the brink of war.[54] The changing diplomatic climate in the Great Lakes compelled Claus and his superiors to take an assertive role in reestablishing their Chain of Friendship with nations that now fell under the influence of the Prophet, Tecumseh, Main Poc, Roundhead, and others. Claus, who ordinarily maintained his headquarters at Fort George near the mouth of the Niagara River, spent more than five months during the first half of 1808 at Fort Malden, where he attempted to ascertain the viability of a restored Native confederacy and its fidelity to British interests. Claus met with dozens of Indians passing through Amherstburg, but he most earnestly desired to speak with the Prophet. The agent sent a number of invitations to Tenskwatawa to meet with him at Fort Malden, and after receiving no response, Claus finally dispatched Frederick Fisher, another Indian agent, to journey to Prophetstown to personally deliver the invitation.[55] Fisher returned with favorable news, indicating that the Tenskwatawa assured the British "of his friendship."[56]

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[53] By May, 1808, Governor General Sir James Craig also viewed the French as a significant threat. See Craig to Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore, 11 May 1808, MPHC, XXV: 245-46; P.R.O., CO 42/136, 163-64.

[54] Harrison's Speech to the Indiana Legislature, 17 August 1807, Esarey, Messages and Letters, I: 235-36.

[55] Claus to Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore, 27 February 1808, MPHC, XV: 44; CNA, MG 19, F 1, Claus Papers, 9, 177-79; Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 10, 405.

[56] Claus to Prideaux Selby, Military Secretary, 3 May 1808, MPHC, XV: 49; Fort Malden Archives, John Marsh Papers, File 10, 415; CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, 9, 193; Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 70-71; Edmunds, Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership, 113-14.

When the Shawnee Prophet still did not arrive after much anticipation, Claus sent a Fox runner specifically informing Tenskwatawa that "I [Claus] will be very glad to take you by the hand and as there will be several Nations with you I will be glad to take some of their chief young men by the hand also."[57]

Despite all of Claus's efforts to speak with the Prophet and to restore close ties with the Natives south and west of the Great Lakes, it does not seem that the Prophet visited Fort Malden until after the commencement of the War of 1812, long after his intertribal influence had seriously diminished. Tecumseh, however, answered Claus's call, and the elder brother, accompanied by five Shawnees, finally traveled to Malden, where they met with the Deputy Superintendent for the first time in mid-June 1808. On this initial meeting Claus "had at least 3 hours conversation with" Tecumseh, but Claus apparently was disappointed that the Prophet remained absent, as the agent never referred to Tecumseh by name, but merely as "the Prophets Brother."[58] No formal commitments were struck in this encounter, but both parties exchanged kind words, and the Shawnee delegation came away with "a handsome Present."[59]

Although both the Prophet and Tecumseh initially approached the British with caution and reserve, they chose not to fully reject Claus's overtures. The Shawnee brothers' recent move to Prophetstown had brought the risk of extreme deprivation and starvation because at the new site the nativists no longer had access to any of the benefits that they had known in Greenville: partial annuity distributions, gifts from the Shakers of

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[57] Diary of William Claus at Amherstburg, 16 May 1808, MPHC, XXIII: 50. The original of this diary is in CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, 9, 195-215.

[58] Claus Diary, entries for 13, 14, 15 June 1808, MPHC XXIII: 53-54.

[59] Ibid., 53.

Turtle Creek, and stolen produce and livestock from white settlers.[60] While far from representing an immediate military alliance, Tecumseh's meeting with Claus in 1808 was the first step in reuniting British leaders with nativist factions in the North, paving the way for a future partnership in a common cause. The meeting also opened a new phase in diplomacy in which the British ardently pursued a wartime Indian policy, and it marked the beginning of Tecumseh's career as a liaison between British officers and the nativist faction that would support them.[61]

Tecumseh and the British

Prior to his meeting with Claus in 1808, Tecumseh probably had never entered a British or an American fort.[62] He had never signed a treaty, nor did he possess any hereditary claims to leadership within the Shawnee infrastructure, a deficiency of credentials that led Black Hoof and the Shawnee council at Wapakoneta to view Tecumseh as a usurping imposter and demagogue.[63] Though he lacked the proper

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[60] Regarding conditions at Prophetstown, see John Conner's Statement before William Wells at Fort Wayne, 18 June 1808, Shawnee File, GABLA; Harrison to Henry Dearborn, 14 February 1809, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 355; Carter, Territorial Papers, VII: 640, 356; Wells to Dearborn, 23 April 1808, Carter, Territorial Papers, VII: 560; White, The Middle Ground, 509; Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 72, 75-76. For the Prophet's relationship with the Shakers, see J. P. MacLean, "Shaker Mission to the Shawnee Indians," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society Publications (II) (June 1903): 215-29.

[61] Although it can be argued that a militant British-Indian policy had been revived a year before this meeting with Tecumseh, British leaders understood their own vulnerability if they did not gain the support of the growing nativist movement. Once they had opened communication with these recalcitrants, British Indian agents knew that they could continue a wartime Indian policy, explaining Claus's anxiety over the Prophet's disposition.

[62] However, Tecumseh had previously met with white leaders, including an occasion when he made a public speeh in the courthouse at Chillicothe in September 1807, calming the citizens by refuting allegations that Indians had committed a recent murder in western Ohio. See Sugden, Tecumseh: A Life, 3-8.

[63] Sugden, Tecumseh: A Life, 92-93, 96-97, 130-31. As Shawnees of the Kispoko division, Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa held less institutional authority than Black Hook of the preeminent Mekoche division, and war leaders were expected to defer to the prerogative of village chiefs in formal council settings. Howard, 26-27, 108-09. For Tecumseh's rivalry with Blackhoof and the Wapakoneta council, see Ibid., 97, 131; Bil

authority to treat with white officials, he seems, based on his tendency to separate himself and his small band from external forms of authority, not to have desired intertribal or international political power. He wished to be free of all ties to British or American leaders, and he did not think that he and other Shawnees should yield to the authority of chiefs who had compromised with the Americans. Thus Tecumseh only became a de facto village chief in the years following Wayne's victory and the Treaty of Greenville; his followers consisted mostly of the poor and dispossessed Shawnees who felt betrayed by their leaders who had signed the Treaty of Greenville and encouraged assimilation with the Americans.

From the British perspective, Tecumseh was a godsend. With most of their former allied chiefs now dealing with the Americans, and the future of the Brownstown council fire uncertain, the British had little hope of warding off an American invasion. Unlike the era of the American Revolution, the British in Upper Canada could no longer expect all tribal factions to support their cause. Now they would have to rely specifically on the disaffected nativist elements, mainly those groups alienated by United States frontier policy. Even so, Claus and the Indian Department were stunned when more than 5,000 of these Indians visited Fort Malden in the autumn of 1808, only a few months after Claus's departure from that place.[64] Such a large number of potential intertribal Native allies linked to so few leaders—Tecumseh, Roundhead, and Main Poc—was certainly more than anyone had anticipated, particularly when considering that British-Indian ties had nearly been severed along the Maumee more than a decade earlier.

Gilbert, God Gave Us This Country: Tekamthi and the First American Civil War (New York: Atheneum, 1989), 192.

Although these results were due in part to the Indian Department's renewed efforts to restore the old alliance, much of the Native enthusiasm can be attributed to the crystallization of the prophetic movement, and perhaps to the fact that the proselytes needed food as they faced their first winter at Prophetstown.

The potential connections with the nativist confederacy also appeared especially advantageous to the British after the Chesapeake Affair in 1807, and from that date onward Canadian officials strove to restore an alliance with Natives living within the borders of the United States. But such a delicate task had to be done with discretion, since Britain technically stood as a neutral power between the American government and the belligerent Indians in the Old Northwest. Blatant British activity among the anti-American tribes could itself precipitate another Anglo-American war. Knowing that they could not send open overtures to their former allied chiefs who now dealt with the Americans, Claus and his staff favored opening a dialogue with Indians who wanted nothing to do with the American government, keeping the diplomacy more discreet. Although the Americans suspected British involvement with the Indians, Prophetstown was so far removed from both Vincennes and Fort Wayne that neither Harrison nor U. S. agent William Wells could determine the level of British-Indian contact.[65]

In the meantime, leaders in Canada pursued a dual Indian policy, one that constantly proclaimed neutrality and another that prepared for war in case the first failed. Governor General Sir James Craig understood the crucial necessity of a British-Indian alliance, reasoning that Indians could never sit idle in warfare and would therefore be

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[64] Claus to Prideaux Selby, Military Secretary, 18 January 1809, CNA, RG 8, Military C Series, Vol. 256, 5.

"employed against us," unless already in the King's service.[66] Thus Craig instructed his officers not to make any public commitments to the Indians, but to privately assure them of the King's friendship in order to gain their trust.[67] At the same time, the nativist allies were urged not to strike the Americans until their British Father was at war with the United States. The pursuit of such a diplomatic line required experience, and Craig reinstated the aging Matthew Elliott after an eleven-year absence from service due to the agent's dismissal in 1797 for alleged misconduct. By 1808 his services were badly needed; not only did the Indians favor him, but he could carry out a duplicitous policy as well as anyone.[68] Although the Americans had exaggerated British tampering with the Indians prior to 1808, the secret policy carried out by Craig, Gore, Claus, and Elliott now gave credence to American allegations of British involvement.[69]

Like the British, Tecumseh and the nativist leaders also used discretion, refraining from wholehearted promises of military support in any forthcoming conflict between Britain and the United States. However, they definitely understood that a reestablishment of ties with their British Father in the face of an imminent crisis could work to their advantage. In July 1808 Tecumseh returned to Malden, where he and dozens of chiefs, accompanied by hundreds of warriors, listened to hours of British rhetoric regarding friendship. Lieutenant Governor Gore personally delivered the capstone speech,

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[65] Harrison and his officers claimed to have found British muskets and supplies scattered on the battlefield at Tippecanoe, 7 November 1811. See Allen, His Majesty's Indian Allies, 117.

[66] Craig to Francis Gore, Lieutenant Governor, 6 December 1807, P.R.O., CO 42/136, 155.

[67] Craig to Gore, 28 December 1807, MPHC, XXV: 232-33; P.R.O., CO 42/136, 158.

[68] Same to same, 11 May 1808, MPHC, XXV: 245-46; P.R.O., CO 42/136, 163-64; Gore to Craig, 5 January 1808, in ibid., 169-70; Reginald Horsman, Matthew Elliott, British Indian Agent, 163-71.

[69] The best study on this topic is Reginald Horsman's "British Indian Policy in the Northwest, 1807-1812," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 45(1) (June 1958): 51-66.

reminding his listeners of the eternal bonds between them and the King and of past injuries done to them by the Americans. Gore also boldly informed them that the King still held sacred "the Treaty made at Fort Stanwix in 1768," which had prohibited white settlement north and west of the Ohio River.[70] This prohibition had been flagrantly violated by more than thirty years of American expansion, U. S. military conquests in the North, all the cessions made at the Treaty of Greenville, and the multiple subsequent treaties that Harrison had negotiated.[71] But Gore and his cohorts were desperate for allies. Two days later the chiefs present formally responded, reciprocating with statements of friendship, telling Gore that his speech had "brightened the Chain of Friendship," and adding, "we pray the Great Spirit to keep it bright and lasting."[72] However, these statements were not accompanied by any binding commitments.

After all of the public ceremonies and pleasant exchanges during the Fort Malden council, Claus and Elliott met privately with Tecumseh and a handful of other headmen. Of the Native leaders present, Tecumseh seems to have made the strongest impression on the agents and Lieutenant Governor Gore. The Shawnee remained friendly but noncommittal, stressing that the growing confederacy on the Wabash did not "intend to take part in the quarrels of the White People." However, Tecumseh affirmed that "if the Americans encroach on them, they are resolved to strike," and "if their Father the King, should be in earnest and appeared in sufficient force they would hold fast by Him."[73] It

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[70] Lieutenant Governor Gore's Speech to the Western Confederacy, 11 July 1808, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 11, 9886.

[71] Recall that in 1793 the former Confederacy, at the urging of Alexander McKee, unsuccessfully demanded that the United States government recognize the Ohio River as the permanent boundary.

[72] Speech of the different Indian Nations, 13 July 1808, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 11, 9891.

[73] Gore to Craig, 27 July 1808, ibid., 9902.

seems that Tecumseh had achieved with regard to the British precisely what Gore and the Indian Department had hoped to accomplish with the nativist Indians: the Shawnee clung to an official status of neutrality for the confederacy, while he temporized on the possibility of a British-Indian alliance. Before he would make such a commitment, Tecumseh first needed to know if war could be avoided between his nativist followers and the Americans. If not, only then would the Shawnee leader consider an alliance. Tecumseh happily paid lip service to the restoration of the Chain of Friendship, which was little more than a simple statement of goodwill. In so doing, the Shawnee scored a diplomatic victory in which he promised nothing, gained a potential ally, and came away with much-needed provisions for the growing intertribal community at Prophetstown. In a tribute to Tecumseh's diplomatic skills, Gore referred to "[t]he Prophet's Brother" as "a very shrewd, intelligent man."[74]

Tecumseh's main purpose was to remain neutral while strengthening the Wabash confederacy. In 1809, a year after his initial meetings with the Indian Department officials at Fort Malden, Tecumseh returned to that vicinity and visited the Wyandots, Shawnees, and members of the Three Fires, without stopping at the British post.[75] Tecumseh made it plain that he did not trust the British. During one of his early visits to Malden, the Shawnee headman reminded Elliott and Claus of the British perfidy at Fallen Timbers in 1794, and "of the number of Chiefs who fell in consequence of that Fort [Miami] being shut against them."[76] Two years later during his first meeting with

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Sugden, Tecumseh: A Life, 435, n. 3.

[76] Gore to Craig, 27 July 1808, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 11, 9902. The Indians bitterly complained about this incident regularly. Also see Isaac Brock to Sir George Prevost, 2 December 1811, Wood, Select British Documents, I: 273; Klinck, Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction, 117.

Harrison at Vincennes, Tecumseh again alluded to "the treachery of the British." He also informed the governor that the confederacy, without developing further ties with the British, intended to use the restored Brownstown council fire to punish those chiefs who had sold land to the American government. This formal council would also seek redress and land restoration from the American government for those unauthorized sales.[77] At that moment Tecumseh sincerely believed that he could accomplish his goals through skillful diplomacy and without British intervention.

Harrison's reply to Tecumseh's appeal that the United States should rescind the Treaty of Fort Wayne led to a sharp shift in the Shawnee's deameanor. The governor had begun to explain the legality and justice of the United States government's Indian policy.[78] After listening for more than fifteen minutes, Tecumseh could bear it no longer; he leapt to his feet and called Harrison a liar, angrily denouncing everything he had just heard.[79] He was furious because Harrison's legalistic statements made it all too plain that negotiations could never recover the lost treaty lands, and that Harrison did not recognize Tecumseh's authority as supreme among the Indians. Given these facts, the matter would probably come to blows, though Tecumseh did not immediately give up on defending his position and policies. The following day he again stated to Harrison, "I am alone the acknowledged head of all the Indians," and he concluded by warning that any American

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[77] Tecumseh's Speech at Vincennes, 20 August 1810, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 464, 466-67.

[78] For U. S. Indian policy during the Jefferson administration, see Anthony F. C. Wallace, Jefferson and the Indians, 220-26.

[79] Tecumseh's Speech at Vincennes, 20 August 1810, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 467-68.

attempts to survey or settle the lands in question would certainly produce "bad consequences."[80]

Although Tecumseh had exaggerated his claims to possessing sole authority over "all the Indians," his remarks were not completely unfounded.[81] The British already viewed him as the confederacy's principal spokesperson, and by 1809 the remnants of the Brownstown council entrusted Tecumseh with carrying the sacred belt of the old confederacy to Prophetstown.[82] This suggests that the Wyandot leaders at Brownstown viewed Tecumseh's leadership qualifications as preeminent among those living at Prophetstown, and that his prestige had eclipsed that of the former members of the Brownstown council who had since made compromises with the Americans. The Brownstown gesture also indicated that the most influential Wyandots now approved of the Wabash movement's goals and sought to incorporate that community into a revived Brownstown confederacy.[83] The Wyandot chief Roundhead may have been instrumental in bringing about the Brownstown endorsement of the nativist movement, but the decision would have also included the approval of both Adam Brown and Walk in the Water, Brownstown's principal village chief and war leader, respectively.

Harrison understood the seriousness of the Wyandots' defection. After having been confident that they supported American interests, he lamented to his superiors that

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[80] Ibid., 468-69.

[81] Certain other leaders, such as Main Poc for example, would not have acquiesced to Tecumseh's claims.

[82] Matthew Elliott to Major Hulton, 19 May 1809, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 3, 990; White, The Middle Ground, 514.

[83] Harrison to William Eustis, Secretary of War, 14 June 1810, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 423-24. This gesture by the Brownstown council, however, did not necessarily mean that Wyandots intended to become the Prophet's religious converts.

"[t]he Prophet[,] knowing the great advantage he would derive from gaining over this Tribe to his interests[,] attempted it and has succeeded." Harrison also realized the significance of "the Great Belt which was the Symbol of Union between the Tribes."[84] The Wyandots had previously paid little attention to the nativist movement, and, indeed, their principal village of Brownstown rivaled Black Hoof's Wapakoneta to the degree that it fostered accommodation with whites.[85] The resistance movement's appeal to the Wyandots grew after Michigan's territorial Governor William Hull concluded the Treaty of Detroit late in 1807, which effectively expropriated an enormous chunk of northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan from the Wyandots and the Three Fires for virtually nothing.[86] The Wyandots apparently did not fully understand the transaction, because they were later troubled to learn that they no longer owned any of the tract, not even Brownstown.[87] The Treaty's significance was also not lost on the Indian Department at Malden, where William Claus informed other tribes of its terms.[88] While not all of the Wyandots joined Tecumseh and the British, most ultimately supported them.[89]

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[84] Harrison to William Eustis, Secretary of War, 14 June 1810, ibid., I: 423.

[85] For contemporary descriptions of Brownstown, see Jacob Visgar to William Hull, 12 October 1807, MPHC, XL: 239-40, and Gerard T. Hopkins, A Mission to the Indians from the Indian Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, to Fort Wayne, in 1804 (Philadelphia: T. Ellwood Zell, 1862), 102-03.

[86] Kappler, II: 92-95; Prucha, American Indian Treaties, 125-26.

[87] Speech of [Wyandot] Indian Chiefs to Governor Hull, 30 September 1809, MPHC, XL: 304-07.

[88] Proceedings of a Private Meeting with the Shawenoes, 25 March 1808, ibid., XXV: 242.

[89] This was particularly so during the crucial opening phase of the war along the Detroit frontier in August 1812. One eyewitness reported that when the war began, the entire Brownstown community "evacuated the place and crossed the [Detroit] river to place themselves under the British flag." Milo M. Quaife, ed., War on the Detroit: The Chronicles of Thomas Vercheres de Boucherville and the Capitulation by an Ohio Volunteer (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1940), 79, 101. John Norton also later indicated that the Wyandots of Brownstown, "[w]arriors of the best character," fought in these skirmishes, and that two Wyandot leaders, Roundhead and Walk in the Water, were instrumental in the capture of Detroit. See Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 300. For Governor Hull, the loss of the Wyandots to the British was a crushing blow, since he believed even after the war began that they

By the end of 1810, Tecumseh, emboldened by his support from Brownstown and annoyed with Harrison, sought a full British alliance for the first time since the disaster on the Maumee sixteen years earlier. In November he met with Matthew Elliott and admitted to him "that at first they [i.e. himself and his confederates] intended to keep their plan a secret even from their [British] Father," but now "Governor Harrison has pushed them to make some kind of avowal of their intentions."[90] During this visit, Tecumseh formally presented the officers with a belt of wampum that the British had given to the Shawnee leaders nearly fifty years before, when the British "laid the French on their back" at the end of the French and Indian War.[91] Tecumseh claimed to have stolen this belt from his nation's chiefs five years earlier, and he considered himself authorized to conduct the tribe's international diplomacy, explaining that "we the Warriors now manage the affairs of our Nation."[92] Unlike his visits to Malden during the summer of 1808, Tecumseh this time did not speak of past betrayals. He and the cadre of nativist leaders now viewed war as imminent, and they petitioned for all of the help that they could obtain; suddenly the prospect of a mutually binding British alliance held stronger appeal for the Indians than it had previously. After three years of remaining

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would remain neutral. See Hull to Eustis, 14 July 1812, MPHC, XL: 413-15; Same to same, 19 July 1812, ibid., 418; Cruikshank, The Invasion of Canada and the Surrender of Detroit, 1812, 53. According to R. David Edmunds, Walk-in-the-Water later wavered in his support of the British. See Edmunds, "Tecumseh's Native Allies: Warriors Who Fought for the Crown," in War on the Great Lakes: Essays Commemorating the 175th Anniversary of the Battle of Lake Erie, ed. William Jeffrey Welsh and David Curtis Skaggs (Kent, OH & London: Kent State University Press, 1991), 65-66.

[90] Elliott to Claus, 18 November 1810, CNA, MG 11 CO 42, 351, 40.

[91] The Shawnees most likely received this belt from Sir William Johnson at Detroit in the summer of 1761 during the first general council held with the western nations after Britain's occupation of the former French posts throughout the Great Lakes.

[92] Speech of Tukumthai, Brother of the Shawanoe Prophet, Fort Malden, 15 November 1810, CNA, MG 11 CO 42, 351, 42; Klinck, Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction, 79-81.

aloof to British overtures, the belligerent Native coalition appeared poised for war and intent on dragging Britain into a conflict prematurely.[93]

The Northern and Western Response to Revitalization, 1801-1812

The period of Native revitalization that culminated in the Shawnee brothers' movement at Prophetstown early in the nineteenth century was less eventful for the tribes living in the northern Great Lakes, northern Wisconsin, and the upper Mississippi Valley. These nations, specifically the northern Ojibwas and Ottawas, Sauks, Menominees, and Dakota Sioux, did not have to grapple with the same issues faced by the other groups featured in this study. Although most lived within the territorial boundaries of the United States, at this point they did not have to defend their sovereignty as the Six Nations did at the Grand River. Also, the northerners had not yet experienced American encroachments to the degree that those south of the Great Lakes had, in part because governors Harrison and Hull never attempted to negotiate any treaties with these northern groups. Anthony Wayne's conquest of Ohio had a minimal effect on the tribes of the northern Lakes, and very few, if any, received American annuity distributions.[94] Moreover, the northern tribes had not experienced a revolution within their leadership ranks, and their younger warriors were not faced with the painful decision of whether to follow an upstart nativist leader or to remain loyal to an older pro-American headman who advocated accommodation. Finally, the fur trade in the North continued to define British relations

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[93] Allen, His Majesty's Indian Allies, 116; Allen, The British Indian Department, 69-70.

[94] Although the Treaty of Greenville entitled both the Ojibwa and Ottawa nations to annuities amounting to $1,000 per tribe, the U. S. made these payments at Detroit, and thus to those Ojibwas and Ottawas living in that region. By the summer of 1807 the northern Ojibwas and Ottawas had not yet received any annuity distributions stemming from the Treaty of Greenville. Captain J. Dunham to William Hull, 18 June 1807, MPHC, XL: 143.

with the tribes there, whereas the nativists at Prophetstown eschewed such contact, fearing both their resulting economic dependence and the Master of Life's wrath.

Of all of these different regional circumstances, the fur trade was possibly the most crucial in influencing the Indians' decisions and in shaping their diplomacy. For example, neither the nativists on the Wabash nor the Indians of the northern Lakes cared for the Americans, and both had previously fought against the "Long Knives," making the nativists' added aversion to the Americans at the time merely a matter of degree. The fur trade, however, set these groups apart and placed them on divergent paths. By the turn of the nineteenth century, British and Canadian fur companies fiercely competed with one another in the Northwest, causing most competing interests to either expand or eventually merge with the competition. The North West Company expanded west through northern Wisconsin, the upper Mississippi Valley, north into Canada, and ultimately to the Rocky mountains. They competed with several other trading interests, including the famed Hudson Bay enterprise and a number of smaller newly formed partnerships such as the XY Company, the Michilimackinac Company, John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, and scores of private traders. Unlike the situation nearer to Detroit and the Wabash, the northern fur interests experienced a time of overall growth, prosperity, and expansion during the first decade after the Treaty of Greenville, and the North West Company in particular continued to be profitable for significantly longer.[95]

In the latter years of the eighteenth century the northern Indians had grown increasingly dependent on the trade, and the heightened competition among the rival

[95] Davidson, 171-72; Kellogg, 238-41, 256.

companies accelerated this process.[96] By the turn of the nineteenth century, the fur companies held a strong influence over their Native clients, but this influence was not a condition simply imposed by the companies. In a spirit of reciprocity, Native participants in the fur trade viewed the relationship as more than a business arrangement, interpreting the market transactions to symbolize bonds of friendship between them and their British Father.[97] The Indians along the upper Mississippi and near Lake Superior closely fraternized with the North West Company's traders, and they proudly wore medals of King George and flew Union Jacks above their villages. Early in 1806, when the American officer Zebulon Pike made this discovery during his Mississippi expedition, he "felt indignant."[98] The Company agents whom Pike encountered treated the American Lieutenant graciously, and one of them, Hugh McGillis, even apologized about the distribution of flags and medals among the Indians, but he assured Pike that these tokens merely symbolized commercial ties and not a political alliance.[99]

Pike appreciated the hospitality shown him by the Company agents, but McGillis's statements failed to convince him of the innocence of the northern traders' activities among the Indians. The American officer had witnessed firsthand the devotion the Indians accorded British traders, and he knew that it went beyond commercial ties. Pike found it remarkable that "the Gentlemen of the N.W. Company" contented

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[96] Henry, 188; Calloway, Crown & Calumet, 134; Gary Clayton Anderson, Kinsmen of Another Kind, 66-67.

[97] Calloway, Crown & Calumet, 137.

[98] Pike's journal entries for 3 January 1806, 6 February 1806, & 10 February 1806, Jackson, The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, I: 76, 92-93. Previously on this expedition Pike met Black Hawk who refused to lower his village's British flags at Pike's request. See Donald E. Jackson, ed., Black Hawk: An Autobiography (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), 52.

[99] McGillis to Pike, 15 February 1806, Jackson, The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, I: 260.

themselves in the "Wilderness for 10, 15, and some 20 years, by the attachment which they imbibe for the Indian Women."[100] Whether or not Pike ever realized the extent of these bonds of kinship, he sensed that British-Indian ties would not be easily severed.[101] In his official report on the North West Company, the Lieutenant alerted his superiors to this danger, recalling the "almost unlimited influence the traders...had acquired over the savages" in all previous frontier struggles.[102]

Pike's concerns were well founded. In his memoirs, John Tanner, a thirty-year captive among the Ojibwas and Ottawas, indicated that traders could at times spontaneously persuade Indians to take up arms for them.[103] Similarly, Black Hawk, after declining the Shawnee Prophet's invitation to move to the Wabash, and despite having informed the Americans that he and his party would remain neutral, enthusiastically joined the British when a British-employed trader arrived near Black Hawk's village with two boatloads of goods.[104] The trader in this instance, Edward La Guthrie, had earlier befriended Black Hawk, and had worked as an associate to Robert Dickson, the most important British trader and Indian agent in the West. Dickson, who was the son-in-law of a Sioux chief, became the critical link in the British alliance with the western nations.[105] Both Major General Isaac Brock and Sir George Prevost, the

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[100] Pike's journal entry for 27 January 1806, ibid., 84.

[101] Anderson, Kinsmen of Another Kind, 88.

[102] Pike's Observations on the North West Company, Jackson, The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, I: 180.

[103] John Tanner, 209-10.

[104] Jackson, Black Hawk: An Autobiography, 58, 60, 62-64.

[105] Kellogg, 292-300; Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 134; Anderson, Kinsmen of Another Kind, 87-88; Gary Anderson, "American Agents vs. British Traders: Prelude to the War of 1812 in the Far West," in

military governor of Upper Canada and the Governor General of Canada, respectively, looked to Dickson to cement this alliance.[106]

As the groups in the northern Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi Valley continued to develop stronger ties with the British through kinship and trade, members of the intertribal nativist coalition on the Wabash distanced themselves from such economic links and most other forms of interaction with whites. To those who believed Tenskwatawa's prophecies, the fur trade meant poverty, drunkenness, and dependence on whites. The Prophet expected his converts "to do without any [white] merchandise," and several of his primary tenets reflected an attempt to escape a market economy.[107] Decades of extensive over-hunting by both Natives and whites had contributed to the Indians' destitute condition. As early as the 1780s, Moravian missionary David Zeisberger noted the excessive hunting in areas of Ohio and Indiana that resulted from intensive trade, and modern studies also document the long decline of the fur trade in the southern Great Lakes in the late 1700s.[108] After 1796, the United States government further accelerated this process of decline by establishing federal trading houses at the

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The American West: Essays in Honor of W. Eugene Hollon, ed. Ronald Lora (Toledo: University of Toledo Press, 1980), 17-18.

[106] Louis Arthur Tohill, "Robert Dickson, British Fur Trader on the Upper Mississippi," North Dakota Historical Quarterly 3(2) (January 1929), 85-86, 96. For Dickson's qualifications, see Captain J. B. Glegg to Colonel Baynes, 11 November 1812, MPHC: XV: 180-82. For letters and documents pertaining to Dickson's appointment and Prevost's instructions, see ibid., 218-23.

[107] The Prophet's principal tenets are listed in Thomas Forsyth to William Clark, 15 January 1827, Forsyth Papers, Draper Mss., Vol. 9T52-53. Those items in the list most directed against Indian participation in the fur trade are numbers 7, 9, 11, & 12.

[108] Zeisberger's entry for 26 May 1787, Eugene F. Bliss, tr. & ed., Diary of David Zeisberger, A Moravian Missionary Among the Indians of Ohio, 2 Vols. (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1885; reprint, St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, Inc., 1972), I: 346; Archer Butler Hulbert and William N. Schwarze, eds., David Zeisberger's History of the Northern American Indians, Vol. XIX (Columbus: Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society, 1910), 14; Wayne E. Stevens, "Fur Trading Companies of the Northwest, 1760-1816," 286; Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 120.

sites of major Indian agencies, in hopes of competing with British trade interests and of increasing Native debt and reliance on the American government.[109] After the many years of over-hunting in the Old Northwest, this final push by the government eliminated much of the remaining game south of the Great Lakes and further alienated Tenskwatawa's followers, who faced a period of starvation shortly after their arrival at Prophetstown in 1808.[110] Clearly, those on the Wabash did not have the opportunity to interact with the British in the same manner in which the northern nations did. With game still plentiful in the North, tribes dwelling on the upper Mississippi and northern Great Lakes had less reason to consider the fur trade's potential for negative effects.[111] Thus they continued to cultivate closer ties with the British, while those at Prophetstown resisted the Americans and remained ambivalent towards the British until Tecumseh directly petitioned their assistance in 1810.

The clash of ideology between the nativists and those tribes linked to the British fur trade became increasingly manifest between 1807 and 1809. Ultimately the northerners would have to choose between accepting the Prophet's new doctrines or continuing their commercial ties to white traders. In fact, the Shawnee Prophet may not

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[109] Wayne E. Stevens, The Northwest Fur Trade, 1763-1800, 104; Thomas Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, 27 February 1803, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 71.

[110] The records of Fort Wayne's Indian Agency provide a glimpse of the declining fur trade. Between 1804 and 1811 the Agency took in an average of 1,071 deerskins per year, with the number of deerskins gradually decreasing. The bumper year of 1807 stands as an exception, when the Agency recorded the receipt of 2,052 deerskins. Nevertheless, with prices at a mere $.44 per deerskin, the resulting per capita profits to the Indians did not stretch very far. See Bert J. Griswold, ed., Fort Wayne, Gateway of the West, 1802-1813; Garrison Orderly Books, Indian Agency Account Book, Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. 15 (Indianapolis: Historical Bureau of the Indiana Library and Historical Department, 1927; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1973), 433-35, 453-54, 480-82, 504-07, 563-64, 580-81, 661-663; Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 120.

[111] Calloway, "Foundations of Sand: The Fur Trade and British-Indian Relations, 1783-1815," 155, 157-58, & 163; Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 160.

have sought to completely abolish the fur trade, but he certainly wanted to minimize it, control all economic transactions, and prevent excessive Native dependence on Euro-American commodities.[112] He knew, for example, that his followers would still need European guns and powder. However, by the time Tenskwatawa's message spread to northern Michigan in May 1807, an Ottawa prophet who claimed to serve as the Shawnee's messenger had interpreted the message much more stringently, calling for a total abstinence from the trade. This prophet, known as La Maigouis, or the Trout, insisted that his followers "kill no more animals than are necessary to feed & clothe you," and also encouraged all Indians to renege on their outstanding debts with traders. He warned that if the Indians persisted in the trade, then the Great Spirit would take the animals "back to the Earth that they may not come to you again."[113] With the fur trade so prevalent in the North, La Maigouis saw this as the primary evil and agent of cultural destruction.

The Ottawa prophet's speech presented the northern Ottawas and Ojibwas with a dilemma. Uncertain of the prophecy's authenticity, some may have hesitated, but if La Maigouis was correct, then the issue became a question of what the Indians feared most: the Master of Life's judgment or the wrath of their creditors. The fact that obedience to the Supreme Being in this case coincided with immunity from their debts may have made the Indians' decision easier, but whatever the reason, La Maigouis began to enjoy moderate success in spreading the revitalization movement among his people. For a time the movement spread rapidly in the North, and agents of the North West Company,

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[112] Prophet's tenets, Thomas Forsyth to William Clark, 15 January 1827, Forsyth Papers, Draper Mss, Vol. 9T52-53, Tenet no. 9; Dowd, A Spirited Resistance, 130-31.

knowing that the "Doctrine is...prejudicial to the interest of the Traders," feared that it might even "extend to the Saulteux [i.e., northern Ojibwa] & Crees," much farther to the Northwest.[114] Captain J. Dunham, the American commandant at Mackinac, sent a speech to the principal Ottawa village at Arbre Croche, denouncing the tribe's intention to cheat the traders, and Dunham sternly demanded that the Indians "Pay them up."[115] The commandant also dispatched a party of soldiers in an unsuccessful attempt to arrest La Maigouis.[116]

There was little Dunham could have said that would have altered the natural evolution of the revitalization movement or the attraction to it that led numerous northerners to make pilgrimages southward to visit the Shawnee Prophet. By August 1807, just three months after La Maigouis delivered his admonitions to the Ottawas and Ojibwas of northern Michigan, U. S. agent William Wells informed Harrison that "Indians...from the Lakes near Mackinac" have passed Fort Wayne as they "flock to" hear the Shawnee Prophet. Wells added "that all the Indians in that quarter believe in what the Prophet tells them," and that "they appear to be deff [sic] to everything I say to them."[117] American officials at Green Bay, Chicago, and the upper Mississippi also alerted their superiors of increased activity in their sectors among the Ojibwas,

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[113] Speech of La Maigouis, 4 May 1807, CNA, MG 19 F 16, Alexander McKee Papers, 13. This speech is also found in MPHC, XL: 127-33.

[114] Duncan McGillivray to William McGillivray, 18 June 1807, Ontario Historical Archives, F 983, John Strachan Papers, Reel MS 35, R1. For brief biographical sketches on these McGillivray brothers, see W. S. Wallace, 469, 471-72.

[115] Captain Dunham's Speech at Arbre Croche, 20 May 1807, Ontario Historical Archives, F 983, John Strachan Papers, Reel MS 35, R1.

[116] Dunham to Hull, 20 May 1807, MPHC, XL: 125-26.

[117] Wells to Harrison, 20 August 1807, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 239.

Potawatomis, Winnebagoes, and Sauks. Charles Jouett, agent at Chicago, warned that "[t]he Indians are crouding [sic] down upon us from the Green Bay on their way…to see the Shawonee."[118]

The hysteria, though temporarily significant, was short-lived. With the exception of the Winnebagoes, most of the northern and Wisconsin tribes soon abandoned the prophetic movement. A close examination of the Winnebago society at the time reveals a different infrastructure from that of the other Wisconsin tribes that ultimately rejected the Prophet's teachings. In comparison to the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Menominees, the Winnebagoes' government was much more centralized. They maintained an elaborate hierarchical clan system, which served as the basis for their nation's political organization. Of the ten Winnebago clans, the Thunder clan was most powerful, and its chiefs held significant authority over the entire nation. The head chief of the Thunder clan presided over a centralized body of counselors who ruled Winnebago affairs, with the head Thunder chief theoretically holding more power than the council.[119] This centralized form of government enabled the Winnebagoes to maintain their political independence longer than the other Wisconsin tribes, who sought British recognition in the form of medals and flags as symbols of authority over their own bands. The Winnebagoes remained more insular, as they did not necessarily yield to the wishes of the traders with whom they did business on occasion. Thus, despite commercial ties

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[118] Charles Jouett to Secretary of War, 1 December 1807 & 22 August 1807, both in Carter, Territorial Papers, VII: 496-97 & 472, respectively; Charles Reaume, Justice of the Peace at Green Bay, to Captain J. Dunham, June, 1807, Winnebago File, GABLA; William T. Hagan, The Sac and Fox Indians (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 39.

[119] Manners, Customs, and International Laws of the Win-nee-baa-goa nation (1823), Ms/I4Me, C. C. Trowbridge Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library. Paul Radin, The Winnebago Tribe (Washington: Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, 1923; reprint, Lincoln: University of Neraska Press, 1970), 115, 159.

between the British and the Winnebagoes, the latter could not be manipulated politically as easily as their neighbors who operated on a band level.

While the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Menominees all maintained clan systems, none of these nations' clans operated as anything more than units of kinship, and they certainly did not serve as basis for a political structure. For instance, none of the clan chiefs possessed any authority over the greater portion of the tribe, and despite having clans, these tribes functioned on a village or band level.[120] An ethnographic field study in 1824 listed the Ojibwa government as "[r]epublican in all its features," without "the least subordination known" among its warriors.[121] The same study also found that although the Menominees had a clan system which paralleled that of the Winnebagoes, the Winnebagoes had a much more centralized government.[122] No central body of counselors existed among the Menominees, and they, too, operated on a village and band level of government. Like the Ojibwas and Ottawas, then, the Menominees were much more susceptible to the external influence of a Euro-American power such as the British. Furthermore, in comparison to these other northern nations, the Menominees did not show an initial interest in the Shawnee Prophet, not even when their neighbors were temporarily attracted to Tenskwatawa's teaching in 1807.[123]

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[120] Kinietz, 69, 78; Danziger, 10-11.

[121] Colonel Boyd's Account of the Chippewa, MS/I4c, Trowbridge Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

[122] Traditions, Manners, and Customs of the Mun-noa-min-nee nation, and Manners, Customs, and International Laws of the Win-nee-baa-goa nation (1823), Ms/I4Me, ibid.

[123] Charles Reaume, Justice of the Peace, Green Bay, to Captain Dunham, 12 June 1807, Winnebago File, GABLA; Felix Keesing, The Menomini Indians of Wisconsin, Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, No. 10 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939; reprint, New York & London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), 91. Also see Tomah's speech to Tecumseh, 1810, WHC, I: 53-54.

In addition to their tribal infrastructure, Winnebagoes also followed the Shawnee Prophet for cosmological and spiritual reasons. Like the Shawnees, the Winnebagoes regarded Thunderbirds as among the most powerful deities, and these supernatural beings were thought to bless warriors with most anything requested, especially victory in war. Powerful leaders and shamans among the Winnebagoes claimed to be reincarnated Thunderbirds, and the Shawnee Prophet distributed sacred slabs illustrating that the Thunderbirds' role was to serve as gatekeepers to the Master of Life.[124] The Prophet's name itself, "Tenskwatawa," was even interpreted as "the Open Door."[125] According to Winnebago cosmology, if Tenskwatawa himself were a reincarnted Thunderbird, or could at least converse with the Thunderbirds, then not only was the Prophet a direct link to the Great Spirit, but also a potential source of immense power for Winnebago warriors. Winnebago oral tradition indicates that their warriors who decided to visit the Prophet believed that they would "walk as the thunderbirds do....above the earth."[126]

Unlike the Winnebagoes, the other northern and Wisconsin tribes began to drift away from the Prophet by 1808. In early May that year, U. S. agent Charles Jouett reported that "those Indians from Green Bay...are...returning home," and they now "appear truly ashamed of their late infatuation relative to the prophet."[127] According to Black Hawk, the Sauks also generally rejected the Prophet's overtures, and John Tanner recalled that Tenskwatawa's "impression was obliterated" among the northern

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[124] Radin, 239, 391-92; James Howard, 175-76, 206. Similarly, the Winnebagoes also believed that the secondary deities occupied the world just below the Great Spirit's dwelling place.

[125] Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 34.

[126] Radin, 21-22.

[127] Jouett to the Secretary of War, 2 May 1808, Carter, Territorial Papers, VII: 564-65.

Ojibwas.[128] Why the sudden reversal and decline of the nativist frenzy in the North? Quite simply, the Prophet could not provide the food and material needs for all of the newcomers in a rapidly growing intertribal society. His closest followers usually subsisted on near-starvation diets, and when new converts arrived from the North, they could not be absorbed into the nativist community.[129] For a man who promised to end Native suffering and restore prosperity, this was not a good first impression in the minds of the sojourners from the North. In Tanner's own northern village "famine began to be felt" among those who adhered to the Prophet's teachings, and the longtime captive concluded, "At this day he [Tenskwatawa] is looked upon by the Indians as an imposter and a bad man."[130]

Tanner's observation is especially significant, since it demonstrated that the Prophet's followers both in the vicinity of and far from Prophetstown experienced the negative effects of revitalization. More than half a century after Tanner wrote his recollections, Andrew J. Blackbird, an aging Ottawa, corroborated this in his personal history. When the Prophet's message came to his people, "[a] great many Ottawas believed and went far west," Blackbird explained, in order "to escape the habits of the white man." Of those who migrated west, "nearly all of them died out there" as a result.[131] The Ottawas, as was the case with the other northern tribes, lived in areas where the fur trade continued to flourish. Had the fur trade in the North been farther advanced and nearing its demise, the Prophet's message would have probably held a

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[128] Jackson, Black Hawk: An Autobiography, 58; John Tanner, 147.

[129] Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 59-60, 66, 70, 76; Warren, 323.

[130] John Tanner, 146-47.

[131] Blackbird, 29-30. For a similar episode among the Ojibwas see Warren, 323.

stronger appeal, but for the time being, the traders met their clients' needs and supplied their wants. The nativist movement collapsed in the North, due mainly to the inveterate strength of the economic system that it had challenged there.

Significantly, Tanner not only preferred to do business with the traders, but through his contact with them, he also came to view whites as superior in spiritual knowledge, making it easier for him to reject the Prophet's teachings. Tanner related,

> [A]s was usual with me in any emergency of this kind, I went to the traders, firmly believing, that if the Diety [sic] had any communications to make to men, they would be given, in the first instance, to white men. The traders ridiculed and despised the idea of a new revelation of the Divine will, and the thought that it should be given to a poor Shawnee. Thus was I confirmed in my infidelity.[132]

Though Tanner, as an Indianized white, was perhaps quicker than most to reject Tenskwatawa's teachings, his peers soon followed, and as with Tanner, the traders played a role in undermining the Prophet's teachings among other Ojibwas. In writing a history of his people in 1852, Ojibwa William Warren alluded to an incident in 1808 when trader Michael Cadotte turned back a huge party of Ojibwas who had set out to visit the Shawnee Prophet. Travelling in a cluster of 150 canoes, the group carried a dead child, hoping that the Prophet could restore the body to life. But when Cadotte met the party along the southwest shores of Lake Superior, the trader convinced them that the Prophet was a fraud.[133]

Several of the northern tribes had already begun to question the veracity of the Prophet's teaching, but the most serious breach between Tenskwatawa and his northern followers came in the winter of 1808-1809 when an Ottawa band from Arbre Croche lost

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[132] John Tanner, 145.

[133] Warren, 323; Barnow, 67; Danziger, 66.

faith in him. This group had come from the same village as La Maigouis, the Ottawa prophet, and it most likely consisted of some of Tenskwatawa's most devoted disciples at the time. Many of these Ottawas and a few of the Ojibwas who had made the pilgrimage to Prophetstown in 1808 attempted to remain on the Wabash for the winter, but extraordinarily harsh weather conditions and the lack of food weakened the inhabitants. When an epidemic (most likely influenza) swept through the community, it selectively carried away 160 Ottawas and Ojibwas; very few members of the other tribes perished.[134] Stunned at their losses and the disproportionate figures of casualties, the surviving Ottawas and Ojibwas became suspicious of the Prophet. It seemed that either the professing Shawnee holy man was a fraud, or that he had deliberately fomented the sickness amongst them. Either way, these northerners concluded that it was not in their best interests to remain at Prophetstown and returned to their villages in Michigan shortly thereafter.

The breach between Tenskwatawa and these northern bands widened when the disaffected groups decided to test the supposed shaman. Earlier he had warned that no blood should ever be spilled at Prophetstown and promised that the Master of Life would destroy anyone who defied this warning. Anxious to determine its truth, a war party of Ottawas and Ojibwas secretly returned to Prophetstown, where, under cover of darkness, they tomahawked two unsuspecting Shawnees—a woman and her child. Unable to detect any afflictions attributable to Tenskwatawa's retaliatory power, the murderers triumphantly returned to Michigan. The brutal experiment had succeeded; the Michigan

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[134] Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 76; White, The Middle Ground, 513; Sugden, Tecumseh: A Life, 174; Matthew Elliott to Major Hulton, 19 May 1809, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 3, 990; William Wells to Henry Dearborn, 31 March 1809, Shawnee File, GABLA; John Johnston to the Prophet, 3 May 1809,

Indians were convinced that they had exposed a charlatan and would have no further contact with either the Prophet or his revitalization movement. When Tenskwatawa sent messengers the following year to summon these dissidents back to Prophetstown, they flatly refused.[135] After this schism, only a wartime British alliance could unite the nativist faction to the tribes of the northern Lakes, and the Ojibwas, Ottawas, Menominees, Sioux, and Sauks all later fought the Americans as British allies, not nativists.

Shortly after the troubling incidents along the Wabash in 1808-1809, the split between the Prophet and the northerners nearly took a turn that could have ruined the prospects of a future joint-British alliance with both groups. With their anger not yet appeased, the Ottawas and Ojibwas conspired to destroy Prophetstown. Ironically, had it not been for the intervention of the American government, the angry dissidents might have carried out their plan. But when Michigan Governor William Hull learned that, as he put it, "the Ottawas and Chippewas [i.e. Ojibwas], on Lake Michigan, were preparing to make an expedition, against the Shawanoese Prophet, and his people, residing on the Wabash," he sent messages to the northern tribes "that the Shawanoese were under the protection of the U. States, and we should consider hostilities against them, the same as against us." Thus the Prophet's worst enemies—the Americans—shielded him from the wrath of his former partisans, doing the British an enormous favor in the process. Hull sent these messages reluctantly; the Michigan governor understood that the Prophet's

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Gayle Thornbrough, ed., Letter Book of the Indian Agency at Fort Wayne, 1809-1815 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1961), 49-50.

[135] Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 82; Harrison to the Secretary of War, 26 April 1809, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 342; Same to same 26 June 1810, ibid.: 433-34.

"object has been to form a combination...in hostility to the U. S."[136] Harrison also expressed reservations about intervening to prevent intertribal conflicts, consistent though that was with Jeffersonian peace policies.[137]

The response of these western governors raises some provocative questions: If the U. S. had not protected Prophetstown, would the village have been destroyed in 1809, making Harrison's 1811 campaign unnecessary? More important, to what extent would this have affected British attempts to reconstruct a general intertribal alliance among all of the tribes in the Great Lakes and the Wabash Valley on the eve of the War of 1812? Without the support of the nativist coalition from the Wabash, the British prospects of successfully defending Upper Canada would have diminished significantly.

In the North, the rejection of nativist doctrine and the continued expansion of the fur trade insured that British-Indian relations there would continue as they had for decades. Unlike the capricious relations between the Indian Department at Fort Malden and the Prophetstown community, northern British-Indian relations maintained a steady course in which British leaders at Fort St. Joseph's continued to play an assertive role in the affairs of the Ottawas and Ojibwas. After 1801 British officers in the North continued to distribute medals and create chiefs, very much in the manner that Major William Doyle and others had done prior to the British withdrawal from Fort Mackinac in the 1790s.

Doyle's successors could reduce a chief in status as well. After Major Alexander Campbell took command at St. Joseph's in 1806, he soon heard that an influential Ottawa

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[136] Hull to William Eustis, Secretary of War, 16 June 1809, Potawatomi File, GABLA. Also see Hull to Eustis, 2 August 1809, and same to same, 20 July 1810, ibid.

[137] Harrison to Eustis, 28 August 1810, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 471.

chief from Arbre Croche, Little King, had allegedly sent his son to the Americans at Mackinac to present them with a string of wampum, indicating that the chief's "heart was American." When the Ottawa headman arrived at St. Joseph's in May 1807, Campbell immediately brought charges against him, but the commandant gave Little King an opportunity to reply formally to the allegations in council. Little King explained that his son had only given wampum to the American doctor at Mackinac as compensation for pulling a tooth for him. The chief also affirmed his loyalty to the British. The matter became so serious that the council even summoned the American commandant, Captain Dunham, to testify at the council. When Captain Dunham arrived at St. Joseph's, he corroborated Little King's defense, explaining that "he had always understood that the Little King had been firmly attached to the British government." Yet prior to Dunham's arrival, Major Campbell and the British tribunal had already informed Little King that he would be required "to return [his] meddals [sic] & Colours, and never more trouble us with your Presence."[138] Only the American officer's testimony ultimately cleared the Ottawa chief of the charge of disloyalty, and Little King was fully restored.

Such an encounter goes contrary to the supposedly widespread practice in frontier diplomacy of Indian leaders "playing off" one Euro-American power against another. True, in some cases, particularly along the Detroit frontier, Indians did possess more diplomatic leverage, but in the North the dominance of British trade had made nations there both economically and politically beholden to British authorities. In theory, Little King should have had every right to have cultivated ties with both the British and the Americans simultaneously. The chief's village was situated in American territory, and

[138] Council minutes at St. Joseph's, 20 & 21 May, 8 June, and 19 June, 1807, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 2, 689-702.

the British had withdrawn from Mackinac more than a decade earlier. Moreover, the Anglo-American powers were not at war, and Little King and his people should have enjoyed the rights of free passage and neutral diplomacy between both nations. Nevertheless, Little King did not have this liberty because he and the British had an understanding that both parties would work to continue the sacred bonds first sanctioned by the Chain of Friendship. This sacred Chain had never been broken in the North, while events on the Maumee in 1794 and 1795 had nearly severed the Chain's links between Britain and the Crown's allies there.

In the North British commandants and Indian agents continued to assert their authority over the Ottawas and Ojibwas, a policy that their counterparts at Fort Malden could never carry out in the Detroit and Maumee regions. British officers and Indian agents at Malden were not in a position to bully chiefs and strip them of their medals, particularly when British officials there virtually begged the Wabash nativists for support after 1807. Little King may have also perceived the difference in attitude toward Indians at the two posts. In February 1808, barely eight months after narrowly being cleared of the disloyalty charges brought against him at St. Joseph's, the Ottawa leader arrived at Fort Malden to meet with William Claus. This meeting went quite differently than Little King's ordeal at St. Joseph's. The Deputy Superintendent General eagerly questioned the chief, just as Claus would later interview Tecumseh, in hopes of determining the Ottawas' disposition in the event of a British-American war. After having promised Major Alexander Campbell and the council at St. Joseph's the previous spring that he would "always be faithful to the British Government," Little King now remained evasive

and non-committal with Claus.[139] When the agent asked him about his people's disposition, the Ottawa leader replied, "the ground is smooth yet." Claus pressed the issue, but Little King merely stated, "you will know when it happens."[140] Such unforthcoming remarks at St. Joseph's might well have cost the headman his position with the British who would have quickly sought to replace him at Arbre Croche with a leader they deemed as more loyal.

Although Little King equivocated, Claus felt confident that the chief and his band would either support the British or remain neutral in the anticipated conflict, since, according to Claus, Little King intimated "the Indians [were] decidedly opposed to the Americans."[141] Consequently, the question of neutrality became the key issue at that point, and Little King considered the option of separating himself and his people from both the British and the Americans by joining the Shawnee Prophet's nativist movement. Perhaps Little King's rough treatment at the hands of Major Campbell and his fellow inquisitors at St. Joseph's had compelled the chief to rethink the consequences of his tribe's close economic and political ties with the British. In any case, he and hundreds of other Ojibwas and Ottawas resolved to join the nativists at Prophetstown during the winter of 1808-1809.

Although several of the northern groups had rejected Tenskwatawa's teachings the previous year, Little King remained an influential voice in his band from Arbre Croche.[142] Some of his followers may have been reluctant to join their chief at the

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[139] Indian Council held at St. Joseph's, 20 May 1807, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 2, 699.

[140] Claus to Lieutenant Governor Gore, 27 February 1808, MPHC, XL: 44-45.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid.

Wabash, but they acquiesced due to Little King's faith in the Prophet. The Ottawa and Ojibwa bands were therefore all the more distraught when the epidemic that swept through Prophetstown that winter not only ravaged their kinsmen more than any other group, but carried off their beloved leader who had brought them there.[143] No wonder that the Ottawas from Arbre Croche and elsewhere wanted to destroy Prophetstown. Now embittered against the nativists, and always hostile to the Americans, the remnants of Little King's band returned to their homes at Arbre Croche. Having flirted with notions of Native revival, separatism, and neutrality, they reentered the only world they really knew, one dominated by British trade and influence.

John Askin, Jr., storekeeper and interpreter at Fort St. Joseph at the time, claimed to have played a significant role in the return of the disillusioned northern Indians from the Wabash. In a memorial listing his past achievements in hopes of gaining a promotion, Askin asserted that his contribution to retrieving the Ottawas and Ojibwas was one of his most important accomplishments while serving in the Indian Department. Writing to Claus, the northern agent took credit for "getting back a number of Indians of the vicinity of this Country who had followed the Shawnee Prophet & settled on the Wabash."[144] Although an exaggeration, Askin's claim provides valuable support for the idea that British leaders in the North typically thought it proper to intervene on a large scale in Indian affairs, and that they viewed Tenskwatawa's prophetic movement as anathema to the northern people's lives, commerce, and culture. However, British policy

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[143] Matthew Elliott to Major Hulton, 19 May 1809, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 3, 990.

[144] John Askin, Jr. to William Claus, 26 December 1815, CNA, MG 19 F 1, Claus Papers, Vol. 10, 207. Askin regarded his combined service as agent, storekeeper, and interpreter between 1807 and 1812 as his most important accomplishment. The Indian Department did not employ a regular Deputy Superintendent at St Joseph's at that time, forcing Askin to hold down several positions simultaneously, without extra pay.

on such matters differed greatly from region to region and tribe to tribe. For example Claus, a British official in the southern Great Lakes, had viewed the nativist movement as a mechanism for Indian unity and the basis for a potential British-Indian alliance at the very time that Askin, in the North, had attempted to dissuade Indians from joining the Prophet.

Such examples of regional differences in British-Indian relations between 1801 and 1812 provide important windows into the complexities of the history of the time. British diplomacy was never monolithic. It varied by region and it always reflected the differing perspectives of its participants, based on their respective positions in the hierarchy of command. Put another way, there was often a large gap in practice and belief between central administrators and agents living among and even intermarrying with Natives.[145]

The history of the tribal revitalization movement also shows regional diversity. At its zenith, Tenskwatawa's religious movement and cultural revival enjoyed its strongest support from the Kickapoos, Potawatomis, and Winnebagoes. The Kickapoos and Potawatomis, geographically located throughout southern Michigan, northern Indiana, and the expanse of Illinois, fit well within the Prophet's main geographical sphere of influence. The Winnebagoes appear to be more of an aberration. This nation

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[145] Neither Gregory Dowd's Spirited Resistance nor Richard White's Middle Ground satisfactorily handles the northern sector of Indian-White relations. Both authors allude to the prophecy of the Ottawa La Maigouis in 1807, briefly treating it as significant, but neither discusses the ensuing years in the North and why the Indians there ultimately rejected revitalization. Instead, they leave their readers with the impression that the nativist ideals held firm in the North. Moreover, neither discusses the significance of the northern fur trade, although the fur trade's participants resisted both nativism and the notion of a common cultural middle ground with the tribes of the southern Great Lakes. (White's brief discussion of the trade in his final chapter is in a different context, one in which the author is attempting to play down the extent of growing Native dependency.) Nor does R. David Edmunds (in The Shawnee Prophet) discuss the failure of revitalization in the North, and like Dowd and White, Edmunds does not adequately cover the northern and western regions (i.e., Wisconsin & northern Michigan) after the Prophet's brief outburst of popularity there in 1807.

occupied portions of central eastern Wisconsin, which was situated near a major trade route, specifically the Fox-Wisconsin rivers waterway. They, like their neighbors in the North, would have also had substantial contact with British traders, including private entrepreneurs and to a lesser extent men of the North West Company. Yet the Winnebagoes became the Prophet's staunchest supporters, and they did not desert him until many of their warriors died in the fierce action against Harrison's troops on 7 November 1811.[146] As previously discussed, a possible explanation is that the Winnebago tribal structure and clan hierarchy did much to prevent that tribe from coming under the full extent of British economic and political influence, while the other northern groups were drawn into the British orbit by trade ties. In any case, the Winnebagoes were ripe for the Prophet's revitalization.

Once the Prophet and his movement were largely discredited at Tippecanoe in November 1811, all of the tribes that continued to resist American expansion during the War of 1812 did so as British allies. It now meant little whether or not these allies had at one time been members of the Wabash nativist movement, and it became more difficult to discern the regional differences in British-Indian relations. These differences became even less evident when early British-Indian successes at the war's outset tended to once again unite disaffected factions of Natives. Nevertheless, some traces of these distinctions remained, and the British encountered multiple Native responses to British policy and actions as the war progressed.

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[146] Harrison to Secretary of War, 25 July 1810, Esarey, Messages & Letters, I: 449; Jackson, Black Hawk: An Autobiography, 58; Gilbert, 271-72; Robert Breckinridge McAfee, History of the Late War in the Western Country (Lexington, KY: Worsley & Smith, 1816; reprint, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), 34.

EPILOGUE

REASSESSING THE CHAIN OF FRIENDSHIP: 1812 AND BEYOND

In 1838, many years after the wars in the Old Northwest had ended, William Henry Harrison completed his Discourse on the Aborigines of the Ohio Valley. In his study, the future president speculated as to why the Indians of the Northwest had previously clung so tightly to the British, and he surmised that His Majesty's agents had purchased Native loyalty with "arms and equipments, clothing and trinkets." According to Harrison, the Indians had accepted these petty gifts from the British because the Natives did not grasp the "enviable distinction" between British rule and the peace and justice that the United States offered them.[1] The retired general also pondered the possible British motives for maintaining close ties with the Indians into the 1810s; Harrison could only conclude that Britain, in spite of acknowledging the independence of the United States, had "still indulged the hope, that…it would be able to again reduce them [the U. S.] to subjection." "No other reason," Harrison mused, "can be assigned for the close connexion [sic] which they [the British] continued to keep up with the tribes within our territorial boundary, and their constant and liberal supply to them of the means of committing depredations upon our settlements."[2] In the near half-century since he had first served as a young officer in Anthony Wayne's Legion, little had changed in how Harrison perceived the Indians and their former British allies.[3]

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[1] Harrison, A Discourse on the Aborigines of the Ohio Valley (Chicago: Fergus Printing Co., 1838), 37.

[2] Ibid., 38.

[3] The best biography on Harrison, particularly for his later years, is Dorothy Burne Goebel's William Henry Harrison: A Political Biography (Indianapolis: Historical Bureau of the Indiana Library and Historical Department, 1926). More recently, Reginald Horsman provides a good biographical sketch with

Harrison's perception resembled that of numerous other American statesmen and military officers of his generation. For example, Lewis Cass, perhaps more than any other American leader of that era, condemned the British government for its dealings with the Indians. Cass, who was taken prisoner by the combined British-Indian force that captured Detroit in August 1812, subsequently served as an aide-de-camp to Harrison later during war; he then spent eighteen years as Michigan's territorial Governor before becoming Secretary of War under President Andrew Jackson and Secretary of State in James Buchanan's administration.[4] Like Harrison, Cass believed that the British had exploited the Natives. The Michigan governor summed up the relationship between the British government and its Native allies, as one in which the Indians "*were useful, and were used, in war to fight, and in peace to trade* [Cass's italics]."[5] Furthermore, Cass regarded the British use of Native wartime allies as tactics tantamount to terror, often indiscrimately employed against civilians. In his indictment against Britain, he passionately charged that

> The nation which authorizes…[an Indian alliance], should be arraigned at the tribunal of Christendom….And 'allies,' as the Indians may be, it is an alliance, to which posterity will look back with grief and indignation, and which will tarnish the brightest jewel in the crown of the *Defender of the Faith* [italicized by Cass].[6]

"William Henry Harrison: Virginia Gentleman in the Old Northwest." Indiana Magazine of History XCVI (June 2000): 125-49.

[4] For a biography on Cass, see Andrew C. McLaughlin, Lewis Cass (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1899; reprint, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1980), with an introduction by Holman Hamilton in the reprinted edition.

[5] Lewis Cass, "Service of Indians in Civilized Warfare," North American Review 24 (April 1827): 370. For more of Cass's writings regarding Indians, see his "Indians of North America." North American Review 22 (January 1826): 53-119. Also, an earlier unpublished report by Cass, dated 1815, can be found in the Newberry Library's (Chicago) Ayer Manuscripts, record 601, under the title, "Report on the Formation of a System of the Regulation of Indian Affairs."

[6] Cass, "Service of Indians in Civilized Warfare," 375.

Cass also believed that it was principally due to their dealings with the British during the years of intermittent warfare that the Indians resisted American attempts to acculturate them.[7] In 1827 Cass concluded that "[n]ot a vestige remains of any permanent advantage derived by the Indians" from their years of fidelity to the British.[8] Consequently, during the 1820s and 1830s, Cass became one of the leading advocates of the federal policy of Indian Removal, arguing that the scheme was the Native peoples' only hope for survival.[9]

Both Harrison and Cass, like so many of their peers, formulated their opinions based on years of frontier warfare and diplomacy during a period in which the Indians of the Old Northwest demonstrated maximum resistance to all external influences that threatened their lifestyles and cultural traditions. Native defiance and determination in resisting American expansion reached its zenith shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century, when American policy attempted to accelerate the process of expropriating Indian lands in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. Coincidentally, the strongest intertribal resistance to these measures occurred precisely when Anglo-American relations once again turned sour, primarily between 1807 and 1812, causing the United States to believe that the British were the actual source of Native discontent. Such thinking on the part of

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[7] Cass continued to suspect British intrigue at work among the Indians well into the 1820s. More concerning his views during this period can be found in his records of personal correspondence in the Lewis Cass Papers at the Clements Library and the Lewis Cass Papers at the Bentley Historical Library. Though bearing the same title, these collections actually contain different sets of correspondence; both research facilities are located at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

[8] Cass, "Service of Indians in Civilized Warfare," 369.

[9] For Cass on Indian Removal, see Cass, "Removal of the Indians." North American Review 30 (January 1830): 62-121 (This has been reprinted by Arno Press, New York in 1975, under the title Considerations on the Present State of the Indians, and Their Removal to the West of the Mississippi.). Also, McLaughlin, 159-61; Francis Paul Prucha, Lewis Cass and American Indian Policy (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967); Prucha, American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 246-47, 256-57.

the Americans gave the British too much credit; it assumed that the Crown retained the influence among the tribes of the Great Lakes that it had enjoyed prior to 1794.

In truth, British-Indian relations in the Northwest had a much richer and more complex history than either Harrison or Cass realized. In 1794, the old Chain of Friendship that had once joined Britain to the nations of the Great Lakes was virtually severed by Anthony Wayne's victory over the confederated tribes at Fallen Timbers, a defeat that was confirmed by the terms of the Treaty of Greenville the following year. This marked the beginning of a twelve-year period of Anglo-American cooperation in which the tribes south of the Lakes dealt more directly with the Americans. Only with great difficulty after 1807 did the British Indian Department manage to restore a semblance of the Chain of Friendship as a defensive measure intended to protect Upper Canada from an anticipated American invasion. Yet by that time American leaders were convinced that Britain's ties to its former allies had never been broken, and only by permanently eliminating the British menace from North America could the frontier be made secure. In 1810 Kentucky leader Henry Clay and his faction of "War Hawks" in Congress clamored for an invasion of Canada, and John Harper, a representative from New Hampshire, argued that Providence would sanction such an undertaking, bellowing, "The Author of Nature has marked our limits in the south, by the Gulf of Mexico; and on the north, by the regions of eternal frost."[10]

American rhetoric aside, Britons and Indians had always understood their relationship with each other quite differently. British agents, government officials, and

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[10] Bradford Perkins, Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805-1812 (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), 283-84; Speech of John A. Harper, New Hampshire, 4 January 1812, 12th Congress, 1st session, 657, in Joseph Gales, ed., Annals of Congress, 1789-1824, 42 Vols. (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1834-1856).

Native leaders often spoke of the Chain of Friendship as a unique understanding that had existed between them, albeit tenusously at times, since Sir William Johnson's intertribal council at Detroit in the summer of 1761. By 1792, the warriors of the Western Confederacy, particularly those dwelling south of the Lakes in the intertribal villages of Kekionga and the Glaize, had made it clear that they would not accept American acculturation.[11] For Britain to have attempted any of the cultural reforms among its allies that Cass had accused them of neglecting would have meant an end to the Anglo-Native *entente*. Moreover, the Indians viewed their British Father as an allied member of the Brownstown council fire who would protect them from American attempts to expropriate their lands and impose new ideologies on them. Implicit within the Chain of Friendship agreement was an understanding that Britain would recognize and protect Native sovereignty for those tribes living within the boundaries of the United States.

When Britain failed in this role during the crisis and defeat of the Western Confederacy in 1794-1795, numerous intertribal leaders in the Ohio Valley and along the Detroit frontier considered their Chain of Friendship with the British broken. Blue Jacket, the Confederacy's principal leader, relinquished his British commission and hoped to replace it with a similar title under the American regime.[12] The Shawnee war leader, along with the majority of Miami, Delaware, and Shawnee warriors, now "thought nothing" of their British allies as the Indians made peace with the United States.[13] Within this triumvirate of nations in the Maumee Valley, Britain never completely regained the Indians' trust, nor was this segment of the Chain of Friendship ever fully restored.

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[11] Painted Pole's speech at the Glaize, 7 October 1792, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, I: 227.

[12] Sugden, Blue Jacket, 192-98.

When Britain negotiated Jay's Treaty with the Americans in 1794 –once again, as in 1783, acting independently of Native interests– it further weakened any remaining semblance of the Chain of Friendship with tribes of the Ohio Valley and southern Great Lakes. When, under the terms of Jay's Treaty, the British evacuated their posts in American territory in the summer of 1796, it appeared that Whitehall had played a complicitous role in undermining the future integrity of indegenous cultures south of the Lakes by recognizing U. S. suzerainty in the Ohio country.

The Indians there remembered this, and only very gradually after 1808 did elements of the former Maumee and Wabash tribes again gravitate towards the British. However, all of the former principal leaders were gone, and by 1808 the British were forced to seek an alliance with an intertribal group of nativist Indians who were in the process of staging a cultural revolt. Led by Tecumseh and his charismatic brother, Tenskwatawa, the nativists attempted to purify their culture and religion, and at times they even encouraged the executions of those Indians who were overtly Christian, or who had supported U. S. acculturation and land-acquisition policies.[14] The Indians participating in this revitalization movement would not have tolerated British attempts to reform them any more than they accepted American schemes. Extreme factions of this movement even attempted to compel the tribes living in the northern Lakes regions to

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[13] Thomas Smith to Alexander McKee, 11 October 1794, Cruikshank, Simcoe Correspondence, V: 113.

[14] Although evidence suggests that Tecumseh might have opposed the witchhunts and purges that the Prophet and some of his followers carried out against a handful of pro-U. S., Christian Indians, Tecumseh did threaten to kill the chiefs who made any land cessions to the Americans. See Tecumseh's speech at Vincennes, 20 August 1810, Esarey, Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, I: 466; Klinck, Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction, 71-72. Regarding the witchhunts, see Edmunds, The Shawnee Prophet, 42-47; Edmunds, "The Thin Red Line: Tecumseh, the Prophet, and Shawnee Resistance," Timeline 4(6) (1987-88): 7-8; Edmunds, "Tecumseh, the Shawnee Prophet, and American History: A Reassessment," Western Historical Quarterly 14(3) 1983: 268-69; Miller, "The 1806 Purge Among the Indiana Delaware," 245-66. For Tecumseh's reaction to the Prophet's witchhunts see Sugden, Tecumseh: A Life, 154, 209, and Edmunds, Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership, 85.

cease trading with the British and to renege on their outstanding debts.[15] In this light, Cass's criticisms of British dealings with the Indians appear ludicrous. Prior to the war Tecumseh had made it clear that he did not trust the British, but he, like the British, restored the Chain of Friendship out of necessity when the Shawnee leader presented the British officers at Malden with a belt that the King's agents had given to his people nearly a half-century earlier.[16] British relations with the nativist Wabash coalition remained tenuous throughout the War of 1812, and only grew worse after Tecumseh was killed (in 1813) and the fortunes of war in the southern Lakes and the Detroit frontier shifted in favor of the Americans.

In the North, British-Indian relations proved much more stable during the interwar period, and thus the assessments of Cass, Harrison, and other American leaders contain a kernel of truth when applied to the continuing influence that the British enjoyed among the Ottawas, Ojibwas, Menominees, Sioux, Sauk, and Fox. The continuity of these ties, based primarily on trade, meant that the Chain of Friendship had never been significantly altered with the northern groups, and those nations remained virtually unaffected by Anthony Wayne's conquest of the Ohio country. At Mackinac and St. Joseph, British agents continued to exercise much influence among Ottawa and Ojibwa bands, often creating chiefs and even issuing commissions on occasion. Cass's assessment that the

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[15] Speech of La Maigouis, the Ottawa Prophet, 4 May 1807, CNA, MG 19 F 16, Alexander McKee Papers, 13; MPHC, XL: 127-33. American and British assessments of the northern phase of revitalization, are found in Duncan McGillivray to William McGillivray, 18 June 1807, Ontario Historical Archives, F 983, John Strachan Papers, Reel MS 35, R1, and Captain Dunham's Speech at Arbre Croche, 20 May 1807, in ibid. Also, Dunham to William Hull, 20 May 1807, MPHC, XL: 125-26.

[16] See Speech of Tukumthai, Brother of the Shawanoe Prophet, Fort Malden, 15 November 1810, CNA, MG 11 CO 42, 351, 42; Klinck, Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction, 79-81. Regarding Tecumseh's distrust of the British, see Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore to Sir James Craig, Governor General, 27 July 1808, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 11, 9902; Thomas Forsyth to General William Clark, 15 January 1827, Thomas Forsyth Papers, 9T54, Draper Mss.

Indians were merely "*used*" by the British, "*in war to fight, and in peace to trade*" [Cass's italics] to some extent describes the Chain of Friendship in the North.

Yet Cass's remarks overlook the degree of mutual reciprocity in the northern British-Indian relations. Moreover, the charge that the British failed to implement cultural innovations among their Indian allies also entailed a false presupposition that Britain could unilaterally impose its ideals on Native peoples. The fact that the Crown met some of the Indians' material needs –and nothing more– was the secret behind Britain's success in maintaining its enduring friendship with the northerners. In not attempting to compel their allies to make cultural changes, British agents and traders generally recognized the dignity and integrity of the northern tribes (with occasional exceptions) while asking for virtually nothing in return, apart from their clients' continued commerce and future wartime loyalty. This can be seen in the fact that although His Majesty's agents and officers could never mediate a lasting peace between the Ojibwas and Dakotas, they continued to trade with both belligerents. Though enjoying their best relations with the northern Indians, the British held only limited power among them. American officer Zebulon Pike misread the situation when he returned from his expedition to the upper Mississippi Valley (in 1804-1805) bewildered by the British inability to quell this ongoing struggle. Pike asserted that the United States could bring a lasting peace to the area through a more powerful show of force.[17] But had the British made such a heavy-handed attempt to pacify the distant northwestern tribes, the result probably would have been an immediate end to the Chain of Friendship there. In the end, British-Indian relations in the North proved so strong that they weathered not

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[17] Jackson, Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, I: 216-17.

only the Sioux-Ojibwa wars, but also all the efforts by the Shawnee Prophet's nativists to end the northern fur trade. Consequently, in the War of 1812 the northern tribes fought as Crown allies, and only incidentally as allies to Tecumseh's nativist coalition of tribes from the Wabash that had once participated in the Shawnee Prophet's revitalization movement.

In evaluating British-Indian relations, both Cass and Harrison implicity assumed that the Crown maintained sovereignty over the Natives with which it dealt –even those tribes dwelling within the boundaries of the United States– and that Whitehall and Canada's leaders had therefore misused their power in treating the Natives as allies rather than subjects. In truth, although the King's ministers argued the Crown's legal sovereignty over British North America, the Chain of Friendship could exist only if the Crown never attempted to assert this supposed right over its Indian allies. Only after the Six Nations at the Grand River Reserve in Upper Canada attempted to force Whitehall's recognition of Native land sovereignty did the British government more clearly define its stance toward the Indians living within its limits. Joseph Brant and the Grand River Council systematically rejected the land deeds offered to them by British leaders in Canada, since these ultimately gave the King final determination over the distribution of Six Nations' land cessions.[18] The Grand River nations did not concur with the notion that they were simultaneously British subjects and allies, and they tenaciously argued the latter status only. Moreover, by the outset of the War of 1812 (after Brant's death), the Grand River Council, attempting to act as a sovereign power, informed Isaac Brock, military governor of Upper Canada, that they would remain neutral until their land

[18] Noon, 86-88; Weaver, 525.

question was satisfactorily resolved. Less than a few dozen warriors from the Grand River joined the British at the war's outset. Hence, by the commencement of the War of 1812, it proved easier for the British to form alliances with those tribes living within the United States, since British sovereignty was no longer an issue with them.

Here lay the dilemma, and indeed the flaw in Cass's argument. Even if the British government had wished to do so, it could not support acculturation and at the same time expect Native peoples to accept extended Crown sovereignty over them. One might expect that by becoming agricultural and Christianized, the Indians would also accept government sovereignty, but such was not the case. The Six Nations, the most acculturated Native peoples of the groups featured in this study, were also the most vocal in claiming an autonomous status, independent of Whitehall. The more John Norton spoke of establishing a seminary and agricultural missions, the more he envisioned a new, politically independent Native community, one distant from British influence. Cass, who had criticized the British government for not promoting the advancements of civilization among the King's Indian allies, did not seem to grasp that such developments among the Natives would have altered the unique relationship between Britain and the Crown's allies, while simultaneously adding impetus to the Indians' desire for sovereignty. Ironically, Cass would later experience this difficulty himself, when, as Secretary of War to Andrew Jackson, he encountered the Cherokee situation; despite the advancements of Cherokee learning, agriculture, and Christian teaching, the Secretary ultimately opted for removal after the United States government denied the Cherokees a sovereign status.[19] But the Crown's Indian policy was much more benign, and by the end

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[19] Prucha, Lewis Cass and American Indian Policy, 14-17. The Cherokees had developed a centralized national government, based on a constitution, which not only proclaimed the Cherokee government as

of the eighteenth century, the British had already set aside three Reserves in Upper Canada.[20]

Cass, Harrison, Clay, and other American leaders could not properly understand British-Indian relations during the early years of the American Republic because they failed to consider the various tribes and regions with which the British dealt. Furthermore, Americans did not grasp that Whitehall's Indian policy was not static, and that the British government's frontier measures were always subject to an overarching foreign policy that often focused on France as the main concern. Moreover, memories of border warfare, and more recent naval incidents such as the *Chesapeake* affair in June 1807, prevented American leaders, particularly the Jeffersonian faction, from discerning that Britain did not desire another Anglo-American war.[21] After the *Chesapeake* crisis, American suspicions of British frontier intrigue seemed to be confirmed when the King's agents at Malden and elsewhere earnestly attempted to restore the Chain of Friendship as a means of protecting Upper Canada from anticipated American invasions. Such renewed activity among the Indians was construed as offensively hostile, rather than as a defensive measure.

The thesis put forth in this study –that Britain's relationship with three different groupings of Indians of the Old Northwest and Upper Canada evolved along separate lines between 1783 and 1812, and that the nations of each of those sectors responded

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sovereign over tribal lands, but claimed that the Cherokee nation did not exist apart from the land. Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, eds., Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents (Boston & New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995), 13-14.

[20] In addition to the Grand River, these included Chenail Ecarte and the Bay of Quinte.

[21] In the incident known as the *Chesapeake* affair, the HMS *Leopard* fired three broadsides into the USS *Chesapeake*, killing or wounding several of its crew, before forcibly boarding the crippled American vessel and removing suspected British deserters.

differently to British policy– is borne out by the subsequent events of the War of 1812. Of the three regions discussed, British agents and officers experienced their greatest difficulty in maintaining amiable ties with the remnants of the nativist faction from the southern Great Lakes, those Indians ostensibly under the leadership of Tecumseh, the Potawatomi chief Main Poc, and the Wyandot leaders Roundhead and Walk-in-the-Water. British officers found that they possessed virtually no influence or control over these warriors. Furthermore, tribal infrastructures had collapsed within the ranks of those bands and tribes that had once participated in the Shawnee Prophet's revitalization movement, and after the revolution in leadership brought by Tecumseh and the Prophet a power vacuum remained.[22] Though the above-named Indian leaders were influential, they probably did not command the intertribal support that Brant, Blue Jacket, and Little Turtle had enjoyed from the 1770s into the 1790s. Even Tecumseh, though popular, did not always possess the influence that the legend suggests, and neither he nor Roundhead could prevent the Indians from ravaging the area around Detroit in the days after the Americans surrendered that post in August 1812. The British-allied warriors also intimidated the Canadian populace across the Detroit River in the Western District and even killed and scalped a man serving in an allied Canadian militia unit.[23]

The better-documented atrocities that the Indians inflicted upon white Americans during the conflict were carried out by warriors from the southern Great Lakes, specifically, northern Ohio, southern Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois. This string of

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[22] Roundhead was the only nativist leader in the War of 1812 who had signed the Treaty of Greenville in 1795.

[23] Lieutenant Edward Dewar to Colonel Procter, 28 August 1812, and Major P. L. Chambers to Procter 24 August 1812, Cruikshank, The Invasion of Canada and the Surrender of Detroit, 1812, 173-76; Entry for 20 August 1812, Journal of Charles Askin, Wood, I: 541.

activity includes the actions remembered as the Fort Dearborn Massacre (August 1812), Pigeon Roost Massacre (September 1812), River Raisin Massacre (January 1813), Dudley's Defeat (May 1813), and Buffalo (December 1813); these incidents are what shaped the American postwar opinion, including the views of Cass and others, when reassessing British involvement with the Indians. Yet each instance demonstrated how little control the British actually exerted over the Indians south of the Lakes. No British personnel were present at the first two incidents, and at both the River Raisin Massacre and Dudley's Defeat, British soldiers were killed by their Native allies while bravely attempting to protect American prisoners from Indian vengeance.[24] After Tecumseh's death late in 1813, when the remnants of his former nativist confederacy had followed the battered British army eastward towards the west end of Lake Ontario, numerous warriors who had participated in the previous killings at the River Raisin and Dudley's Defeat accompanied a British expedition into American territory on the Niagara frontier. When the British burned the towns of Black Rock and Buffalo on 30 December 1813, Ottawa leaders from southern Michigan near Detroit began throwing live American children into the flames. After the Indians had burned three children, a detachment of British soldiers managed to save the remaining American civilians, but only after a British officer had been shot through his sword arm with an arrow and a significant body of cavalry had

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[24] John Strachan to Thomas Jefferson, 30 January 1813, in William F. Coffin, 1812: The War and its Moral: A Canadian Chronicle (Montreal: J. Lovell, 1864), 273-85; Sandy Antal, A Wampum Denied: Procter's War of 1812 (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997), 201-02; Larry L. Nelson, Men of Patriotism, Courage, & Enterprise!: Fort Meigs in the War of 1812 (Canton, Ohio: Daring Books, 1985), 77; Casselman, Richardson's War of 1812, 153-54; Klink & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, 321-22. John Norton ascribed the massacre of Dudley's men to "[a] Worthless Chippawa [i.e. Ojibwa] of Detroit having with him a number of wretches like himself." Robert McAfee, American veteran of the War of 1812 and early historian of that epoch, attributed this atrocity to the Potawatomis, while claiming that the Miamis and Wyandots "were on the side of humanity" and attempted to grant mercy to the defenseless Americans. McAfee, 272.

come to his aid. The episode once again nearly ended the rocky relationship between the British and their allies from south of the Great Lakes.[25]

Officers of the British Right Division –the army that was deployed along the Detroit frontier and Upper Canada's Western District– dreaded the consequences of an Indian alliance gone awry. Their overall commander, Major General Henry Procter, also feared his allies' instability, and what would become of the British forces and His Majesty's subjects of Upper Canada if his army was ever compelled to retreat. After having witnessed the carnage following the actions at the River Raisin, Fort Meigs, and Dudley's Defeat, Procter understood what his allies were capable of doing. At Fort Stephenson in July 1813, when the Indians refused to commit any of their forces until the British made a reckless frontal assault in which the latter sustained severe losses, Procter considered the futile attack as a necessary "Sacrifice…to Indian Opinion."[26] Although Procter was not popular with his men and other officers, most shared his concerns regarding the Indians.

At one point during the Right Division's ill-fated retreat in early October 1813, the aging Indian agent Matthew Elliott, an adopted Shawnee who had lived among the Indians for nearly fifty years, broke into tears, exclaiming that "he would not stay to be sacrificed."[27] Had Procter not stopped to give battle against the pursuing Americans in

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[25] Darius B. Cook, Six Months among Indians…in the Forests of Allegan County, Michigan, in the Winter of 1839 and 1840 (Niles, Michigan: Niles Mirror Office, 1889; reprint, Berrien Springs, Michigan: Hardscrabble Books, 1974), 15-18. The accounts included in here were those given by the former Ottawa war leaders from southern Michigan –Saginaw, Noonday, and Gosa.

[26] Procter to Sir George Prevost, 9 August 1813, Wood, II: 46; Same to same, 11 July 1813, ibid., 253-54. Procter's superior, Sir George Prevost, did not understand the peril of the situation, and he scorned the General for "having allowed the clamour of the Indian Warriors to induce you to commit a part of your valuable force." Prevost to Procter, 22 August 1813, ibid., 48.

[27] Testimony of Lt. Colonel Augustus Warburton, 9 December 1814, Procter Court-Martial, P.R.O., War Office (WO) 71/243, 11. These records are also available in CNA, MG 13, WO 71/243.

unfavorable circumstances, the British might very well have had to fight their own allies. At Procter's court-martial in December and January, 1814-1815, all of the testimonies given by Indian agents confirmed these fears, mainly that the Indians would either attack the British troops, or that "they would fall upon the Country" and its inhabitants.[28] Colonel William Caldwell, a thirty-five-year veteran in the Indian Department who had also fought for the illustrious Tory outfit known as Butler's Rangers during the American Revolution, was convinced that these Indian allies would commit depredations against the local civilians, causing him to take the precaution of secretly moving his family. In addition to Caldwell, his adult mixed-blood son Billy, and another experienced Indian agent, Francis Baby, all testified that their allies on this retreat often grumbled about the British betrayal at Fort Miami more than nineteen years earlier.[29] Specifically, the elder Caldwell related, "They said to me this is like the peace of 1783, and again alluded to 1795 [i.e. 1794] and said this is the second [third?] time we have been deceived by our father."[30]

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[28] Depositions of Warburton, Lt. Col. William Evans, Capt. Peter Chambers, Capt. Thomas Coleman, Francis Baby, Captain William Caldwell (legitimate son of father of same name), Billy Caldwell (Col. Caldwell's illegitimate son), Colonel William Caldwell, and William Jones. These depositions are located in ibid., pp. 11, 50, 83, 109, 151, 156-57, 160, 176, 178, respectively. For more on Procter's court-martial see Antal, 371-77, 392-93, and John Sugden, Tecumseh's Last Stand (Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 183-86. Also, in his retreat through the woods after the battle of the Thames, Private Shadrach Byfield of the 41st Regiment of Foot was harassed and intimidated by his former Indian allies, and according to him, they deliberated for a time on "how I was to be disposed of." Shadrach Byfield, "A Narrative of a Light Company Soldier's Service in the 41st Regiment of Foot, 1807-1814," 22-23. Manuscript from the National Army Museum, Chelsea Dristict, London. Anthropologist James Clifton has written two excellent biographical essays on Billy Caldwell: Clifton, "Personal and Ethnic Identity on the Great Lakes Frontier: The Case of Billy Caldwell, Anglo-Canadian," Ethnohistory 25(1) (Winter 1978): 69-94; and "Merchant, Soldier, Broker, Chief: A Corrected Obituary of Captain Billy Caldwell," Journal of Illinois State Historical Society 71(3) (August 1978): 185-210.

[29] This refers to the incident when the British garrison closed the gates of the fort, denying refuge to the Indians fleeing from the American army led by Anthony Wayne at Fallen Timbers, 20 August 1794.

[30] Colonel William Caldwell's deposition, 11 January 1815, Procter Court-Martial, P.R.O., WO 71/243, 176.

In stark contrast to those often tense moments that characterized the alliance in the region of Detroit and the southern Great Lakes, British-Indian relations in the North and in the upper Mississippi Valley progressed much more smoothly. Specifically, the greater discipline of the Indians from the North and West stood out. When Robert Dickson, principal British agent and trader from the upper Mississippi region, arrived at Detroit with hundreds of Native reinforcements to assist Procter in the summer of 1813, the General described them as "restrainable, tractable to a Degree that I could not have thought possible." But Procter feared that after several days they had begun to grow "contaminated, by the other Indians" from the Detroit region.[31] Like Procter, John Richardson, a "Gentleman Volunteer" from Upper Canada, also praised Dickson and the northwestern Indians, comparing the Sauks' "nobleness of feature" to that of the ancient Romans.[32] More importantly, Richardson related an instance in which Dickson prevented a Sauk chief from taking the life of an American prisoner in order to avenge the death of the chief's son.[33] But Richardson's stories of American prisonsers captured near Brownstown the previous year by tribes from the Detroit region demonstrated that in those instances not even the presence of a British Indian agent nor that of army officers could prevent the ritualized killing of prisoners.[34] As they had always done prior to the War, Britain's Indian allies from the North and the far West continued to look to their traders and Indian agents for leadership and guidance. These tribes envisioned

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[31] Procter to Prevost, 9 August 1813, Wood, II: 44.

[32] Casselman, Richardson's War of 1812, 102.

[33] Ibid., 157-58.

[34] Ibid., 27-31.

themselves in a symbiotic relationship with their British Father, one which would always protect them and provide for their material needs.

In his autobiography, the Sauk leader Black Hawk spoke of his relationship with the British agents in the Mississippi Valley and Wisconsin. In a meeting with Dickson at Green Bay, Black Hawk recalled that the agent "*could not consent to send brave men to murder women and children* [italicized by autobiography's editor]," and therefore would not permit the King's allies to raid defenseless settlements.[35] Instead, Dickson insisted that the Sauks and the other western nations accompany the traders and British officers to assist Procter in northern Ohio. According to the Sauk chief, he and approximately five hundred warriors happily complied with this request. Furthermore, while enroute to Fort Meigs Black Hawk demonstrated his humanity by advising other allied tribes to treat American prisoners well, and he credited himself with the distinction of intervening to end the slaughter of captive Americans at Dudley's Defeat, an honor that legend has generally bestowed upon Tecumseh. Regardless of which chief actually stopped the killings at Dudley's Defeat, Black Hawk's cooperation with the British and his respect for the basic human dignity of his enemies was almost diametrically opposed to the attitudes of his Indian counterparts along the Detroit frontier.[36] Britain's ties to the Sauks and Dakota Sioux of the Upper Mississippi, along with its ties to the Ojibwas, Ottawas, and Menominees of Wisconsin and northern Michigan, provided the necessary support

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[35] Jackson, Black Hawk: An Autobiography, 66.

[36] Ibid., 66-67.

for the Crown's little army to hold key posts in those regions until the Treaty of Ghent in December 1814.[37]

As with the other groups covered in this study, the Grand River community of Upper Canada endured a wartime experience reminiscent of their prewar years. With their land question still unsettled, the Six Nations officially proclaimed neutrality at the commencement of hostilities, ostensibly until the British government would address their grievances. Nevertheless, after the initial British successes, coupled with the relentless urging of John Norton, most warriors from the Grand River once again allied themselves with the King's cause.[38] This time, however, they did so in hopes of receiving future redress from the Crown, and with the understanding that it was a matter of honor to repel an invader of their homeland. Unlike the other segments of the Chain of Friendship, the Iroquois at the Grand River did not fight to regain lost territory, but to retain the ground which was rightfully theirs, regardless of how the British government perceived their status on that land.

Once again, officials in Canada were forced to temporize with the Six Nations at the Grand River. Neither Prevost nor the military governor of Upper Canada, Isaac Brock, could make any promises to the Six Nations, nor could they undermine the Indian Department's position, which was still at odds with Norton and elements of the Six Nations. Nevertheless, Prevost, realizing that it was essential to keep the Six Nations actively employed in the war, compromised with the Grand River group by allowing them wartime autonomy and resources and eventually granting Norton a great deal of

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[37] Calloway, Crown and Calumet, 204; Anderson, Kinsmen of Another Kind, 88-91.

[38] Benn, 36-53.

control over the distribution of gifts and war materiel at the Grand River.[39] In essence, Prevost had established a direct link between Norton and the upper levels of government and had given the mixed-blood leader significant control over military resources. Prevost's maneuver drastically undercut the power and influence of the Indian Department at the Fort George agency, particularly that of Norton's arch-rival and nemesis, William Claus, who resisted Prevost's orders throughout the war and took every opportunity to continue to malign Norton. Although Norton was eventually shoved aside by his adversaries at the war's end after Prevost's recall to England, the Grand River's wartime experience demonstrated that the British, while not prepared to fully grant Six Nations' demands, were in a position in which they were compelled to compromise with Iroquois interests.

Several aspects of the Chain of Friendship have been discussed in this study. Ties between the British government and the Indians of the Old Northwest and Upper Canada between 1783 and 1812 were often tenuous, and this relationship differed widely, depending on several varying factors, such as geographical position, Native relations with the United States, the fur trade, Indian intertribal relations, the degree of Native acculturation, indigenous religious beliefs, the influence of British Indian agents, and the constitutional issues of Native sovereignty and legal status. During the nineteenth century few Americans, if any, grasped the reasons for the continuation of the Chain of Friendship between Great Britain and its Indian allies, nor could Americans understand the complexities of these bonds. Perhaps Henry Schoolcraft, ethnologist and U. S. Indian

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[39] Ibid., 142-43, 156-57; Klinck & Talman, Journal of Major John Norton, lxxviii; Noah Freer, Military Secretary to Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond, 1 March 1814, Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, 219-20, and in CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 3, 1299-1301. Also see Freer to Captain Loring, 9 July 1814, ibid., 1463-64.

agent, came the closest when, in 1834, he publicly presented his study on "The Movements of the North Western Indians During the Late War" to the Historical Society of Michigan. At the time of his presentation several of the Indians who had fought in the war were still living, and the Shawnee Prophet had moved to an Indian reservation in Kansas. While erroneous in places, Schoolcraft's study pointed out the regional differences between the tribes of the Old Northwest, and it emphasized that the northern nations had rejected the teachings of the Shawnee Prophet. The ethnologist also credited "the Agents of the North West Company" and Robert Dickson as key figures in preserving the northern alliance. Finally, rather than condemning the British for their participation and involvement in Native atrocities, as his countrymen were wont to do, Schoolcraft pointed out that the British had not kept their promises to their faithful allies.[40] The U. S. agent, having worked among the tribes in northern Michigan for more than a decade, also managed to incorporate a degree of Native perspective in his scholarship, and in so doing helped to pave the way for further studies in British-Indian relations such as this one.

Schoolcraft's study also hinted at a key point, namely the Chain of Friendship's frailty. The uncertain level of British commitment to their Indian allies was further brought out in the Treaty of Ghent, which did not adequately protect Indian interests. This would have been forgivable if British officers and agents had not made promises to

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[40] Henry R. Schoolcraft, "Movements of the North Western Indian During the Late War," Discourse Delivered Before the Historical Society of Michigan, Detroit, 1834, GABLA, Shawnee File, 1803-1804; Winnebago File, 1797-1806. There were also two other documents written by Americans during the war that acknowledged regional groupings and differences between the Indians, yet without applying this to the British alliance. These are: Thomas Forsyth to John Gibson, 26 July 1812, Thomas Forsyth Collection, Box 134, Chicago Historical Society, and Duncan McArthur, "Report on the Indian tribes East of the Mississippi River with Whom the United States are Connected by Treaty," 22 March 1814, Duncan McArthur Papers, Vol. 1, 122-32, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

their allies regarding the restoration of their land and sovereignty. Little is known about what was actually promised to the Indians at the war's outset, but the Native postwar responses and a few quotes from key officers make it easy to conjecture. In 1815, Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDouall, who had commanded British forces at Mackinac during the war, lamented,

> I shall to the latest period of my life, bewail the hapless Destiny of these devoted Nations who listened to our solicitations and confiding in our promises faithfully adhered to us during the war, but found the Peace which *promised* [emphasized by McDouall] security to them and their Country only led to their utter ruin and annihilation.[41]

McDouall often expressed the shame he felt regarding his nation's postwar Indian policy, saying "[A]fter what I have told them [the Indians][,] what a superlative and unequalled ------ they must think me."[42]

At Mackinac in June 1814, McDouall had informed the Indians that the King would assist them in recovering their "old boundaries." Great Britain, McDouall continued, would refuse to make peace until "your interests...be first considered, your just claims admitted, and no infringement of your rights permitted in the future."[43] At Fort McKay in the upper Mississippi Valley, where news of the peace of Ghent had not yet reached the British garrison by April 1815, Captain Andrew Bulger of the Royal Newfoundland Fencibles instructed his interpreters to inform both the Sioux and the Sauks that "it is *solely on their* [Bulger's emphasis] account that the War is now carried

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[41] McDouall to Major General Robinson, 22 September 1815, MPHC, XVI: 284.

[42] Same to same, 4 October 1815, ibid., 310. Also see Robert McDouall Orderly Book, 1815, Burton Historical Collection.

[43] Speech of McDonall to the Indians at Michilimackinac, 5 June 1814, CNA, MG 11 CO 42, 157, 15-18.

on."[44] When news of the peace finally reached these distant outposts the following month, both officers were stunned. The Treaty's terms called for the restoration of all conquered territories. The disillusioned McDouall could only conclude that "[o]ur negociators [sic], as usual, have been egregiously duped.... they have shown themselves profoundly ignorant of the concerns of this part of the Empire."[45]

The northern and western Indians who subsequently met with McDouall and the Indian agents at Mackinac and Drummond Island between 1815 and 1817 were thunderstruck as they began to fully grasp the implications of the peace. In the summer of 1816 the Sioux chiefs Wabisha and Little Crow, accompanied by four hundred warriors, visited the new British post at Drummond Island to express their dissatisfaction.[46] A Winnebago leader also made his way to the northern agency that summer, where he complained to agent T. G. ("Tige") Anderson that "we...have always been deceived by you."[47] Black Hawk, too, visited the post for a few consecutive summers in an attempt to compel the British to make good on their earlier promises, exclaiming, "I many times rubbed my eyes and cleared my ears, before I could believe what I saw or what I heard." If the British did not support the Indians, Black Hawk

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[44] "Instructions to Mr. Guillory Interpreter for the Saulk [sic] Nation," A. Bulger, 8 April 1815; "Instructions to Lieutenant Renville Interpreter for the Scoux [sic] Nation," A. Bulger, 8 April 15, CNA, MG 19 E 5, Andrew Bulger Papers, File 6, pp. 505 & 510, respectively.

[45] McDouall to Bulger, 2 May, 1815, ibid., 573.

[46] Allen, His Majesty's Indian Allies, 175. At a council held at Amherstburg on 10 June 1816, a delegation of "Principal Chiefs" of several of the refugees residing near the Western District claimed that the British had promised them that they "would get back again the old French lines," likely meaning the Allegheny watershed. Proceedings of a Council held at Amherstburg, 10 June 1816, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 27, 16106. This, of course, was impossible by 1812, and the statement may have been an effort on the part of the Indians to extract more gifts from the British. More realistically, British officers and agents may have given the Indians hope of restoring all of their country lost since the Treaty of Greenville in 1795.

[47] Speech of Karamanke, Winnebago leader, 11 June 1816, William McKay Papers, File 5, McCord Museum, Montreal.

continued, "your red children…will be slaves to the Big Knives." When the Sauk leader grew aggressively angry, agent William McKay forcefully silenced him: "I have your Great Father's orders to obey and all the Indians in the universe will not make me deviate from them. The council is Ended and you must withdraw." These remarks left Black Hawk "crying with rage."[48]

Of all the groups within the Chain of Friendship, the tribes in the North and West --once the most stable segment of the Chain– were the most vocal in expressing their anger with the British after the War of 1812. This was partly due to the fact that they still held out hope of resisting the Americans. The nations nearer to the Detroit theater of the conflict had either relocated or had surrendered to the "Big Knives." Tecumseh and Roundhead were dead, and by 1816 Main Poc was gone as well.[49] Walk-in-the-Water, one of the few surviving chiefs of the coalition from the southern Great Lakes, had begun to cooperate with the Americans much earlier. The warriors from the Grand River merely returned to their farms, and with the restoration of peace, they no longer stood to lose their land. But the nations in Wisconsin and the upper Mississippi Valley were beginning to experience the pressure of an expanding military presence in those regions after 1815, causing more consternation for the Indians there. Finally, however, probably the most signficant reason that the northern and western tribes so ardently expressed their dissatisfaction with the British stemmed from their understanding of the familial, symbiotic ties that had subsisted between them for so long. To these groups, their British Father was far more than a mere wartime ally, and since the nations in these distant

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[48] Speeches at Drummond Island, 3 August 1817, CNA, MG 19 F 29, William McKay Papers; also in John Strachan Papers, F983, Vol. 1, Ontario Historical Society, Toronto.

quarters had not been greatly affected by events in either 1783 or 1794, they now began to experience this disappointment for the first time.

In truth, British officials and military leaders, both in Canada and in the home government, earnestly desired to protect their allies and make good on their wartime promises. After Tecumseh's death, the fallen warrior's sister and Tecumseh's teen-aged son, along with nearly two dozen other Indians from the Detroit region, visited Governor General Sir George Prevost at Quebec in March 1814. Prevost compassionately expressed his condolences, telling the delegation of his sorrow upon previously learning of Tecumseh's death. To console the Indians, the Governor General reminded them that they and the British shared a common cause, and that "[o]ur Great Father considers you as his children and will not forget you or your interests at a Peace."[50]

Like Prevost, British leaders in England, including Prime Minister Lord Liverpool and his War Secretary Earl Bathurst, considered it a priority to negotiate a permanent Indian boundary and preferably a sovereign Native buffer state that would separate the United States territories from Britain's Canadian possessions. Furthermore, the British peace commissioners at Ghent exceeded their government's instructions by boldly demanding an Indian buffer state as a *sine qua non* of any peace agreement. The proposal was to include nearly all of the Indian territory lost since the Greenville Treaty in 1795, and both the British and American governments would theoretically be prohibited from purchasing or acquiring any Indian lands from within its boundaries.

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[49] For Main Poc's death, see Thomas Forsyth to William Clark, 15 January 1827, Thomas Forsyth Papers, 9T53, Draper Mss.

[50] Speech of Sir George Prevost to Indian delegation at Quebec, 15 March 1814, CNA, RG 10, Indian Affairs, Vol. 12, 10308-12. Tecumseh's sister, still very distraught, cried on this occasion. John Norton and his wife were also present.

Such a lofty ultimatum by the British commissioners had no chance of succeeding. Any attempt to redraw the boundary separating Indian country from the United States at the old Greenville line would have first required the removal of more than one hundred thousand white settlers. In addition, John Quincy Adams, a member of the American peace delegation, pointed out that "[n]o European power had ever considered the Indian nations as Great Britain appeared now to consider them."[51] Adams later told Henry Goulburn, the leader of the British peace commission, that to "condemn" so great a "territory to perpetual barrenness and solitude [so] that a few hundred savages might find wild beasts to hunt upon it, was a species of game law that a nation descended from Britons would never endure."[52] When the two countries' delegations informally met for dinner on 23 August 1814, Heny Clay, another of the American commissioners, explained to Goulburn that the British proposition regarding the Indians was "equivalent to a demand for the cession of Boston or New York."[53] Consequently, the Americans prepared to break off negotiations. Only Clay held out hope for reaching an agreement, but merely because he, renowned for his gambling and card-playing, felt certain that the British were bluffing.[54]

The Americans ultimately had the better of the argument, for they were basing their perspective on the traditional Euro-American legal understanding that Natives were

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[51] Substance of Conference on 9 August 1814, enclosure in Henry Goulburn to Earl Bathurst, same date, CNA, MG 24 A 8, Earl Bathurst Papers, 192.

[52] Entry for 1 September 1814, in Charles Francis Adams, ed., Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848, 12 Vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1874-1877), III: 28.

[53] Goulburn to Bathurst, 23 August 1814, CNA, MG 24 A 8, Bathurst Papers, 200.

[54] Hickey, 292.

not sovereign over the lands on which they lived, but merely possessed the usufructuary right to the temporary use of the land. Americans had regarded the region of the proposed Indian buffer state as sovereign U. S. territory ever since the Peace of Paris in 1783. The proposal was more convenient for Britain. Since Britain had ceded this region at that time, it was not as if the King's ministers were offering to carve a sovereign Native state from British territory. Certainly, the Grand River experience had demonstrated their aversion for such a concept. In any case, the Americans would never agree to any compromise unless the British were in a position to forcibly evict them from Indian lands. Even then, the war would probably never end. Adams believed that even if the United States government agreed to Britain's Indian proposal, "all its [the U. S. government's] force, and that of Britain combined with it, would not suffice" to prevent the American settlers from crossing the line.[55] Clay shared this view, intimating to Goulburn that the two countries' "united efforts would be inadequate to restrain that part of the American population which is to the Westward of the Alleghany, from encroaching upon the Indian Territory and gradually expelling the aboriginal inhabitants."[56] Amazed, Goulburn later concluded, "I had till I came here no idea of the fixed determination which prevails in the breast of every American to extirpate the Indians and appropriate their Territory; but… there is nothing which the people of America would so reluctantly abandon as what they…call their natural right to do so."[57] Thus, the problem stemmed largely from the massive land cessions made in 1783 of areas that the Americans had

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[55] Entry for 1 September 1814, Adams, Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, III: 28

[56] Goulburn to Bathurst, 16 September 1814, CNA, MG 24 A 8, Earl Bathurst Papers, 213.

[57] Goulburn to Bathurst, 25 November 1814, ibid., 239.

never actually conquered, but which they had based their right to possess on a myth of conquest.

Rather than demanding an Indian buffer state, perhaps a wiser strategem for the British commissioners to have attempted would have been to seek modest territorial gains in Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, and Maine, without mentioning the Indians at the peace talks. Then the Crown might have subsequently had the option of earmarking some of the conquered regions specifically for Native reserves. Instead, once President James Madison received news of the extravagant British proposals for an Indian buffer state, he released the substance of the confidential peace talks to the American public, further raising the ire and hatred of the populace against Britain and the Crown's faithful Indian allies.[58] Once the British commissioners had proposed the buffer state, the American government and its citizens were in no mood to make any territorial concessions at all, no matter how poorly American forces had fared in the war.

Even so, British officials contemplated a continuation and an escalation of the war and offered overall command of Britain's North American forces to the greatest military mind of the age, the Duke of Wellington. The "Iron Duke," though expressing his willingness to accept the command, could not promise further territorial conquests until the British had gained full naval superiority on the Great Lakes. Only then could he consider moving great numbers of troops south of the Lakes and dislodging the Americans from their remaining forts scattered throughout northern Ohio and Indiana, key locations that Procter's former Right Division had failed to capture. Without control of the Lakes, Wellington firmly maintained, "you have no right…to demand any

[58] Bailey, 149; Hickey, 291.

concession of territory from America."[59] The Duke's words helped temper Britain's zeal to continue to prosecute the war. Fortunately for both countries, Wellington remained in Europe to meet the revived French threat after Napoleon's escape from his temporary exile at Elba.

Wellington's opinion represented only a single factor influencing Britain to end hostilities in North America. After more than two decades of fighting France, a continued war with the United States would require additional loans and property taxes.[60] Furthermore, Europe's instability at the time and growing European sympathy for the United States made peace desirable. Years later, Henry Goulburn reflected on the final months of 1814, recalling that "the discussions at Vienna assumed a character which made it possible that there might be a renewal of hostilities in Europe & parties there speculated upon the embarrassment which an American war would cause to England."[61] Therefore, British commissioners relented to American pressure for a peace based on the principle of *status quo ante bellum*, a restoration of all conditions and territories as they stood prior to the war. Thus, while officers and agents in North America such as McDouall, Bulger, Dickson, and others all recognized the familial ties that the Indians believed morally bound the British to the Chain of Friendship, the home government,

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[59] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, 9 November 1814, quoted in Hickey, 295. Wellington's concerns were well founded; the naval struggle on the Lakes would have made it difficult for either side to gain supremacy. By war's end, the naval race on Lake Ontario alone entailed the construction of the world's largest sailing vessels at the time. For an excellent essay on this struggle, see C. P. Stacey, "Naval Power on the Lakes, 1812-1814," in After Tippecanoe: Some Aspects of the War of 1812, ed. Philip P. Mason (East Lansing & Toronto: The Michigan State University Press & The Ryerson Press, respectively, 1963), 54-57.

[60] Harold D. Langley, "The Quest for Peace," in War on the Great Lakes: Essays Commemorating the 175th Anniversary of the Battle of Lake Erie, eds. William Jeffrey Welsh and David Curtis Skaggs (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991), 73.

[61] Wilbur Devereux Jones, ed., "A British View of the War of 1812 and the Peace Negotiations," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review 45 (1958-1959), 486.

though wanting to help the Indians, in the end shaped Britain's foreign policy to conform to its European geo-political interests.

By all conventional standards, the Americans had lost the war but won the peace. The United States had failed in all of its objectives, including its attempt to conquer Canada. At Ghent American comissioners never compelled the British peace delegation to address Britain's violation of maritime rights for which the war was supposedly declared, and at the war's end British troops occupied much more American territory than vice-versa. Finally, the Americans held naval domination only on Lake Erie, albeit the most vital of all the Great Lakes. Yet the American diplomatic triumph in gaining a stalemate at Ghent, coupled with Andrew Jackson's brilliant postwar victory over a seasoned British army at New Orleans in January 1815, left Americans with the false impression that they had won the war and had compelled Britain to agree to favorable terms. In a sense, it was the myth of victory in 1783 all over again; Jeffersonian Americans even regarded it as a second war of independence.[62]

As in 1783, the Crown's Indian allies were once again left vulnerable to American expansion. This time, however, British leaders had at least attempted to address Native concerns at the peace negotiations, and in place of the ill-fated buffer state proposal, Goulburn and his associates managed to persuade the American commissioners to add an article to the Treaty as a token attempt to protect Native interests. In keeping with the principle of *status quo ante bellum*, Article IX of the Treaty of Ghent theoretically restored all Indian "possessions, rights, and privileges" to which they had been entitled in the year 1811. This, however, did not guarantee the Indians a sovereign status, and it did

[62] Hickey, 298-99, 308-09.

nothing to prevent the continuation of a process of relinquishing their lands to the United States through a rapid succession of treaties. Furthermore, Tecumseh and other significant leaders of resistance were now gone, and the British no longer attempted to intervene, so nothing hindered the accelerated process of American land acquisition. Short of continuing the war for many years in what promised to be a bloody, futile struggle for Lake Erie and northern Ohio, Article IX in the Ghent agreement was the best that the British could do for the Indians, given the circumstances and American temperament.

In spite of the broken promises and the drastically reduced British Indian budgets that followed the war, traces of the old Chain of Friendship remained. Indians living in the North still received gifts and provisions at Drummond and Manitoulin Islands well into the 1840s, and a number of those who remained in the vicinity of Detroit continued to cross over each year in order to visit their British Father at Malden, a practice that continued to annoy Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan.[63] And during the Mackenzie Rebellion of Upper Canada in 1837-1838, Ojibwas from Lake Huron and nearly one hundred warriors from the Grand River turned out to assist in putting down the revolt.[64] Even Black Hawk, after having survived the bloody war that bears his name, by 1833 had seemingly forgotten about his harsh words and shouting sprees with British agents sixteen years earlier. In his autobiography, the Sauk leader recalled that "the *British* made but few [promises] –but we could always *rely upon their word!* [italicized by

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[63] Cass to John Calhoun, Secretary of War, 3 August 1819, and same to same, 8 October 1819, Bentley Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Lewis Cass Collection, Vol. 3, 99-102 and 122-25, resepectively.

[64] Allen, His Majesty's Indian Allies, 184.

editor][65] Nevertheless, in spite of the memories, the years of frontier warfare, military alliances, council fires, Indian revitalization movements, and fur trade in the Great Lakes had all passed. A new era in the annals of Canadian-Indian relations had begun.

[65] Jackson, Black Hawk: An Autobiography, 60.

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National Army Museum, Chelsea District, London
- Shadrach Byfield Manuscript

Newberry Library, Chicago
- Ayer Manuscripts
  - John Norton Letterbook
  - Lewis Cass – "Report on the…Regulation of Indian Affairs," 1815

Ontario Historical Archives, Toronto
- John Norton Papers
- John Strachan Papers

Public Records Office, Kew Gardens, United Kingdom
- Colonial Office Record 42
  - Vols. 136, 140, 321, 322, 324, 325, 349, 352
- Colonial Office Record 43
  - Vol. 22
- War Office Record 71
  - Vol. 243

Toronto Public Library
- Russell Papers
  - L18-Letterbook, Correspondence with Governor-General, 1796-1799
    - -Letterbook, Indian Affairs, 1798-1799

Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario
- John Norton Papers

Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison
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