

and Dutch in the northeast. Armed by their European allies, the Haudenosaunee used their technological advantage to overpower many surrounding tribes during the seventeenth century to gain control of the market for beaver pelts and the flow of European goods to tribe to the west. By the eighteenth century, the increasingly powerful Haudenosaunee found themselves drawn into political conflicts between the European powers. As the British asserted their control over the region, the Haudenosaunee were caught between the British and their American colonies as tensions grew; with their stronghold in the strategically important area surrounding Lake Ontario, the Haudenosaunee were uniquely positioned to determine the war's outcome. The British and the American revolutionaries were keenly aware that if the Six Nations were to choose sides, it would radically affect the balance of power. English representatives routinely offered tribute to the Haudenosaunee, often in the form of wampum, in the hopes of retaining their alliances (Johnson 1755 and 1756).

Ultimately, when the American Revolution began, the tribes of the Six Nations were torn between neutrality and their differing sympathies toward the two warring parties. Thus “[b]eing unable to agree, they covered the council fire of the League in 1777, leaving each tribe to pursue its own course of action during the war” (Tooker 1978a:435). Because the 1784 Treaty of Paris left no provision for the Indians, the Haudenosaunee divided. Some stayed in New York while the rest followed Mohawk War Chief Joseph Brant to Canada (Weaver 1978:525). On October 25, 1784, Sir Frederick Haldimand awarded the Loyalist Haudenosaunee with a tract of land in Ontario along the Grand River as restitution for the loss of tribal lands in New York (Johnston ed. 1964:50). They took with them a portion of the Confederacy's wampum belts (Abrams 1994:359). Once situated in Canada, the Loyalist Haudenosaunee appointed their own wampum keepers and the Canadian branch of the Grand Council acquired more belts through continued political dealings with the British Crown (Gilkison 1928:50; Paul Williams, Council of Chiefs, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, Ontario and Delegate to the HSCBRR, personal communication 4/15/2011).

The latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed political and social changes that had dramatic impacts on the Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, and Tuscarora communities at Grand River. Federal bills and statutes were instituted to accelerate Euro-Canadian acculturation and dismantle traditional Haudenosaunee governance and lifeways. By the late nineteenth century, Anglican Christians began to outnumber Longhouse traditionalists and a de facto class system began to emerge favoring Anglicans (Abrams 1994:361; Johnston ed. 1964:lxxix; Weaver 1978:530).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> These shifts were part of larger patterns of cultural change. From the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries, Christian missionary efforts shifted from French Catholicism to English Protestantism, which focused on assimilation as well as conversion. Anglicans, Methodists, and Baptist Christian denominations began to predominate at Six Nations Reserve in the nineteenth century (Johnston ed. 1964:lxxxv–lxxxvi; Weaver 1978:526).