Race, Gender and Colonialism: Public Life among the Six Nations of Grand River, 1899-1939

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2010

Abstract

Six Nations women transformed and maintained power in the Grand River community in the early twentieth century. While no longer matrilineal or matrilocal, and while women no longer had effective political power neither as clan mothers, nor as voters or councillors in the post-1924 elective Council system, women did have authority in the community. During this period, women effected change through various methods that were both new and traditional for Six Nations women. Their work was also similar to non-Native women in Ontario. Education was key to women’s authority at Grand River. Six Nations women became teachers in great numbers during this period, and had some control over the education of children in their community. Children were taught Anglo-Canadian gender roles; girls were educated to be mothers and homemakers, and boys to be farmers and breadwinners. Children were also taught to be loyal British subjects and to maintain the tradition of alliance with Britain that had been established between the Iroquois and the English in the seventeenth century.

With the onset of the Great War in 1914, Six Nations men and women responded with gendered patriotism, again, in ways that were both similar to Anglo-Canadians, and in ways that
were similar to traditional Iroquois responses to war; men fought and women provided support on the home-front. Women’s patriotic work at home led to increased activity in the post-war period on the reserve. Six Nations women made use of social reform organizations and voluntary associations to make improvements in their community, particularly after the War. The Women’s Institutes were especially popular because they were malleable, practical, and useful for rural women’s needs. Women exerted power through these organizations, and effected positive change on the reserve.
Acknowledgments

Many people have supported the research and writing of this dissertation through various means. First and foremost, Cecilia Morgan pushed me in the direction of the Six Nations of the Grand River, without which, I would not have done this project. Her helpful suggestions, careful editing and thoughtful questions made my work stronger and made me a better historian. Ruth Sandwell’s enthusiasm and Ian Radforth’s questions at several committee meetings made this a much improved thesis. Heidi Bohaker’s early help with advice on organizing my work and about forming a writing group were crucial to this project’s success. Jarvis Brownlie’s comments and suggestions clarified some important points and reinforced my belief in the importance of my project. Jane Errington’s early support of my interests during my Master’s was one of the chief reasons I chose to pursue doctoral studies after completing my Bachelor of Education. I also wish to thank the numerous kind historians in Canada and beyond who replied to email enquiries and were beyond generous with their time and their research. Their help is evidence of the generosity of spirit within the Canadian history community. I wish to thank the people of Six Nations who welcomed me and were interested in my work. Many individuals were generous with their time and their resources, particularly at the Ohsweken Genealogy Society and the Woodland Cultural Centre. Researching Six Nations family histories would not have been possible without the help of the community itself, particularly Tammy Martin of the Ohsweken Genealogy Society. Marion Press of the Education Commons at OISE was also especially helpful with my investigation of Scottish and English families. I also wish to thank Virve Wiland, the librarian of the Woodland Cultural Centre for her kind assistance and support over several years of research trips. Spencer Alexander of Buxton, Ontario, Sarah Innes of Elie, Scotland and William Milne-Home of Sydney, Australia generously shared their families with
me. Many friends provided me with a place to stay while I visited archives, especially Karie Rippin in Guelph, Kerry Pfahl, Delphine Merven and Laura Schneider in Ottawa, Mayu Nishimura in Hamilton, and Abbey Peters in Peterborough. Finally, I wish to acknowledge that this research was funded by Ontario Graduate Scholarship, and the Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

This project benefited from the support of many colleagues and friends. I began as the only PhD student in the program in my year, and was beyond thrilled when Jennifer Bonnell arrived the following year so that we could get through this degree together. Jennifer, along with Kristine Alexander and Robin Grazley provided much needed stress relief in our “off campus meetings.” The Toronto Area Women’s Canadian History Group has been a place of support and encouragement for all of us who have attended our monthly potluck dinners since the Fall of 2005, myself included. The members of the Larkin Group: Cara Spittal, Susana Miranda, Ariel Beajot, Nathan Smith and Denis McKim offered helpful criticisms, questions and suggestions for my work, as well as a place to enjoy the occasional Portuguese tart or pint! I also realize how lucky I am to have friends outside of school who supported my efforts, including Sara Kemp, Tara Scott, and the Bonnies girls. Finally, I could not have completed this project without the support of my family. My parents provided encouragement and support (financial and otherwise) and only occasionally asked when I might be finished. My siblings, in-laws, nieces and nephews made sure that I maintained a good work-life balance throughout my graduate schools years and I was a happier person as a result! My younger sister Amy joined me in the pursuit of a PhD a few years ago, and it is has been very special to be able to slog it out together. Lastly, my partner Derek Flack edited much of my work, offered support, and challenged me while also providing necessary distractions over the years.
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Introduction

Figure 1. Emily General on left, with Chauncey Garlow and Dora Jamieson, in Hampstead England, 1930. The Emily C. General School, Grand River.

In August of 1930, twenty-seven year old Emily General boarded the S.S. Aquitania in Southampton, England with Dora Jamieson to return home to Grand River. She had been in England for almost three months as the leader of a delegation of people from Six Nations who hoped to convince the British Crown that the Six Nations were allies and not subjects, and to complain about the management of band funds by the Department of Indian Affairs. At the time, Emily had been teaching children at the No. 9 School on the reserve for several years. She hired her own replacement in case she did not get back in time to teach her class that fall. Despite her planning, the Six Nations School Board decided to suspend her from teaching for three years.
Born into a very politically active family which included several Confederacy Chiefs and clan mothers, Emily was the niece of Deskaheh (Levi General) who in 1922 traveled to London and Geneva for similar reasons. While the 1930 trip was unsuccessful, it was the beginning of Emily’s career as an activist. Several years later, after twenty-two years teaching, she was fired by the Department of Indian Affairs for refusing to swear an oath of allegiance to the Crown. Soon after that she founded both the Six Nations Reserve Forest Theatre and the annual pageant which taught people the traditional history of the Six Nations, much of which she believed had been forgotten. Emily later became involved in the Indian Defence League of America, becoming their President. Two years before her death, a new school was built on the reserve, and was named after her. Emily General is remembered by her community as an educator and activist, a woman who fought for her people. While Emily General is not typical of her generation of women, she shared with many of them the desire to teach her community about its history, an aspiration to better her community, and to improve the community’s political strength within Canada and the British Empire.

In the period between the South African War and the beginning of the Second World War, the women of Six Nations were community builders and social and political activists. They worked to benefit their community in similar and different ways than in the past, and in similar and different ways than white women were doing at the same time. Their particular experiences of education and their upbringing led to activism and attempts at social reform. Teachers in particular were social activists. Education gave women the tools to work within and against the government, as literacy and a familiarity with the state were gained through schooling. Women

initiated and took part in patriotic work during the Great War, and in social reform campaigns to improve the morality, civility, and productivity of the community. This thesis explores the manner in which gender relations were reshaped by colonialism at Grand River, and how women’s status was both transformed and maintained. While much of the research done on Iroquois women suggests that matrilineal society declined with colonialism, leaving them with decreased power, my research shows that women at Grand River maintained leadership roles in their community. In using the term power, scholars of Iroquois women often mean political power, but influence, respect or authority within the community is a more appropriate way of thinking about women’s position at Grand River.

Christian women are the focus of this thesis, particularly because their work as community builders had a great impact on the community. According to most historians Christians were the majority of the population in the period under study. Thus, I am interested in how Christian women acculturated and adopted new strategies to improve their community. Anthropologist Annemarie Anrod Shimony states that “the Six Nations Indians have been in close contact with the dominant white culture for over three hundred years, and have been subjected to political domination, the preaching of missionaries, economic controls, and the attractions of modern technology and entertainment.” The impact of this contact, and changes in gender relations because of it, are important in understanding the activities of early twentieth century Six Nations people. I show that despite their acculturation, women maintained respect and influence in the community, especially through education, patriotic work, social reform and activism.

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Although there were various communities within the Grand River Reserve, and political, cultural, social, economical, and religious divisions, I refer to “the community,” or the entire reserve. To be sure the community was always in flux, with people coming and going, and it was a large reserve. However, the term is useful when referring to education within the community, or the efforts of social reformers to improve the community. When discussing the Six Nations of Grand River, terminology is another complicated issue. In general, I chose to use the term “Six Nations of the Grand River,” or “Six Nations” to refer to both the community of people who lived there and the place itself. I have done so not because I find the term more accessible or familiar to Euro-Canadian ears, but because that is what the people themselves commonly used at the time (and many still do today). While Longhouse people, anthropologists, activists and others use the term Haudenosaunee to describe Iroquois peoples, including the Six Nations of Grand River, it seemed wrong to apply this term to the Six Nations of the early twentieth century when it was not a term that many Native or non-Native people used.

Historiography

This study makes a contribution to three fields of history: Aboriginal women’s history in Canada; the history of gender and the British Empire in Canada and internationally; and the history of the Iroquois, Iroquois women, and the Six Nations of Grand River. It is a work of feminist history in that it recognizes that women often have been absent from mainstream history and that their absence is both a political and academic problem. As well, while women have historically often been subordinate to men, building on the insights of feminist historical scholarship, my work suggests that women’s lives have also been shaped by power relations which involve race, class, and sexuality. I am interested in women’s experiences of these power
struggles, and especially in their resistance and agency. While men are certainly part of my story, this project focuses primarily on women. However, I examine how colonialism, especially through schooling and the Great War, shaped gender identities of both boys and girls, men and women.

Since work began on Aboriginal women’s history in the 1970s and 80s, there has been a veritable explosion of publications in the field. What was generally an ignored topic before Sylvia Van Kirk’s *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (1980) has become a growing field in Canadian history. In 1987, Van Kirk complained that “most native history to date suffers from the lack of feminist perspective.” This is clearly no longer the case, as the intersection of women’s and Native history has resulted in a huge increase in Native women’s history. The growth of the field testifies not only to the variety of stories and experiences that are being uncovered, but also the interest in Aboriginal women’s history by mostly non-Native feminist scholars. Much of the work is interested in the theme of women’s sexuality, an area that includes Jean Barman, Robin Jarvis Brownlie, and Joan Sangster or the impact of the state and colonialism on Native women, including work by Sarah Carter. Joanne

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Fiske, and Mary Ellen Turpel. Other work focuses on the fur trade, missionaries and education, and performance and representation. However, much of this scholarship relies on sources produced by the state. Moreover, a great deal of the work in the last thirty years looks at the Canadian West; much less has been written about central Canada and the Maritimes. As Janice Forsyth recently pointed out in a review of the historical literature on Aboriginal women,


“our knowledge of First Nations women is really non-Native knowledge of First Nations women in Western Canada.”12 While there are several excellent collections of Native women’s history, there also is a lack of monographs on the subject; this book-length project aims to make a substantial contribution to the field.13 This dissertation aims to broaden our knowledge of the history of Native women in Ontario, and whenever possible it uses their own voices.

It also contributes to a new and growing field in Canadian history, the history of gender and empire. This field has largely grown out of women’s and gender history, in response to an imperial history that left out women and ignored the concept of gender as a category of historical analysis. As Adele Perry recently observed, “feminist historians of Canada and the British Empire have crafted rich and substantial histories attesting to the presence of women and the importance of gender.”14 These histories include work on contact and colonialism, much of which includes Native women’s history; work on settler women and the empire,15 and work on women organizing for and against the empire.16 Perry argues that “the processes of colonization

cannot be understood without attention to gender, and that gender, similarly, cannot be adequately comprehended outside of the politics of race and colonization.” This is certainly the case for women at Grand River.17

This project also responds to the related body of work on gender and the British Empire, particularly in the settler dominions. Gender relations were shaped by colonialism in various locations around the empire; scholars such as Philippa Levine, Clare Midgley, Fiona Paisley, Victoria Haskins and Angela Woollacott have examined the effects of empire on colonial women, white women’s centrality to the imperial project, and why the empire has been seen in the past as a masculine enterprise.18 While Perry suggests that “the feminist historiography of Canada and the feminist historiography of the British Empire have had remarkably little to say to one another and have, with a couple of notable exceptions, developed separately,” this project tries to break this pattern to consider how gender roles and relations were shaped by colonialism at Grand River, and to examine the importance of the British Empire within the community.19

Finally, this project aims to add to the field of Iroquois history, and especially to the body of work that considers the changing status of women in Iroquois society. While the Six Nations have been the topic of much study by anthropologists and historians, the activities of Christian women in the early twentieth century have been overlooked. Interest in the Iroquois as a cultural


19 Perry, “Women, Gender and Empire,” 220.
group rose in the mid-nineteenth century; they continued to attract attention well into the twentieth century. The majority of anthropological researchers, though, have been based in the United States and have focused on the experiences of the Iroquois in what became the United States of America. Ethnohistorian Daniel Richter has suggested that the Iroquois “are among the most studied of all North American Indians; indeed, many would argue that they are overstudied.”

The apparent strength and thirst for warfare of the Iroquois, relative to their Algonkian neighbours and their European enemies and allies, their geographic location, and their complex political organization has made them a popular research topic in the past. They were well aware of their appeal and made the most of it. In 1922, secretary of the Six Nations Council, Asa R. Hill, claimed that “of all the American Indians, the Six Nations have best preserved their traditions. From the earliest European arrival they have occupied a peculiar historical position... Their system of government was so complete and unique and so well fitted to the people that from the earliest times they have been constantly written about.”

 Anthropologists, ethnologists, ethnographers and historians have all demonstrated a keen interest in the Iroquois; Elisabeth Tooker has argued that the Iroquois were especially important to the development of anthropology in both the United States and Canada. Theresa McCarthy’s recent work on the role of anthropologists at Grand River suggests that

Although power relations between anthropologists and the Haudenosaunee remain asymmetrical, the latter have never been passive in relationship to scholars. Reciprocal exchange and intellectual interaction have extended well beyond the production of scholarly texts. Moreover, as the Haudenosaunee assumed roles as co-producers and

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22 Much less has been written on the Iroquois peoples who moved north of the border into the British colony of Upper Canada after the American Revolution: these are the people that this thesis will consider. See Elisabeth Tooker, "History of Research," in Handbook of North American Indians, ed. Bruce Trigger (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1978), 4.
counter-narrators of anthropological works, anthropologists whose works and research activities are often subjects of intense criticism, have often participated in Haudenosaunee-based advocacy and activism.  

The Historiography of Women in Iroquois Society

The status of women in Iroquois society has been a much discussed and debated topic for centuries.  

Jesuit missionary Jean-François Lafitau’s early eighteenth century statements on the “superiority of the women” in Iroquois culture provided much for later anthropologists and historians to consider:

It is they who constitute the tribe, transmit the nobility of the blood, keep up the genealogical tree and the order of inheritance, and perpetuate the family. They possess all real authority; own the land and the fields, and their harvests; they are the soul of all councils, the arbiters of peace and war; they have care of the public treasury; slaves are given to them; they arrange marriages; the children belong to them, and to them and in their blood is confined the line of descent and the order of inheritance.

Despite Lafitau’s assessment of the Iroquois as a veritable “gynocracy,” by the middle of the nineteenth century early anthropologists saw things from a much more pessimistic perspective. Lewis Henry Morgan, “the father of anthropology,” stated in 1851 that “the Indian woman is regarded as the inferior, the dependant, and the deviant of man, and from nurture and habit, she actually considered herself to be.” However, by the end of the nineteenth century,

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24 Some studies look at the Iroquois people as a whole, while others focus on specific nations or communities, such as the Seneca. However, since people from all Six Nations (and more) came to Grand River, it is useful to include all of these studies to investigate how anthropologists and historians have assessed the changing role of women at various times and places.


26 Lewis H. Morgan, *League of the Ho-Dâne-No-Sau-Nee, or, Iroquois* (Rochester, N.Y.: Sage, 1851), 315. Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) was one of the earliest anthropologists to take an interest in the Iroquois, publishing his
anthropologists and ethnologists such as Lucien Carr and William Beauchamp agreed with Lafitau’s early assessment that Iroquois women held much power. Carr noted that the Iroquois woman, “by virtue of her functions as wife and mother, exercised an influence a little short of despotic, not only in the wigwam but also around the council fire.” Anthropologists were especially interested in women’s political and military influence over Iroquois men. Many anthropologists depended on the Jesuit Relations for evidence, as well as later eighteenth and nineteenth century sources. In the early twentieth century, Beauchamp noted that women control whether men were able to go to war, and in fact, at times had a “pacific influence.” Writing in 1884, Carr explained that “as it was for the woman to decide when this [mourning wars for captives] was necessary or desirable, it follows that the war-making power was virtually in her

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28 William M. Beauchamp (1830-1925), archaeologist and historian, was born in Orange County, New York and became an ordained priest. He had an interest in the Iroquois people which was strengthened by a friendship with Albert Cusick, an Onondaga priest. After his retirement to Syracuse in 1900, he devoted himself to studying the history of the Iroquois and became an authority on the subject. In 1904, he was adopted into the Eel Clan of the Onondaga, and given the name Wah-Kat-yu-ten, meaning the Beautiful Rainbow. Beauchamp was archaeologist for the New York State Museum, and published many studies of the Iroquois, including The Iroquois Trail (1892), History of the New York Iroquois (1905) and Iroquois Folk Lore (1922). William’s sister Mary Elizabeth Beauchamp worked as his secretary, and also published multiple newspaper articles on the Iroquois. William Martin Beauchamp and David Cusick, The Iroquois Trail; or, Footprints of the Six Nations in Customs, Traditions, and History (Fayetteville, N.Y.: Printed by H.C. Beauchamp, Recorder Office, 1892), William Martin Beauchamp, A History of the New York Iroquois: Now Commonly Called the Six Nations, Bulletin of the New York State Museum; 78 (Albany: New York State Education Dept., 1905), William M. Beauchamp, Iroquois Folk Lore Gathered from the Six Nations of New York. (Syracuse: Dehler, 1922).

hands.” These scholars were also very interested in women’s responsibility to select and depose of chiefs, a concept quite foreign to those familiar with European monarchical and parliamentary traditions.

In 1900, Anglo-Mohawk poet, author and performer Pauline Johnson wrote an entry on Iroquois women for the National Council of Women’s publication, *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work*, a book to be distributed at the Paris International Exhibition that year. Knowing that her chapter would stand among others on non-Native Canadian women, she wrote:

That the women of this Iroquois race are superior in many ways to their less fortunate sisters throughout Canada, is hardly necessary to state. Women who have had in the yesterdays a noble and pure-blooded ancestry, who look out on the to-morrows with minds open to educational acquirement; women whose grandmothers were the mothers of fighting men, whose daughters will be the mothers of men elbowing their way to the front ranks in the great professional and political arena in Canada; women whose thrift and care and morality will count for their nation, when that nation is just at its turn of tide toward civilization and advancement, are not the women to sit with idle hands and brains, caring not for the glories of yesterday, nor the conquests of to-morrow.31

Johnson’s maternal feminist pride in Iroquois women stems not only from their past as clan mothers, but from the moral leadership they can provide for the future. To an extent, she was correct: Iroquois women at Grand River gained more and more education in the early twentieth century and became teachers in their own community, and their “thrift and care and morality” certainly counted for their nation both during the crisis of the Great War and afterwards in social reform movements. While they lost their traditional method of political power, women were able to maintain influence through their roles as community leaders and activists during this period.

Women continued to be of interest to American anthropologists in the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1914, Alexander A. Goldenweiser commented on the “Functions of

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Women in Iroquois Society” at a meeting of the American Anthropological Society. Like those before him, he was most interested in women’s “connection with the political system, namely the election and deposition of federal chiefs, of who there were fifty in the League.”

John N. B. Hewitt focused especially on language, and in his work on the status of women prior to 1784 he argued that women’s power and authority was apparent most clearly in the League, as “her voice and her will through institutional means were made dominant and directive.” However, when he wrote on Iroquois women in 1933, he closed his piece by lamenting that “with the destruction and subversion of organic institutions of the Iroquois state through direct impact with the white man, the Iroquois woman quickly lost her unmatched pristine status and her plenary social and political power, and so her dispersed descendants today are groping among those ruins perchance to find her lost jewels.”

In the 1940s and 50s, several women academics took up the torch, although many of these studies were done by anthropologists less interested in change over time or the dynamic aspect of gender roles. Ann Eastlack Shafer’s 1941 Master’s thesis in anthropology under William Fenton was interested in “what the ordinary woman did and how she handled her


problems.” She noted that “perhaps too much has been written about Iroquois ‘matriarchal’ society,” and yet “there is little discussion of the ordinary woman and her relations to her own family and children.”³⁵ Shafer undertook research on reservations in New York State and at Grand River “in order to study the position of women in Iroquois society today [1941] from the standpoint of the processes of acculturation which are proceeding so rapidly.”³⁶ After investigating family relationships, economic activities, and women’s position in the community, both historically and in the contemporary period, Shafer concluded that

In more recent times the Iroquois woman has become more and more like her white neighbours. She has duties now similar to those of any woman living in an agricultural environment. To a large extent, in comparison with her former authority, she has given up much of the control of her children to the schools. Those tasks peculiar to her former political position are no longer important, for with the diminishing power of the chiefs those of the matron have likewise diminished.... It will be seen that in the course of time the Iroquois woman has given up many of her former prerogatives. These losses have not been replaced to any great extent, and within the total configuration she has surrendered far more than she has gained through acculturation.³⁷

While it seems that Shafer conducted research mostly among Longhouse families, my dissertation suggests that Christian women maintained power and status in the community in the pre-World War II period.

Martha Champion Randle’s observations led her to different conclusions. After spending time at Grand River in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Randle published her research on contemporary Iroquois women, suggesting that “women of today identify completely with their feminine role, do not seek ‘equality’ with men, and, while participation in masculine-centred cultural pursuits is not as great as that of their neighbouring sisters, feminine cultural activities

³⁶ Ibid., 72-73.
³⁷ Ibid., 112.
are successfully and cooperatively undertaken and accomplished."³⁸ Randle was married to the local Indian Agent at Grand River, E. P. Randle (1938-1949). Her 1951 paper at the Iroquois Research Conference concluded that

> The family centred life of the Iroquois woman in the old days made for a secure woman who entered into masculine activities in a subsidiary but important fashion. The acculturative process was less destructive of the woman’s pattern, and consequently the woman of today is more secure in her feminine role and more successful in accomplishments along the lines set by White patterns, than her masculine counterpart.³⁹

Anthropologist Cara Richards’ work in the late 1950s did take a dynamic look at the power that Iroquois women enjoyed. In “Matriarchy or Mistake: The Role of Iroquois Women through Time,” she suggests that in the seventeenth century, they had little real power, but by the nineteenth, due to population loss and other stresses caused by contact with Euro-Americans, women’s power and influence returned.⁴⁰

The growth of interest in women’s history and Native history in the 1970s brought about an increased awareness in the seemingly unusual role that women played in Iroquois society. Such an interest was expressed by several feminist academics, particularly anthropologists, ethnohistorians, and some gender historians by the 1990s. Their primary focus was on Iroquois women prior to the American Revolution, or for those that considered the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in the United States. However, very little of this literature considers the Iroquois women of Grand River.

In 1970, Judith Brown published an article that focused on women’s role in the economy and suggested that women’s power in Iroquois society came from their control over the

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³⁹ Ibid., 148.
economic organization of their community. For instance, women had the ability to prevent war parties from organizing because they controlled the food stores.\(^{41}\) In 1977, Joan Jensen focused specifically on Seneca women and found that “in spite of the disappearance of their traditional economic function, Native American women continued to be active in tribal organizations and to display independence and strength in arranging their lives. In addition, they kept alive older traditions which conflicted with the new ideology of private property, profit, and the subordination of women to men.”\(^{42}\) Diane Rothenberg’s 1980 study of the same women, though, suggests that “the position of Seneca women came more and more to resemble the position of the women of the white man”: that of being a subordinate.\(^{43}\)

Anthropologist Elisabeth Tooker conducted much research on the Iroquois League and the Handsome Lake religion, but her 1984 article on Iroquois women attempted to clarify “the principles of Iroquois socio-political organization.”\(^{44}\) She argues that women’s power may not have been as strong as some suggest because matrilineal kinship and matrilocal residence traditions also existed among other North American Native societies, and do not always indicate an improved status for women.\(^{45}\) Tooker also suggests that we need to be careful when thinking about ownership and property, as these ideas had different meanings in that time and culture. For

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\(^{45}\) Tooker, "Women in Iroquois Society."
example, while women “owned” their agricultural implements, they were often wooden sticks, that were easily replaceable. While women “owned” the land, the communities moved every so often, suggesting that the land was not as valuable as westerners might think.

Tooker’s findings, however, did not put the matter to rest. Gretchen Green’s 1989 historical work on Mohawk women, and particularly the Brant family, explores how women faced acculturation and continued to make efforts to gain social power through changing means. In 1991, historian Nancy Shoemaker took on the topic of Iroquois women, specifically the Seneca, and “instead of trying to prove that women lost power or gained power – as through powers were absolute and measureable,” she focuses on “how women’s political rights, economic roles, and individual freedoms changed in the context of colonization.” She concludes that “all Senecas lost power” but that “there is little evidence... showing that Seneca women became increasingly subordinate to Seneca men.” Joy Bilharz also focused in particular on the Seneca, but, unlike some of the earlier anthropologists, she is interested in the changing status of Seneca women. Bilharz suggests that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the influence of Handsome Lake and the nearby Quakers, the Seneca of upstate New York faced major changes to their way of life; “the effect on women’s roles was great.” She adds that the formation of the Seneca Nation of Indians in 1848 was another change that “further eroded the formal political roles of Seneca women.” As the new constitution “reflected contemporary white

48 Ibid.: 40.
customs, women were disenfranchised.” Her work follows the lives of Seneca women into the second half of the twentieth century where she examines the role of women in protesting the construction of the Kinzua Dam in the 1960s, and in community leadership roles after that.

Historian Natalie Zemon Davis offered a comparative perspective on Iroquois, Huron, and European women in a 1994 article, which focused on historical change, “and not just change generated by contact with Europeans, but by processes central to their own societies.” She suggests that some Native women may have tried to gain or maintain some power in the new and changing Catholic and traditional religious culture. Martha Harroun Foster’s 1995 article examines what she calls “the lost women of the matriarchy.” She suggests that “even after the awakening of feminist scholarship in the 1960s, interest in the diversity of culture and in women’s place in society remained restricted to anthropology and the new women’s history. The increased interest in Indian women barely touched the broader histories of Indian-white relations.” She argues that work by historians such as Daniel Richter, James Axtell and Francis Jennings fail to make Iroquois women “visible” in their histories of the Northeast.

While scholars have been preoccupied with the question of how much power or authority women had prior to contact, and if they lived in a matriarchal, matrilineal and matrilocal society, they have also been interested in whether women’s status declined and, if so, in what ways. My project accepts that prior to contact and colonialism, women were treated more or less as equals in their communities, and were respected for their labour and contribution to society. While their

50 Such as the vote being given to white male property owners.
position clearly changed over time with the move to reserves and the establishment of nuclear families, by the early twentieth century in Grand River, Christian women had found new sources of influence within the community, especially through education and the churches. While they no longer exercised political power through their clan chiefs, and did not acquire the right to vote or run for the elected council in 1924, they maintained authority within the community in numerous other ways that the following chapters will discuss.

The Historiography of Grand River

Despite the preponderance of work on the Iroquois in the United States, several anthropologists conducted fieldwork among the Six Nations of the Grand River in the mid-twentieth century and produced quite different studies. Two in particular have been useful to this project. Annemarie Shimony (1928-1995) and Sally Weaver (1940-1993) both looked at the community, although Shimony focused on the “Conservative” members of the population (meaning the Longhouse people) and Weaver focused on the “Non-Conservative” members (meaning “progressive” or Christian people). Shimony’s *Conservatism among the Iroquois at*

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54 A third study was conducted by John Noon in 1941, but was generally focused on law and government on the reserve. Noon used records of the Indian Office, the Minutes of Council, an interviews with chiefs and councilors to learn about Iroquois case law. While the topic is not entirely relevant to this study, some of the research that he uncovered is, and is included in the following chapters. John A. Noon, *Law and Government of the Grand River Iroquois*, Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology (New York: Viking Fund, 1949). A fourth was done by anthropologist Merlin Myers, who visited traditional Longhouse homes Six Nations in the 1950s and used British anthropological theory. He situated kinship networks in the context of structural-functional anthropology, and is less useful for this dissertation. Merlin G. Myers, *Households and Families of the Longhouse Iroquois at Six Nations Reserve* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

the Six Nations Reserve (1961) was published after field work conducted in the 1950s, and is an attempt to understand how, despite centuries of white contact, the Conservative Iroquois managed to retain so much of their culture. She was particularly interested in the survival of the Longhouse religion and culture; her study is considered one of the most important general descriptions of the Iroquois. Anthropologist William Fenton wrote that “few have enjoyed better rapport with the old people of the Longhouse... none has contributed a taller monograph.”56 In her study, she concluded that “to one degree or another, acculturative pressures had affected nearly every aspect of Iroquois culture and society.”57 Shimony built friendly relations with the Longhouse people in particular and was adopted by the Cayuga before her death in 1995.58 Currently, her husband, Abner Shimony, is continuing research she began on what happened to hereditary clan titles in the twentieth century.59

Sally Weaver conducted her research after Shimony, doing fieldwork at Grand River in the mid 1960s. Weaver was interested in the medical acculturation of the non-Conservative (Christian) Six Nations. She found that dependence on Western medicine began in the mid-nineteenth century, and continued to grow until 1966, the end of her study.60 Weaver’s book, Medicine and Politics among the Grand River Iroquois: A Study of the Non-Conservatives


(1972) was followed by several other papers on medical acculturation, but Weaver passed away before publishing her next manuscript, parts of which have been published elsewhere.\(^{61}\) Weaver formed many relationships with Progressive, or Non-Conservative Six Nations families, including the Elliotts, Moseses and Jamiesons.\(^{62}\) For many Canadian historians, Weaver's work is the primary source of information on Grand River. But neither Shimony nor Weaver were particularly interested in women, or in the impact of colonialism on gender roles.

Despite a growing body of work on Native women in Canada, there is no significant published study of Six Nations women in the early twentieth century.\(^{63}\) And as much as has been written about the status of women in Iroquois society, most of the work ends in the nineteenth century and only looks at the situation in New York state. Historians who look at the community in this period tend to focus on the political events of 1924 and debate whether the new elective political system was “imposed” upon the community or finally “arrived as requested.” The work of Scott Trevithick, James Benincasa, John Moses, Yale Belanger and Andrea Catapano provide various views on the topic.\(^{64}\) For these studies, the focus is on the how and the why of political

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62 Despite the fact that Weaver had many informants, some continue to disagree with her arguments. See Susan M. Hill, "Through a Haudenosaunee Lens: An Examination of Sally Weaver's Six Nations Historical Publications" (paper presented at the Canadian Historical Association 86th Annual Meeting, Saskatoon, May 26-30 2007).

63 There is also no significant study on women in nineteenth century Grand River.

change, and less on the impact of that change, especially on women. Whether women were involved in demanding change, or protested it when it arrived, is rarely mentioned. Several other studies look at the role of Levi General or Deskaheh and the Six Nations’ quest for sovereignty in the early 1920s, and other visits to Britain by community members. While Brian Titley’s work makes mention of the fact that “two women” traveled to England in 1930 as part of a delegation, he does not even name them. This reference sparked my interest, and my research on Emily General and Dora Jamieson appears later in the thesis.

Those studies that consider women tend to concentrate on “famous” or “important” individuals, such as the Brants, and not on the community in general. The Brant family, in particular, has garnered much understandable attention. While Joseph Brant has been the focus of historians for centuries, his family, including his sister Molly, has also been studied by


Titley, "The Six Nations’ Status Case,” 131. In fact, Titley suggests that the delegation was led by Chauncey Garlow when numerous other sources and oral history suggest that Emily General herself was appointed by the Confederacy Chiefs to lead the delegation. See The University Women's Club of Brantford, "Emily General: Six Nations Teacher, Activist."


Harvey Chalmers and Ethel Brant Monture, Joseph Brant, Mohawk (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1955), Ethel Brant Monture, Famous Indians: Brant, Crowfoot, Oronhyatekha (Toronto; Clarke, Irwin, 1960), William L. Stone, Life of Joseph Brant - Thayendanegea, Including the Border Wars of the American
Several Canadian gender historians have studied Six Nations women worthies. Pauline Johnson has become the most well-known woman from the community partly because of her prominence during her lifetime and now through the work of Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag, who show that through her writings and performances, Johnson “talked back” to the dominant Anglo-Canadian culture of the early twentieth century. Johnson rarely shows up in this dissertation primarily because she left the reserve community to travel, and then moved to British Columbia where she died in 1913; thus, while she is an intriguing Six Nations woman, she did not spend much of her adult life as part of the community. Cecilia Morgan’s important work on Ethel Brant Monture and Bernice Loft in the 1920s and 30s suggests that through lectures and performances they were able to question racial categories and provide a public voice for women.

But much of this work is focused on what feminist historians have called “women worthies,” or special women who stand out. However, it is important not to focus only on extraordinary or exceptional people. Historian Natalie Zemon Davis suggests that early

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72 Morgan, "Performing for ‘Imperial Eyes’: Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture, Ontario, 1930s-1960s.

women’s history, which was so often biographical and focused on “women worthies,” had specific purposes: “to disclose the range of female capacity, to provide exemplars, to argue from what some women had done to what women could do, if given the chance and the education.” The limitations, she notes, are that these sorts of biographies often remove women from their historical context, treat them in isolation from men, and “say little about the significance of sex roles in social life and historical change.” The short biographies in this thesis attempt to situate women in their historical context, and to examine how they fit into changing patterns on the reserve over time.

Microhistory and biography

This is a microhistory: a local history of a specific community. Ruth Sandwell explains that microhistory – “the detailed observation and analysis of the minutiae of daily life in one small community or region” – can be very useful at getting to the complexity of a community, especially rural communities. In addition, Jill Lepore suggests that microhistory is the history of “hitherto obscure people” that “concentrates on the intensive study of particular lives” to reveal “the fundamental experiences and mentalités of ordinary people.” While studies of “famous,” well-known, or powerful people from the community have been important to the study of the Six Nations, the study of the ordinary people who made up the majority of the population is important to understand the community. As Lepore suggests, “however singular a

74 Ibid.
person’s life may be, the value of examining it lies not in its uniqueness, but in its exemplariness, in how the individual’s life serves as an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole.”77 This microhistory relies on microbiographies, short introductions to the lives of individuals from the Six Nations community. Ronald Hoffman adds that a common purpose of historians working from a biographical perspective is “an endeavour to discern through the lives of individuals or families the broader contours of the social and cultural landscape.”78 The lives of the people studied in this thesis are often “incompletely documented,” but as Lepore argues, “microhistorians, tracing their elusive subjects through slender records, tend to address themselves to solving small mysteries, in the process of which a microhistorian may recapitulate the subject’s entire life story, though that is not his primary purpose. The life story, like the mystery, is merely the means to an end – and that end is always explaining the culture.”79 It is my contention that through the microbiographies of the people of Six Nations, the complexities of the community and its culture in the early twentieth century become apparent.

This thesis relies in part on close biographical studies of numerous Six Nations women, some children, and men, and some non-Native people from Brantford or elsewhere in Ontario who came to the reserve during the period in question. Too often in the history of the First Nations, individuals are left out of the story in favour of generalizations about the community. Social science methods often ignore the specifics of individual lives, or use case studies of anonymous subjects. In his recent micro-biographical study Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits, Allan Greer examines the life of Kateri Tekakwitha in order to “gain

77 Ibid.: par. 9.
78 Ronald Hoffman et al., Through a Glass Darkly : Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1997), viii.
a better understanding of the larger processes of colonization by taking as [his] subject not ‘Indians,’ not even ‘Iroquois’ or ‘Mohawks,’ but a particular native person.”  

Six Nations of Grand River was and is a complicated community, where people had various religions and political perspectives. It is only possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the community through examining the lives of individuals.

**Methodology**

Since all historical sources have constraints, I used a wide variety of sources and methods for this project. The most important methodology was the tracing of the genealogy or family histories of many of the individuals discussed in the thesis. Historians have long relied upon tracing a subject’s genealogy with “the purpose of positioning the individual with respect to his or her contemporaries and kin.”  

Family history is also a tool used by historians of the First Nations, especially those that look at the fur trade and the Métis. Both Van Kirk’s *Many Tender Ties*, and Jennifer Brown’s *Strangers in Blood* look at family histories and kinship networks in the fur trade.  

More recently, Heather Devine’s *The People who Own Themselves* is a study of Métis family histories which looks at the development of aboriginal ethnic identities, as well as

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81 David Henige, “Genealogy,” in *Encyclopedia of Social History* ed. Peter N. Stearns (New York: Garland Reference Library of Social Science, 1994), 299-300. American historians John Demos and Laurel Ulrich have used family history with great success in their award-winning books. See John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), Laurel Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1990). More recently, Linda Colley’s *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History*, relies upon genealogy to flesh out the story of what she calls “this obliterated life.” While little is known about Marsh herself, Colley investigates her family in what she calls a “micro-strategy – using the perspectives on the past afforded by a family.” She adds that “biography, it has been said, is like a net that catches and brings to the surface an individual life. But a net is only a set of holes tied together by string, so some things slip through.” Of course, this has also been the case with this project. Despite my research, we can only know so much about those involved. Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History*, 1st Anchor Books ed. (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), 291.

the importance of kinship networks as motivating factors in the 1885 Northwest Rebellion.\textsuperscript{83}

Finally, a recent collection of articles on Métis history by members of the community examines how family history and identity are tied together, and tries to clarify “who we are and where it is we are going.”\textsuperscript{84} The collection is in part inspired by the Supreme Court of Canada’s use of family history in its affirmation of Métis rights in Canada. Authors describe their genealogies and family stories as evidence of the complexity of Métis identity.

For Métis, Native and social historians “accumulated genealogical data provide major sources of understanding larger developments in family and society.”\textsuperscript{85} This is the case for my project, where kin networks and familial connections suggest explanations for the involvement of various members of the community in specific organizations, enrolment at certain schools, or even familial trends in employment. As this study relies on the stories of individuals, I tried to learn as much as I could about the lives of the people I was writing about. For every teacher, social reformer, and patriotic volunteer, I tried to trace the family history. I created a database and entered in every name that I found on a list of teachers, councillors, chiefs, soldiers or membership lists of organizations, resulting in over two thousand entries. I am particularly interested in connections between family members, such as women whose husbands, brothers or fathers were chiefs or elected councillors, or between men who served overseas and whose wives, sisters or mothers volunteered to knit socks on the homefront. Membership in


\textsuperscript{85} Henige, "Genealogy," 300.
organizations and community leadership was often passed down through generations. Business and employment traditions often moved through families, such as teaching or running the family farm. It was also necessary to trace families histories in order to understand who were the community elite, or the political and social leaders of the community. After doing this work, it became clear that several families dominated the council and community organizations, but these conclusions are impossible without understanding the genealogy and family connections.

It took quite a long time to become familiar with the families on the reserve and to learn the genealogical connections. I am still learning. One problem is that there are very few surnames in use on the reserve. Several names are very popular, but this does not necessarily indicate a familial relationship between those families. Missionaries gave the Six Nations biblical first names and Anglo surnames such as Hill, Johnson, Martin, Miller and Smith. 86 There are also some names of Dutch origin, such as Claus, Staats, Doxtater, and Powless (originally Paulus), which suggests ancestral descent from those who lived near Dutch settlements in New York. 87 Because these names do not identify someone as “Native” or “non-Native” in historical records, it was initially difficult for me to discover who was in fact from the community, and who was an outsider. Moreover, there was much intermarriage with non-Natives, including African-Canadians, and the ethnic background of individuals is often difficult if not impossible to learn. However, gathering information about the families through genealogy has been part of my ongoing familiarization with the community.

When trying to learn about an individual, I consulted the 1901 and 1911 Canadian censuses which are now indexed and searchable online. I looked for birth, marriage and death

87 Ibid., 106.
records, some of these having been indexed by the Brantford Public Library. I found numerous important obituaries which have been transcribed by members of the Brant County Message Board on Ancestry.ca. I also looked at attestation papers for the Great War which listed some families members of soldiers. Occasionally I consulted records of border crossings, as well as previously compiled family histories. Interviews done by Sally Weaver among the community in the 1960s, and held at the Museum of Civilization were also of great value for putting together families. Several descendants of subjects of this dissertation also shared their families’ histories with me, including Spencer Alexander, William Milne-Home, Sarah Innes and others.

Of course, other archival records were also of great importance, especially those collected by the Department of Indian Affairs. While these sources have their limits, they were able to provide me with a clear picture of family networks, and the ways in which women acted as community builders on the reserve. The records of the Brantford Indian Office, copies of minutes of Council meetings, the records of the Six Nations School Board, and records of the Mohawk Institute, among others, are all available through Library and Archives Canada. I also consulted the Brantford Expositor as well as other newspapers. As well, I used records produced by the community itself, housed at the Woodland Cultural Centre Library in Brantford. The library has created subject files on numerous topics on First Nations culture and history, and these were important. They often held newspaper articles and reports done by librarians or students in the past. Oral histories conducted in the 1970s and 80s were also useful. The Library also holds the minute books of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute, a valuable record, as the books of the other two Institutes on the reserve have not survived. The Woodland Cultural Centre lives in the building erected in 1904 as the Mohawk Institute.
My research also took me to the United Kingdom. I traveled to London to research the travels of Emily General in 1930, as well as the interest that British women took in the Six Nations, especially during the Great War and the 1920s. I conducted research at the National Archives and the Women’s Library. I also traveled to Edinburgh to research the travels of a contingent of Six Nations men who visited the area in 1916 and made connections with Scottish women. My research took me to Fife, Clackmannanshire, Perth and Kinross, and the Scottish Borders to conduct research into the family histories of the Scottish and British women who became allies of the Six Nations. Some of this research appears in this thesis, but is also the basis for a future project. 88

Janice Forsyth suggests that “we have little understanding of how First Nations women view their own histories,” and suggests that historians collect and use oral histories. 89 Oral history would have provided an additional layer of evidence to this project, but it was beyond the scope of this project for numerous reasons. The vast majority of the people I write about in this thesis are deceased, and thus I focused on archival sources. However, I endeavoured to find women’s voices wherever possible in the archives, as well as records that women produced themselves. While oral history is an important and useful method, I was able to find documents written by Six Nations women about their own lives and community. Throughout the dissertation I have used letters that Six Nations women and girls wrote to government officials, teachers, and non-Native allies. Evelyn Johnson’s memoir is a wonderful source, but the only document of that kind that I could find. Wherever they exist, I have used the words of women themselves from oral interviews done in the past, or from newspaper articles that quote them. The minute books of


the Ohsweken Women’s Institute are especially valuable for this reason. Several women also published articles, pamphlets and books about their community, and wherever possible, I have included these as well. The work of Julia Jamieson and Florence Smith Hill were especially useful, as were the published records of the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League published by the Brant County Aryan Society. While I was able to find and use the voices of women in this project, the next step for this project would be conducting oral interviews with descendants.

**Challenges**

In a community that is politically divided, and has been for centuries, not everyone wants to speak to a non-Native university-based researcher. The Six Nations have a very long history of academics visiting the community, conducting interviews and other research, and then leaving, never to be heard from again. The community is used by the academic to acquire “letters after their name,” as I was told by one community member. Outsiders can find that without having a relationship with the community, there can be suspicion and a hesitance to help because people are not sure if they can trust you. The challenges of being a non-Native outsider conducting research among a long-studied, politically divided community cannot be understated. However, several Native academics have published on this issue, and where possible, I took their advice. As Keith Jamieson has cautioned, I have thought about the fact that my work may be used by

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people within and without of the community, the government, or others.  

I have tried to listen to voices from within the community and have attempted to build some long-term relationships with the community. However, while it takes years to build trust, research for a dissertation must be conducted in a shorter amount of time! Despite the fact that I did not have decades to foster relationships, I think that my approach helped me gain some trust and even friends. The idea of reciprocity was very important. I saw that coming into the community and “taking” out stories and information was problematic if I did not also give back. In this vein, I have shared my research with the community, particularly the Ohsweken Genealogy Society and the Woodland Cultural Centre Library. I collected information in Ottawa, as well as some information from the United Kingdom and Australia and brought it back to the community. My finished thesis will also be deposited in community libraries. I have also taken advice from several scholars and historians from the community, through their written work, lectures, comments on my conference papers, and personal conversations, including Keith Jamieson, John Moses, Rick Monture, Sheila Staats and Sue Hill. These problems are not mine alone, of course. Numerous other historians have faced the problem of being a white woman doing Native women’s history. However, I have attempted to conduct my research and writing with both “methodological caution” and “epistemic humility.”

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The Role of Women in Iroquois Society

As we have seen, the role of women in Iroquois society has attracted much attention from scholars and feminists throughout the last 150 years, partly because, unlike women in European cultures, they lived in a non-hierarchical society in which they had a political voice and in which their role as producers of food was properly appreciated. As in most other societies, there was a gendered division of labour in Iroquois society. Men generally performed work outside of the longhouse or village, such as hunting and warring, and women were responsible for childrearing, agriculture, and caring for the family. Women’s connection to the land and agriculture relates directly back to the story of Skywoman. Turtle Island, the earth, was created specifically for Skywoman, who brought the original crops with her; this gave women control over the agricultural food supply.  

But it was Iroquois women’s exercise of political power that made the Iroquois distinct. There were three main ways that Iroquois women enacted their power: by formally selecting chiefs, by participating in consensual politics, and by starting wars.  

First, Iroquois clan mothers were responsible for selecting the chiefs to take part in the League of the Iroquois. When one of the forty-nine chiefs died, the senior woman of his lineage nominated his successor from her clan. Moreover, if the man did not do his job well, the woman who chose him could remove him from the council and replace him.  

Second, when village decisions were to be made, men and women both attended council fire meetings. Although it was generally men who did the formal talking at the meeting, women worked behind the scenes, lobbying the men and trying to control

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95 Snow, The Iroquois. 64. This was often called “dehorning” as the woman removed his antlers.
the decisions. Third, women were entitled to demand that a murdered kinsman or kinswoman be replaced by a captive, and her male family members were obligated to go to war to secure captives. The bereaved woman could choose to adopt or torture the captive.

However, women’s status in Iroquois society changed over time with the impact of colonialism. Several historians have suggested that the social effects of contact with Europeans and the mid-seventeenth century Beaver Wars were dramatic. Trigger suggests that because men spent less time in their own villages (and more time waging war), and because men suffered a higher mortality rate, women needed to play a more important role in the management of the village and the politics of the nations. He explains that “while there is no reason to doubt that the matrilineal institutions of Iroquoian society antedate European contact, it appears likely that much of the political importance of women dates from this period.”

By 1700, women maintained power within their families. Senior women within the household arranged and approved marriages of their children and these unions were used to tie matrilineal houses together. The couple would reside within the woman’s household. The status of women continued to be “derived by their economic importance and from the extension of the kinship system into Iroquois political life.” The village and fields continued to be the domain of the women while the surrounding forests were the domain of the men. To be sure, the

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96 Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca. 28-9. Green, "Molly Brant, Catherine Brant, and Their Daughters: A Study in Colonial Acculturation." 236. This is an important point because women’s voices are often missing from council meetings, but this is not because they are not there, but because they are speaking quietly behind the scenes.

97 Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca. 29.


99 Snow, The Iroquois. 129.

100 Ibid.
warfare between the colonial powers in the region took place in the forests, but these conflicts greatly affected Iroquois women, especially when their domain was destroyed.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Iroquois women were losing power as many of the culture’s traditions were changing. Most Iroquois were living in cabins, and the longhouse became a place for meeting, rather than living. It was a crucial site of cultural and political organization, especially for men. Men were finding new ways of earning money, women’s role as food producers became less important, and the social system based on traditional roles began to fade. Also, clan mothers no longer led large cooperatives of women to work in the fields. Gender roles were changing and power structures changed as a result. However, some recent work by Deborah Holler and James Folts suggest that at times women continued to play important diplomatic roles.

The important role that Iroquois women played in warfare became more apparent during the American Revolution. In the past, women occasionally women took up arms and provided reconnaissance for their men. Historian Barbara Graymont argues that not only did Iroquois women support their warriors by feeding and clothing them, they also had a say in whether their clan or nation would fight and for whom. Clan mothers could veto a decision to go to war, give

101 Ibid. 141.
102 Ibid. 141.
104 Jon Parmenter notes how in 1690, four Mohawk women provided reconnaissance of Schenectady before it was attacked. In 1755, during a battle between William Johnson’s Mohawks and the French, supported by their Mohawk allies from Kahnewake and Kahnesatake, “a party of bayonet-wielding Kahnowake women guarding their warriors’ supplies” killed Theyanoguin or King Hendrick, who had his horse shot out from him and was in flight from the battle. Jon Parmenter, "After the Mourning Wars: The Iroquois as Allies in Colonial North American Campaigns, 1676–1760," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (2007): 47, 66.
advice on diplomacy, and make decisions regarding war captives. Mary (or Molly) Brant is perhaps the Iroquois woman who is best known for her efforts during the American Revolution. From an important Mohawk family, Brant was the widow of Sir William Johnson, sister to Joseph Brant, and head of the society of Six Nations’ Matrons. Graymont argues that “the military officials who had most to do with Indian affairs during the American revolution recognized how essential her leadership was in maintaining the morale and loyalty of the Iroquois.” As James Carson suggests, her “life provides an exception to the assumption that Naive women’s power and authority declined as a consequence of contact with Europeans.”

Gender roles for both men and women changed with the American Revolution. Reservation life limited traditional diplomatic and military roles for Iroquois men. As well, the female-centred character of kinship relations, economics, and politics among the Iroquois was drastically diminished. The role of the clan mother began to atrophy as the Council itself had

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107 Barbara Graymont, "Koñwatsiaiéñni (Gonwatsijayenni, Meaning Someone Lends Her a Flower, Mary Brant)," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography (University of Toronto, 2000). See also Green, "Molly Brant, Catherine Brant, and Their Daughters: A Study in Colonial Acculturation."
108 Carson, "Molly Brant," 57. Mary Brant was not the only Iroquois woman to participate in the American Revolution. An unknown number of women accompanied their men on campaigns, and at times, they even fought with them, although this is less common. Iroquois women, like non-Native American women, worked in the camps doing typical female work, such as laundry or cooking for the men. There are also some references in the historical record to women actually taking up arms, including a reference to their participation in the Cherry Valley campaign of 1778. They armed themselves with tomahawks for protection, and waited behind the lines until it was safe from them to loot the destroyed settlement. Another woman, the wife of the Oneida commander Honyery Doxtater (Thawenengakwen), came to her husband’s rescue when he was wounded in his wrist during the Battle of Oriskany. She loaded his gun for him, and also used her own gun against their enemies, “fighting as bravely as any [male] warrior in this furious engagement. The Seneca Chief, Governor Blacksnake describes these women in his memoirs. Graymont, "Koñwatsiaiéñni (Gonwatsijayenni, Meaning Someone Lends Her a Flower, Mary Brant)," 187.
109 Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca. 28.
The changes that had begun to occur by the Revolution were codified by Seneca religious leader Handsome Lake at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and were carried out by his growing number of followers. The Code includes much advice on the proper social and economic roles of men and women, as well as principles of domestic morality. Women should be good housewives, avoid gossip, serve food to visitors and neighbours, and help the orphaned of the community. Men, on the other hand, should harvest food for their family, build a good house, and keep horses and cattle. Dean Snow adds that Handsome Lake “did everything he could to subvert the authority of matriliney at its root.”

The effect of moving to Grand River on women and gender roles is understudied. No full-length assessment has been done, but it is likely that women’s position and gender relations did not undergo any drastic changes. Women continued to be involved in agriculture with the cultivation of small gardens, especially with the planting of the three sisters: corn, beans and squash. Martin Cannon suggests that “among the Christians at Grand River... some women enjoyed a great deal of cultural continuity as relates to their traditional roles in agriculture, especially among those who took up farming in particular.” Despite the maintenance of some women’s traditional economic activities, gender roles continued to approach what they were in non-Native communities, with men doing the farming (the cash crop agriculture), and women generally doing the domestic work within the house, as well as the gardening. As in previous

110 Green, "Molly Brant, Catherine Brant, and Their Daughters: A Study in Colonial Acculturation." 243.
111 Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca. 283-4.
112 Ibid.
113 Snow, The Iroquois, 162.
wars, Six Nations women on both sides again worked to support the men during the War of 1812, supplying provisions for the warriors, working in the camps and boosting morale.\textsuperscript{116} Women often accompanied the men on campaign, although generally they did not actually fight.\textsuperscript{117}

After the consolidation of the Grand River Reserve in 1847, the land was assigned to the male head of a nuclear family. In the past, land was held in common by non-nuclear families, and was the women’s domain: clearly these land-holding traditions came to an end. However, in the case of Six Nations women who married non-Native men, the chiefs overruled Thorburn’s instructions and assigned the land in the name of the Native women.\textsuperscript{118} Nevertheless, because of the shift to patriarchal nuclear family structures many Christians lost track of their national lineage and their clan membership during this period. These problems increased after the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869 established patrilineality as the basis for Indian status and affiliation.\textsuperscript{119} The law also denied Indian status to a Native woman who married a non-Native man, and their children.\textsuperscript{120} The 1876 Indian Act attempted to “impose Euro-Canadian social organization and cultural values,” specifically through the imposition of gender norms.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{116} Carl Benn, \textit{The Iroquois in the War of 1812} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998). 61, 82, 159.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid. 61. There were twenty Oneida women on the army’s pay list for the Americans, and Benn suggests that they probably did the cooking, washing, and nursing, although it is possible that they assumed combat roles as well. Benn, \textit{The Iroquois in the War of 1812}. 159-60. See Cecilia Morgan “Gender, Loyalty, and Virtue in a Colonial Context: The War of 1812 and Its Aftermath in Upper Canada.” In \textit{Gender, War, and Politics: The Wars of Revolution and Liberation - Transatlantic Comparisons, 1775-1820}, edited by Karen Hagemann, Gisela Mettele and Jane Rendall. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
\textsuperscript{118} Weaver, “The Iroquois, 1847-1875.” 185.
\textsuperscript{119} ———, “Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario.” 527. This is something that members of the Ohsweken Genealogy Society are currently trying to research.
\textsuperscript{120} From Tammy Martin: “Prior to the Indian Act of 1869, the membership of a husband followed that of this wife. The Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869 was the first law denying Indian status to an Indian woman who married out and preventing her children from acquiring status. Carried forward into the first \textit{Indian Act} in 1876, these provisions were maintained until 1985.” The Ohsweken Genealogy Society, 2007.
\textsuperscript{121} Carter, “Aboriginal People of Canada and the British Empire,” 209.
Carter explains that “the 1876 Act assumed that women were subordinate to males and derived rights from their husbands or fathers. Women were excluded from voting and running in band elections. They had to prove to government officials that they were of good ‘moral’ character before they were entitled to receive an inheritance.”

Women at Six Nations lost political power and rights. Although clan mothers continued to nominate and depose chiefs, their political power decreased over time, a decline that culminated with the 1924 arrival of the elected council on the Six Nations of the Grand River in which women lost their right to nominate chiefs and were not given the right to vote or run for the new council.

By the end of the nineteenth century, life at Grand River was not that different from the non-Native rural community in Brant County, or southern Ontario. The majority of people attended Christian churches, and many children were educated in day schools. Gender roles had changed drastically over the past few centuries due to the conversion of the people to Christianity or the Code of Handsome Lake, as well as a changing economy that was now based on agriculture. Women and men performed similar gender-based tasks to their non-Native neighbours. Women’s roles as educators, social reformers and activists during the first four decades of the twentieth century set them apart from many other First Nations communities, and in some ways, made their activities resemble those Anglo-Canadian women, especially social reformers, first wave feminists, and other political and social activists. Education was the most important tool. These women also retained a sense of self that was at least, in part, Iroquois. For instance, while they conducted Women’s Institute meetings in English, most meetings in this

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122 Ibid.
123 It was not until 1951 that status women were allowed to vote in band elections. In 1985, the Canadian Parliament passed Bill C-31, “An Act to Amend the Indian Act,” which ended the discriminatory provisions of the Indian Act, including those which discriminated against women. Women could marry into another band, or marry a non-Native man and not lose status, as she no longer derived her status from her husband. See also Bonita Lawrence, “Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States: An Overview,” *Hypatia* 18, no. 2 (2003) 3-31.
period opened with an “Indian Song.” They taught the standard Ontario Provincial Curriculum, but many also taught their students Iroquois history and traditions. Women often cooked typical rural Ontario fare, but still made corn soup for special occasions. So while in many ways they acculturated to the dominant Anglo-Protestant Canadian culture, they retained some activities and traditions that Iroquois women had been doing for centuries.

Chapters

Chapter 1, “‘Time shows that given a chance, Indian children can go far in education:’ Schooling at Grand River Schools,” looks at the growth of education on the reserve in the early twentieth century in both day schools and the residential school, the Mohawk Institute. It also looks at the process whereby women from Six Nations came to be so prominent in the teaching profession by 1939. Chapter 2, “‘The woman is the civilizer:’ Gender and Education at Grand River Schools,” explores the education of children in Anglo-Canadian gender norms in both the day schools and residential school. Chapter 3, “‘To cultivate a patriotic interest in their county:’ Teaching Empire in Grand River Schools,” looks at lessons in patriotism within the British Empire. Chapter 4, “‘In Defence of the Empire:’ Gendered Patriotism and the Great War,” traces the links between militaristic education and high enlistment in the war by Six Nations men, and patriotic work by women in the homefront. Finally, Chapter 5,

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“We decided that something must be done.”128 Social Reform, Voluntary Associations, and Community Work on the Reserve,” considers how women parlayed their experiences organizing during the war into social reform and voluntary work throughout the 1920s and 30s. The Conclusion briefly suggests the continuities between my period and the post World War II period.

128 Evelyn H. C. Johnson, Memoirs (Brantford: Chiefswood Board of Trustees, 2009), 33.
Chapter 1

“Time shows that given a chance, Indian children can go far in education:” Schooling at Grand River Schools

“My father always believed in improving the Six Nations Indian Reserve by having more schools built to have the children educated… Of course, my father had to fill the schools with teachers and we were sent to high school in Caledonia and to Normal School in Hamilton. Five of us became teachers…”

Nora Jamieson, Six Nations teacher in a July 1977 interview.

The above quotation from Nora Jamieson, and the quotation in the chapter title attributed to her father Augustus Jamieson, suggest a commitment to education on the Six Nations reserve in the early twentieth century. Nora Jamieson was one of many Six Nations women teachers who taught at reserve day schools and the Mohawk Institute in the first few decades of the twentieth century. They are evidence of Native women’s involvement in formal education on the reserve.

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during this period. This is the first of three chapters on the history of education at Six Nations, a community which has a different history of education than many First Nations in other parts of Canada. There is a long tradition of Six Nations working as teachers within their own community, but they came to be very prominent in the profession during the early twentieth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, women made up about half of the teachers on the reserve and that percentage increased throughout the next few decades. Teachers were often seen as examples of proper womanhood on the reserve and as community leaders by both state officials and the community itself. At times, they could be called community activists. Teacher Emily General, for example, was given the Iroquois name of Gaw-hen-dena which means “she is going along in the front or in the lead” a name which is suggestive of her extraordinary activist work throughout her life. This chapter will discuss the arrival of the Six Nations at Grand River and the establishment of the reserve community, and the history of education on the reserve. It will then investigate the role that Six Nations women played in teaching reserve children.

Grand River in the nineteenth century

After the American Revolution, the British encouraged the Six Nations under the leadership of Captain Joseph Brant to relocate to Canada. General Haldimand worked to secure land for Brant and his followers in what would become Upper Canada; he first suggested what became the small reserve at Tyendinaga on the Bay of Quinte. Brant, however, argued for a more western location, closer to the other Six Nations still in New York. In 1784, Brant chose the Grand River Valley because it was only a day’s travel to Buffalo Creek, it was warmer, larger,

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3 Translation from Jeremy Green, Mohawk Language and Culture Teacher, Oliver M. Smith School, Six Nations.
4 Sir William Johnson had convinced the British that the Mohawks would be able to sway the other Six Nations, and possibly other First Nations of the Great Lakes and Ohio country, and thus, were a powerful ally. Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 120.
and more fertile than Tyendinaga, and there were fewer settlers in the area. The British negotiated a land cession from the Mississauga; the result was six miles on either side of the Grand River from the head of the river to Lake Erie, totalling about 570,000 acres. They also promised a church, mills, a school, clothing, and farm tools for the Six Nations who moved there. Brant hoped to consolidate all the Iroquois nations at Grand River, which was the opposite from British and American plans for the Iroquois. In 1785, after much discussion at Buffalo Creek, approximately 1200 Six Nations, about one third of them Mohawk, moved to Grand River. The clan mothers made the decision to divide the Six Nations between Upper Canada and the United States of America in an effort to ensure that they would always have land in one place or the other. Along with the Iroquois, Grand River also attracted some Algonquian-speaking Mohicans, Delawares, Tutelos, and Nanticokes.

Between 1785 and 1835, much of the Haldimand Tract was sold off by Joseph Brant, the Confederacy Council, and other individuals. What remained were isolated settlements of Six Nations peoples spread out along the Grand River. This made them all the more vulnerable to incursions by white settlers. In 1840, the government of Upper Canada passed an order-in-council recommending that the remaining Six Nations’ land, apart from one compact bloc

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5 Ibid. 121.
9 Ibid. 123.
reserved for their use, be surrendered to the Crown for sale. The disagreement over the land surrender illustrates the ongoing division between the Christian (progressive) element who tended towards acculturation and the Longhouse (conservative) faction of the Six Nations at Grand River. The Grand River Reserve was established in 1847, with 22,000 hectares located in the townships of Tuscarora, Oneida, and Onondaga, on the south bank of the Grand River. The Six Nations also continued to hold 111 hectares within the city limits of Brantford. With the establishment of the reserve, many of the Six Nations people had to leave their cleared land and homes, and move to a new location where they had to start all over again. Non-Native squatters had to be removed from the Six Nations’ land, and parcels of land had to be assigned to individual families. About 325 families received forty hectare plots by the end of 1851.

When the Six Nations moved to the consolidated reserve after 1847, it was the first time that all six nations lived in one community; the largest Iroquois reserve in Canada or the United States. The reserve was also the wealthiest, based on the funds established by land sales. The Chiefs established a League to govern the community, and over time, the council assumed many of the traditional roles of the clans and nations, which led to the further attrition of these kinship

11 Ibid. 179. The proceeds from these land sales would fund the Six Nations, and this money was needed after they lost so much in the Grand River Navigation Company scandal. Several chiefs signed the surrender documents in 1841 but within days representatives from Six Nations denounced the action. They argued that Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Samuel Jarvis, had been too forceful in encouraging the chiefs to sign the document, and they also argued that the signatories had not followed traditional procedures to debate and discuss an issue. ———, "The Six Nations in the Grand River Valley, 1784-1847."

12 For more on this, see Susan M. Hill, "Skanatayonnh - One Village Has Been Made: The Nineteenth Century Consolidation of the Six Nations Grand River Territory" (paper presented at the Canadian Historical Association 85th Annual Meeting, Toronto, May 29 2006).


14 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1847-1875." 183.


relations. The council was made up of the hereditary chiefs from each nation, the war chiefs from 1812, and the appointed, non-hereditary Pine Tree chiefs totalling approximately 50 men.\(^\text{17}\) They met in the Onondaga council house near Middleport several times a year to discuss community issues; their meetings were usually attended by the visiting superintendent. Communication between the chiefs and the superintendent relied upon the interpreter who was generally a chief, and also a paid government employee.\(^\text{18}\) Moreover, the 1860 transfer of the Indian administration from the imperial government to the provincial government also encouraged better communication between headquarters and the field offices.\(^\text{19}\) In 1861, the first reform movement on the reserve began, with people agitating for an elected council. Isaac Powless, a Mohawk, led the movement, and circulated a petition, although the movement failed to gain widespread support at the time.\(^\text{20}\) These men became known as the Progressive Warriors, and later, the Dehorners.\(^\text{21}\) They opposed hereditary rule and believed that local government should be elected, and more progressive.

Superintendent Gilkison encouraged the hereditary Chiefs to create a village in the centre of the reserve and to build a new council house there. Despite some protest, a new longhouse was built in the new village of Ohsweken in 1865, and the Council relocated their meetings from the Onondaga Village.\(^\text{22}\) As Sally Weaver explains, “‘progress’ and the Protestant work ethic became the driving force behind many of the changes and attempted innovations at mid-

\(^{17}\) Ibid. 528.

\(^{18}\) Ibid. In 1862, Jasper T. Gilkison was appointed superintendent of the Indian Department, a position he held until 1891. Unlike his predecessor, David Thorburn, Gilkison lived in Brantford where the Agency office was located.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1847-1875." 202.

\(^{21}\) Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945." 243.

\(^{22}\) Hill, "Skanatayonn - One Village Has Been Made: The Nineteenth Century Consolidation of the Six Nations Grand River Territory". 12.
Agriculture and education were the two means by which the Six Nations were to be "civilized," according to Gilkison, and they were successful at both. The Grand River Reserve became the showpiece for the Indian Department, its residents seen as a successful example of Indian adjustment to Canadian society. In 1860, when the Prince of Wales visited North America, he stopped in Brantford and saw the Six Nations in a procession led by Chief George H.M. Johnson, followed by the marching band, the Warriors and the chiefs.

The consolidated reserve consisted of about 18,000 hectares of land, or about 185 square kilometres. While there was a cluster of families living in and around the village of Ohsweken, located towards the north western part of the reserve, most families lived on forty-hectare plots of land spread across the reserve. Concession roads divide the reserve into a grid, and many of the intersections are named for the families living nearby, such as Smith’s Corners. By 1900, there were fifteen brick houses on the reserve, but log and frame houses still dominated. Ohsweken was known as the “capital” of the territory, and is the home of the Council House, the Agricultural Exhibition Hall, the Orange Lodge, as well as churches, the No. 2 School, and many businesses. (See Figure 2). The population of the reserve grew from about 2200 at the time of consolidation in 1847 to about 4700 at the outbreak of the Great War.

24 ———, "The Iroquois, 1847-1875." 182.
25 Ian Radforth, Royal Spectacle: The 1869 Visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada and the United States (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 112. George was the father of Pauline and Evelyn Johnson.
26 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 229.
27 Ibid. 231.
Figure 2: Map of Six Nations of Grand River (1985), from Jean Waldie, Brant County: the Story of Its People. Brant Historical Society.
The Christian farmers were the majority of the population. Several popular voluntary organizations were formed after consolidation whose goal was to improve the community. In 1867, the Six Nations Agricultural Society was formed by several wealthy Mohawk farmers; in 1883 they held their first annual fall exhibition, an event which continues to this day. Other groups include the Council-sponsored Union Temperance Society with several branches on the reserve, and the Orange Lodge, founded in the 1890s. The Six Nations also formed several brass bands.

Schooling on the reserve also continued to grow after consolidation as more schools were built from the 1850s into the 1870s. By 1877, the New England Company had established nine schools, the Wesleyan Methodist Church two, and the Council its own the Thomas School. Out of the thirteen teachers, eight were Six Nations men and women who had been educated at the Mohawk Institute. In 1878, after a disagreement between the Six Nations Council and the New England Company over the costs of maintaining the schools, the Six Nations School Board was founded. This was the first Native school board in the province. The Superintendent of Indian Affairs sat on the board, along with three representatives from Six Nations, three from the New England Company, and one from the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

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31 Hill, "Skanatayonn - One Village Has Been Made: The Nineteenth Century Consolidation of the Six Nations Grand River Territory".
33 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 51. 224.
34 Jamieson, History of Six Nations Education. 10.
England Company, and one Wesleyan missionary. The Council and the New England Company each paid $1500 a year to run the schools. The board was also funded by a small donation from the Department of Indian Affairs, their first investment in education on the Grand River Reserve. The first priorities of the School Board were to improve the school facilities, hire better trained teachers, and improve school attendance. By 1897, five new school houses were built, three improved and re-furnished, and by 1900, four more school houses had been built and two others improved.

So far as religion was concerned, the Six Nations community continued to be divided between Christians and Longhouse adherents. Although it is difficult to determine exact percentages, Longhouse adherents outnumbered Christians until the consolidation of the reserve, but after 1847 the number of Christians grew. Weaver has argued that by 1865 the Longhouse community made up only 23 percent of the people at Grand River and continued to fluctuate between 19 and 24 percent of the population. The Longhouse community was centred at the Ohsweken longhouse and two new longhouses. The latter were formed in the 1890s, when the Seneca Longhouse branched off from the Onondaga Longhouse and established itself ‘down below’ in the north-eastern part of the reserve; the Upper Cayuga Longhouse became the longhouse for those people of the upper end of the reserve, acquiring the name of Sour Springs.

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36 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945." 225.

37 Jamieson, History of Six Nations Education. 12.

38 Weaver, "Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario." 530. Susan Hill disagrees with these numbers and suggests that families may have been counted as Christians when they were in fact Longhouse. See Hill, "Through a Haudenosaunee Lens: An Examination of Sally Weaver's Six Nations Historical Publications".
because of its close proximity.\textsuperscript{39} Longhouse people maintained a conservative or “traditional” life in terms of religion, politics, and their way of life and they attended the Longhouse for spiritual and political purposes. In comparison, the Christian factions on the reserve supported several churches which grew and changed throughout the nineteenth century. According to Weaver, by 1890 the Anglicans made up forty percent of the people at Grand River and had four churches, including St Paul’s.\textsuperscript{40} The Baptist made up twenty-four percent of the population and had three small churches (Ohsweken Baptist Church, Medina Baptist Church, and Garlow Line Baptist Church).\textsuperscript{41} The Methodists had two churches; along with several other small sects, including Mormons, Brethren, and the Salvation Army, they constituted the remaining thirty-six percent of Christians at Grand River.\textsuperscript{42} These figures did not change very much over the next half century, as the Anglicans and Baptists each drew about one-third of the Christians on the reserve. Weaver has written extensively about the divisions in the community. She suggests that, while the Longhouse people have historically shunned acculturative influences,

the Christian community slowly began to adopt White middle-class values and beliefs and by the late nineteenth century cautiously but actively sought to educate their children, practice agriculture on an expanded basis of large farms rather than subsistence level, and secure material possessions far beyond those aspired to by the non-materialistic ethic of the Longhouse.\textsuperscript{43}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Hill, “Skanatayonn - One Village Has Been Made: The Nineteenth Century Consolidation of the Six Nations Grand River Territory”.
\item Weaver, "Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario." 530.
\item Ibid. 530.
\item Ibid. 530.
\item Ibid. 530.
\end{enumerate}
Education in Historical Context

Educating the Native residents of the colonies was a long-standing tradition all over the colonial world. Missionaries often followed explorers and traders and began the twin processes of conversion and education. After the British acquired New France in 1760, education was left to the Christian missionaries who successfully converted several groups of Iroquois. But, in general, the First Nations were ignored. However, once the threat of war subsided in the nineteenth century, the fur trade declined, and white settlers began to encroach on Native land, aboriginal communities became increasingly an issue for the colonial government.44 In Upper Canada the government’s main strategy was to remove Natives to reserves and try to educate them in day schools.45 In the mid-nineteenth century and with the support of the government, missionary societies began to set up industrial or residential schools that were intended to “raise the Tribes within the British Territory to the level of their White neighbours.”46 Both day schools and residential schools were established to assimilate Native children into British-Canadian culture. Although the British North America Act awarded education to the provinces, in 1876 the Indian Act made the education of the First Nations peoples in Canada the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs and it made them “wards of the federal government.”47 The residential school system was established by the 1880s but the system did not run smoothly;

46 Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling, 72. See also Jennifer Pettit, “To Christianize and Civilize: Native Industrial Schools in Canada” (University of Calgary, PhD thesis, 1997).
47 Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling, 72-73.
there were doubts in government (as elsewhere) about the usefulness and success of the system. 48

Historiography

The history of educating the First Nations in Canada is a topic that has increasingly attracted the attention of scholars, but the vast majority of the published work focuses on residential schooling. 49 Very little has been written on day schools; in part, this is due to the lack of primary sources. 50 Whereas good records were kept of the residential schools, few day school records have been preserved. The lack of research on the day schools, which educated about two-thirds of the Native population who attended schools, has led to a misunderstanding over the numbers of students who attended these schools rather than residential schools. 51


51 J. R. Miller suggests that “residential schools never attempted to educate and train more than about one-third of all Inuit and Indian children.” Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 167. Additionally, the increasing discussion and disclosures of abuse of students at residential schools has led to a general belief that the majority of students were abused. It simplifies a very complicated story in which some students were emotionally, physically, and sexually abused, but others enjoyed their experience, chose to go or to return to residential school, and still think fondly of their experiences. See for example Wendy Stueck and Sarah Boesveld, "Schools Not Entirely Bad, Native Writer Contends," The Globe and Mail, June 11 2008. My work is an attempt to complicate what has become an overly simplified story.
Some of the important published studies of “Indian education” are those gathered by Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert, and Don McCaskill in two edited collections published in the mid 1980s. These collections focus on the development of “Indian education” in Canada since the arrival of Europeans, as well as the changes that have occurred since 1973 when the Canadian government officially adopted the policy of Indian control of Indian education. While no major monograph has been published on the day schools, scholars such as J. R. Miller, John Milloy and Celia Haig-Brown have published important studies of residential schooling. Miller’s book, *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* is probably the best and most well-known book on the subject. Milloy’s *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1896*, came out of his research for the Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Both tell complicated stories of abuse and victimization, but also of the agency of Native peoples themselves in responding to the schools. Jennifer Pettit’s unpublished writings on industrial schools in Canada, and specifically the Mohawk Institute, are also important contributions because she focuses on the early and mid-nineteenth century foundations of the residential school system. More recent work such as Hope Maclean’s studies of Methodist missionaries and Ojibwa education in Upper Canada consider both day and residential schools, and points to the role that Native people such as Peter Jones and

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54 Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*.


57 Jennifer Pettit, ”From Longhouse to Schoolhouse: The Mohawk Institute, 1834-1970” (1992), Pettit, ”To Christianize and Civilize: Native Industrial Schools in Canada”.
John Sunday played in the education of their people. Quite a few articles have also been published about schooling in British Columbia, making it the best studied province.

Some research has been done on the history of education at Grand River but none of it is recent. Abate Wori Abate’s 1984 doctoral thesis looks at Iroquois control of Iroquois education on the reserve and focuses on the history of the Six Nations School Board. A small number of studies by members of the community are also useful and have incorporated both school records and oral history into their stories. However, although they applaud the work of Native teachers, these studies do not connect education to other issues on the reserve, or draw very many conclusions about the education system at Grand River.

Several recent studies have begun to use gender as a category of historical analysis but none have looked at Grand River schools, either the residential school or the day schools. However Six Nations women worked as teachers in the day schools on the reserve in large


60 Abate, Iroquois Control of Iroquois Education.


numbers before their counterparts in other communities did. Why this is so has not been investigated. What made the Six Nations different? As well, the impact of the historical connections to the British Empire on education in these schools has not been considered by many scholars, and yet it is a critical part of Six Nations history. This chapter, and the following two, attempt to do so.

The Structure of Education at Grand River

Western education was not new to the Six Nations of Grand River in the early twentieth century. But it is important to remember that they had a long history of education within their community as well, in which children learned in unstructured and non-coercive ways, through participation, and from examples in the environment in which they lived.  

Women were central to the education of Iroquois children: “the mother-child relationship in tandem with all the women of the Longhouse, shared in the task of developing in the child, an appreciation for the home and family, language, values and beliefs.” Ideas of cooperation, competence, coexistence, and individuality were the basis of education, and learning took place during everyday life: it was not separated from the experience of day-to-day activities. The arrival of the Europeans and Western education meant that education became separated from other facets of life, was controlled by religious, political and economic concerns, and became formally structured. Keith Jamieson explains that “through the classroom environment, a designated instructor was charged with the responsibility of transmitting facts, skills and knowledge to the child, separated from the parents, family, and community.”

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
Native but over time the instructors began to come from within the community of Six Nations. Furthermore, many were women, so although education became separated from the family and from children’s mothers, Six Nations women remained involved in education.

Schools were built by the New England Company soon after the arrival of the Six Nations at Grand River in 1784, and continued to be established throughout the nineteenth century, especially after consolidation in 1847. The Mohawk Institute was founded in 1830 as a manual training school. By 1874, there were thirteen schools at Six Nations, including the Mohawk Institute. Nine were operated by the New England Company, two by the Wesleyan Methodists, and two by the community itself, financed by Six Nations funds. Attendance was an ongoing problem. For example, only about one third of the school age population was attending school. Out of the thirteen teachers, eight were Six Nations men and women who had been educated at the Mohawk Institute.

As the hereditary council grew increasingly frustrated with the paternalistic control of the church and state, it tried to take control of the schools from the New England Company, and this resulted in the Six Nations School Board. The New England Company hoped that the involvement of the Six Nations would result in the takeover of the “management and support” of the schools by the Six Nations in the future. The first priorities of the School Board were the improvement of the school facilities, as many of the buildings were deteriorating; the acquisition

67 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945." 224.
68 Ibid.
69 Pettit, "From Longhouse to Schoolhouse: The Mohawk Institute, 1834-1970". 64.
of trained teachers; and the improvement of school attendance. These continued to remain priorities throughout the first few decades of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{71}

At the turn of the twentieth century, there were twelve day schools on the Grand River Reserve and one residential school, the Mohawk Institute, located nearby, but no high school.\textsuperscript{72} In 1895, there were approximately 724 school-aged children on the Reserve, and 543 (75 percent) were enrolled in school.\textsuperscript{73} Fewer than that actually attended. Attendance was also a problem in non-Native schools in Brant County and the rest of Ontario, and so absenteeism was not just an issue with the Six Nations.\textsuperscript{74} For instance, in Brantford in 1882, the average attendance was 69 per cent, or 1400 of the 2030 pupils.\textsuperscript{75} Truancy by Native students was a problem that was dealt with by several amendments to the Indian Act that made it compulsory for Native children to attend school, either residential or day school. In 1906, a new amendment included a provision that gave the government control of financial concerns and annuities but it is unclear of its impact on children’s attendance.\textsuperscript{76} In 1920, more compulsion was added to the Act, making it mandatory for Native children between the ages of seven and fifteen to attend school and allowing truancy officers to search for delinquents and prescribe penalties.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{71} Jamieson, \textit{History of Six Nations Education}, 12.

\textsuperscript{72} Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945." 224. ——, \textit{Medicine and Politics}. 15. There is still no high school on the reserve.

\textsuperscript{73} Report on the Mohawk Institute and Six Nations Boarding Schools by Martin Benson, 1895. RG-10, Vol. 2006, File 7825-1A, LAC.

\textsuperscript{74} Aælrod suggests that in 1900, "only 61 percent of Canadian youth age five to fifteen were consistent school attenders."Aælrod, \textit{The Promise of Schooling}, 15.


\textsuperscript{76} Miller, \textit{Shingwauk’s Vision}, 169.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 169-70. Aælrod, \textit{The Promise of Schooling}, 76-77.
from Grand River in 1925. Australian historian Fiona Paisley suggests that that compulsion acts for aboriginal children in the dominions “worked to erase indigenous culture and language (and therefore identity) through teaching English and the history of colonization as a matter of evolutionary progress.”

After a century of settlement at Grand River, schools were well-established, if not well-attended. Despite colonial practices, education was important to the community, although it had different meanings for the Six Nations than for the government. Between 1907 and 1924, eight new schools were built to replace older buildings. In the surrounding communities, there were several high schools that students from Six Nations could attend if they passed the entrance examination, including Brantford Collegiate Institute (founded 1867), and the high school in Caledonia (founded 1910). However, actually attending high school was not easy. As Sally Weaver explains, “some parents went to great lengths to ensure that their girls, as well as their boys, received further schooling. Some drove their children daily by horse and buggy to the colleges in towns near the reserve, and others boarded their children in town during the week, scrimping and saving money to afford the additional expense.” Other high school students boarded at the Mohawk Institute, which was closer to Brantford Collegiate. Every year, several students completed high school and some went on to Normal School to train as teachers. Moreover, the Mohawk Institute was open to students from outside the community of Grand

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79 Jamieson, Echoes of the Past, 17.
80 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 227.
81 Duncan Campbell Scott to Rev. James White of Hagersville, 12 September 1922: “We are doing what we can to provide a higher education for the brighter boys and girls on the reserve. If there is any accommodation in the Mohawk Institute we are always pleased to have high school students in attendance there… the matter of providing a continuation school right on the reserve is receiving serious consideration.” RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.
River, so some of the students who were educated and trained there were not in fact Six Nations themselves. However, according to the available records the majority of students who attended were from the community. For instance, in 1919 sixty-three students were from the Six Nations of Grand River, four were Mississaugas of New Credit (part of the Grand River Reserve), thirteen were Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, and fourteen were from the Oneida, Chippewa, Muncees and Moravians of the Thames Reserve. Some of these students also became teachers.

The introduction of the elective council in 1924 brought about a demand for higher educational standards on the reserve. The council put pressure on the teachers to become formally qualified by the province if they did not already hold such qualifications; the result was that the few uncertified teachers enrolled in Normal School. By 1924, all of the teachers employed at Six Nations possessed a Normal School Certificate. School inspections by the County of Brant Inspector also began in 1907; prior to that, inspections had been done by the Reverend Isaac Bearfoot, an Anglican minister and former teacher. It was at the request of the School Board that the more qualified Brant County Inspector was hired.

In general, the day schools on the reserve were comparable to schools in neighbouring white communities. In 1914, the Department of Indian Affairs claimed

Our schools compare favourably with white schools similarly situated, both in respect to work in the classroom, and accommodation. The buildings erected during the past few years are not excelled in white communities and the character of the work in the classroom has also greatly improved, and it is shown that under favourable conditions the Indian boy or girl can compete with white children.

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82 “Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute (student’s records, attendance records 1919, accounts, clippings).” RG10, Volume 2771, File 154,845, p. 1A, LAC.
83 Jamieson, Echoes of the Past, 19.
Of course, some schools were better than others but members of the Six Nations School Board worked to make sure that their schools were just as good, if not better than off-reserve schools. They built schools “to provide [children] the opportunity of education as acquired by their white neighbours.” For instance, when they made plans to build a new building for the No. 2 School in 1902, a committee was appointed to visit “school houses among the whites, to take a pattern of them, and return back to Council.” The school they built was a replica of the non-Native school at Mount Pleasant, in Brant County.

Buildings were not the only aspect of Six Nations education that the School Board wanted to rival the non-Native schools. For decades, the Board demanded that they be allowed to teach the regular Ontario Programme of Studies, and not the separate curriculum designed for “Indian Schools.” Six Nations teacher Julia Jamieson writes that:

they had to overcome that tendency of some of the Indian agents in those early years, 1884-1900, to feel only basic knowledge such as ordinary farm work and house work should be a subject taught to the youth of the Six Nations and as a result the teaching of academic subjects was limited because it was their belief that Indians were unable to absorb more knowledge, in subjects presented in the Ontario Curriculum of Studies. In 1903, Department of Indian Affairs clerk Martin Benson reported that he thought that “as the Six Nations were on their own initiative eager or anxious to adopt the higher standard of education entailed in the Provincial programme of studies, they should not be obstructed, but encouraged.”

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87 Ibid. The committee was made up of Peter Powless, Nicodemus Porter, Ben Carpenter, George W. Hill, Levi Jonathon, Philip Hill and Josiah Hill.
88 Ibid., 13.
Three years later, the School Board appealed to the Department of Indian Affairs and asked for the adoption of three new initiatives: the use of the Ontario Curriculum and the Regulations for the Management of Schools, the engaging of qualified teachers, and proper school inspection by the county inspector. The government refused and, according to Julia Jamieson, “the development and growth of Indian education [was] stunted by the attitude of opinion of the government officials that Indians are supposed to remain in their primitive state.”

Jamieson’s father, Augustus Jamieson, was a teacher, a member of the School Board, the Inspector of Public Works, and “a driving force to bring about a better education for Six Nations.” As a strong proponent of education, Jamieson declared “to the best of my ability, I will endeavour to show them that they are mistaken in their notion that Indian children cannot gain knowledge and make progress.” In general, it was the Native members of the School Board who pushed for the better curriculum and the Non-Native members, generally the Indian Agent and missionaries, who voted against it. The ministers and Indian Agents tended to believe that Native children were incapable of learning academic material and would be better served learning farming and housekeeping skills.

In 1908, with the support of the new Superintendent, Major Gordon J. Smith, the Ontario Programme of Studies was finally adopted, first by the No. 2 School, then by the rest of the day schools. According to Julia Jamieson, “that period between

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90 Jamieson, Echoes of the Past, 13. In particular, the chiefs wanted the introduction of the new Ontario curriculum, including Botany, Book-keeping, English Poetical literature, English Rhetoric, French language, Canadian History since 1841, Latin, Greek, Physiology and temperance. Abate, Iroquois Control of Iroquois Education, 210.

91 Jamieson, Echoes of the Past, 13-14. Julia writes that when her father was Inspector of Public Works, “During these days Nora the youngest daughter was of great help to him by making copies of the specifications, correcting grammatical errors and spelling if any, before they were sent to Ottawa for approval. Good proof that Indians can learn. Nora’s penmanship was excellent.” P. 16. Nora later became a teacher as well.

92 Ibid., 14. Julia Jamieson retells an incident in the early 1900s where Augustus Jamieson was insulted by Mohawk Institute Principal Robert Ashton who implied that Native children could not learn very much. Nearly getting into a fight, and shaking his fist, he said “I’ll show you that my children can learn and so can the others.” Julia Jamieson adds that “time shows that given a chance Indian children can go far in education.” P. 13.

the years 1907 and 1923, the greatest advancement in education was made than during the Indian Agency of Major Gordon J. Smith.\textsuperscript{94} While the federal government and its funding of the schools was paramount to education at Grand River, the use of the provincial curriculum, the construction of the schools themselves, and the requirement of provincial teaching certificates the provincial education system suggest the considerable influence of the provincial education system. Schools at Grand River were a hybrid, and in many ways, were quite similar to the surrounding schools in Brant County.

It is clear that the School Board believed that the Canadian education system would fulfil the needs of school children at Grand River. With much of the education system in the hands of the community itself via the School Board and the teachers at the day schools, it is understandable that there was much support for it. Local control over schooling was likely more important to the community than the fact that the Department of Indian Affairs was involved. That so many of the teachers in the schools were Six Nations people, and, women in particular, may well have led to the community’s confidence in the system.

Teachers

The first teachers at Grand River schools were white male missionaries but by 1900 white women, as well as both men and women from Six Nations, were also working as teachers at Grand River. During World War I many teachers enlisted, and the School Board’s advertisements also brought several African-Canadian teachers to Grand River. Although hiring and keeping well-educated teachers at Grand River was an ongoing concern for the School Board throughout the earlier period, there were many well-known, longstanding teachers at Grand

\textsuperscript{94} Jamieson, \textit{Echoes of the Past}, 18-19. Smith was later made an honourary Chief, and was adopted into the Bear Clan of the Mohawks.
River, all single women from Six Nations. Although some had gone to the day schools on the reserve, many of them had been educated at the Mohawk Institute, and attended local high schools. Some went on to Normal School in Toronto or Hamilton. It was uncommon during this period for Native women to become teachers in reserve schools or residential schools in either North America or the British Empire.  

An exception is the Cherokee women trained at the Cherokee Female Seminary in Oklahoma; many graduates of the seminary became teachers in Cherokee public schools in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, Ella Deloria (Sioux) and Ruth Muskrat Bronson (Cherokee) were well-known Native teachers at the government-run Haskell Institute in Kansas in the 1920s. But these examples are the exceptions: the vast majority of teachers in residential and day schools were Anglo-Canadian.

Teaching was just one career option for Six Nations women. Some women worked as domestics, or obtained clerical jobs off-reserve, while others went into nursing, especially after World War I. With their work as teachers, Six Nations women stand out. In her study of Mohawk (Tyendinaga) and Anishnabe women’s labour from 1920-1940, Robin Jarvis Brownlie suggests that “though a few Aboriginal women managed to become clerical workers... in this period they were rarely admitted to the middle-class occupations of teaching and nursing.”

Women at Grand River seem to have had more options than aboriginal women elsewhere in Ontario, and teaching was likely the most popular choice for Six Nations women in this period. It

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95 Very little work has been done on First Nations or aboriginal teachers in the colonies, so it is difficult to know how unique the Six Nations are. But it is clear that few other communities had the preponderance of teachers as the Six Nations.


was an attractive option for women, as they could impart both Six Nations traditions and Western values learned through their own schooling.

Six Nations women had the opportunity to become teachers because of centuries of Western education, a tradition of learning, and leaders such as Joseph Brant who advocated Western education for all people of Six Nations. Women in particular were comparatively well-educated at Six Nations due to the Iroquois tradition of women’s role in educating the young, the importance that the Mohawk Institute placed on educating girls, and the power that the Six Nations School Board held in hiring teachers. In addition, the Great War had an important impact on the teaching staff at all of the Grand River Schools. After the war, teachers were predominantly female and from within the Six Nations community (See Table 1). Some teachers were activists, working in differing ways to improve the community, and it is clear that there was a link between teaching and activism.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, roughly half of the teachers at Six Nations day schools were non-Native, while the other half was from Six Nations. The white teachers on the reserve were often unmarried women who were quite transient: indeed, none stayed for very long. For example, in 1909, Miss J. S. Taggart taught at No 7, and Miss O. O’Mulvenny taught at No 9, but neither taught a second year. Teachers had a hard time finding housing on the reserve, and often boarded with other teachers before teachers’ residences were established at all

99 This conclusion is based on the lists of teachers from 1899, 1900, 1909, and 1910. In 1900, for example, five of the nine teachers were from within the community – Elam D. Bearfoot, John Lickers, Peter T. Adams, Naomi Latham, and Sarah Davis. Government of Canada, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1900," (Ottawa: 1900).

of the schools. The Indian Agent at the time, E. D. Cameron, suggested that in the long run white teachers would not be as useful because they could always leave and get work elsewhere, whereas he believed Native teachers could not do so. He believed the Native teachers were doing a good job. Some of the white women who taught at Grand River were the daughters or wives of missionaries. Annie Cross was the daughter of a Methodist missionary and she possessed a teaching certificate from the Young Ladies College in Hamilton; she taught throughout the 1880s and 90s. At the Mohawk Institute, white women also worked as teachers, and for a brief period a white woman was its principal. Alice Boyce was the daughter and sister of the previous principals, Robert Ashton and Nelles Ashton. During the first year of the War and for several years after it, she was herself principal until she married Sydney Rogers, who took her job, relegating her to “lady principal.” White women taught Natives in many British colonial spaces; their teaching at Grand River can be seen at least partly as uplifting, through education and Christianization, supposedly degraded Native races.

However, unlike most other reserves in Canada, at Grand River, white women were replaced over time with Native teachers from within the community. In 1900, of the nine

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102 Ibid., 148.


106 One other example is Annie Cummings, a mixed-race woman who attended Coqualeetza Residential School in British Columbia’s Fraser Valley, and later worked as a teacher. The Coqualeetza Annual Report noted that “One of the pupils left last November to take charge of an Indian school, and is doing excellent work. She has obtained a teacher’s certificate. This gives one an idea of the possibilities of the Indian children.” Jean Barman, *Stanley Park's*
teachers at the day schools, only four were white. The Native teachers were Sarah Davis, Elam Bearfoot, and John Lickers, all graduates of the Mohawk Institute. Lickers, an Onondaga, married a white woman and went on to a career as an elected councillor. He also worked as a truant officer for the School Board. Elam Bearfoot was the son of the Reverend Isaac Bearfoot. Both father and son attended Brantford Collegiate and the Mohawk Institute, and Isaac also taught at the Institute before becoming the School Inspector in the early 1900s. Lickers taught for years at day schools on the reserve. Native teachers accounted for around half of the teachers at the day schools on the reserve for the first two decades of the twentieth century, but after the Great War and throughout the 1920s, the number of Native teachers rose until all teachers on the reserve were from within the community by the end of the decade. Throughout the 1930s, almost all of the teachers were Six Nations. There were a few exceptions, such as Vera Davis, the non-Native daughter of the reserve physician, Dr. Walter Davis, who began teaching in the late 1930s after growing up on the reserve. She was the only non-Native teacher there by 1939, although she was from within the community.

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107 Miss N. Latham and Miss T. Davis were also Native teachers. The white teachers were Mr. Peter Hunks, Mr. John Clark, Mr. P. Adams and Mr. C. C. Park. Lickers was a Dehomer, one of the men who opposed hereditary rule and believed that local government should be elected, and more progressive. Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*, 4, 9, 11, 50. Also File 13 “Dehomers”, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Government of Canada, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1900.," (Ottawa: 1900), 374. Jean Barman suggests that while Native women teachers either remained teaching or retired upon marriage, Native men tended to use teaching as a springboard to other careers. Personal Communication, October 24, 2007.

108 Six Nations School Board Minutes. Ibid., 50.


110 Statistics gathered from several sources, but especially the Annual Reports from the Department of Indian Affairs.

The Mohawk Institute: the Indian Normal School

The Mohawk Institute played a central role in the production of teachers at Grand River, so much so that in 1885 it was nicknamed the “Indian Normal School.” Throughout much of the nineteenth century, there was a shortage of teachers in Ontario and this also had an impact on the schools on the reserve. In particular, “women were hired in growing numbers to staff a costly and rapidly expanding school system because qualified male teachers were in short supply.” This was also the case at the Mohawk Institute and the day schools at Grand River. The Institute began training teachers for Native schools. All that was required to acquire a certificate as an Indian school teacher was passing the high school entrance exam and the completion of a six month course in special training at the Institute. As Jennifer Pettit explains, “the Indian Department, particularly impressed with the number of teachers on the Six Nations reserve who were graduates of the Mohawk Institute, praised the school as a ‘pattern institution.’” As one teacher remembers about the Thomas School, “once the school was established it was easy to find children to attend but school-teachers were not secured so easily. The Mohawk Institute graduates came to the rescue.” By 1884, all of the day schools under the control of the Six Nations School Board had teachers trained and qualified from the Mohawk Institute. This was relatively uncommon compared to other day schools on reserves in Canada, as teachers in

112 Jamieson, *Echoes of the Past*, 12. In the 1885 Kelly Report by the Brant County School Inspector, the school was referred to as the “Mohawk Institution and Indian Normal School.” Graham, *The Mush Hole*, 84.


116 Jamieson, *Echoes of the Past*, 5. Jamieson herself taught at the Thomas School, as did George E. Bomberry. The last teacher there was John Miller from Onondaga who spent over 25 years there.

117 Abate, *Iroquois Control of Iroquois Education*. 
Native schools were “with rare exceptions untrained.” However, both the New England Company and the Confederacy Chiefs were concerned that the quality of the teaching was not good enough. Over time, the School Board began to require all teachers to have a Normal School Certificate, the provincial standard, and by 1923 no teacher was employed at Grand River without one.

There were implications for teachers who were trained at the Mohawk Institute. If they still spoke their Native language on entering the school, many of them lost it. Students of the Institute also experienced a particular type of upbringing, removed from their family, separated from students of the opposite gender, and taught that their traditional culture had little value. Of course, not all teachers at Six Nations were from the Mohawk Institute and not all students at the Institute were from the Six Nations. Many were from other First Nations communities in Ontario and some of these students too became teachers. However, it is important to consider how the school affected the student who then became a teacher. Those who spent much of their youth at the Institute became somewhat assimilated and had lost some of their connections to Six Nations traditional culture.

Mohawk Institute students, particularly girls, spent time working as teachers at the Mohawk Institute after graduation to gain experience before going to teach at a day school or other residential school. For example, Mildred Thomas (later Mrs. Franklin Lickers) attended the Mohawk Institute and after graduation taught there for two years. After examining the records

\[\text{119} \text{ Jamieson, Echoes of the Past, 19.}\]
\[\text{120} \text{ Interview with Mrs. Gladys Lickers Hill, about her parents, Mildred Thomas and Franklin Lickers. File 17, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.}\]
kept by the Mohawk Institute, historian Elizabeth Graham calculates that between 1872 and 1892 twenty boys and twenty-five girls, all graduates of the Mohawk Institute, became teachers.\textsuperscript{121}

Although records were not always kept of graduates’ careers, in 1930 the Superintendent of Education Russell Ferrier wrote a history of the Mohawk Institute which included a list of successful graduates. Ferrier contacted as many Institute graduates as he could and found fifteen men and twenty-six women had become teachers.\textsuperscript{122} For both men and women, teaching was by far the most popular occupation. The 1930 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs suggests that the Mohawk Institute had by then produced fifty-five teachers at Indian day schools.\textsuperscript{123} Clearly the school played an important role in the education of the community by training teachers. The training of Six Nations women was particularly important.

\textbf{Susan Hardie}\textsuperscript{124}

Susan Hardie perhaps best epitomizes the tradition of schooling and teaching at the Mohawk Institute. She arrived at the residential school in 1879 as a twelve year old. After several years of schooling at the Mohawk Institute and Brantford Collegiate Institute, she took the teaching course and wrote the examination in 1885. However, she failed to gain a second class certificate (necessary in order to teach), and instead passed with only the third class certificate. The principal of the Institute at the time, the Reverend Robert Ashton, took up her

\begin{footnotes}
\item[122] Ferrier found ninety former pupils, of which forty-one became teachers. All of the men who trained as teachers at the Mohawk Institute were students before the Great War. Some women were trained there before the War, but after the War, all of the teachers trained there were women. Ibid., 21, 219-21. Russell T. Ferrier, "History of the Mohawk Institute, Successful Graduates," RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 2, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1926-1936, LAC.
\item[124] Susan’s name is spelled both Hardie and Hardy in different sources, but her death certificate and gravestone use the “ie” spelling.
\end{footnotes}
case with the Education Department and argued that English was her second language, that her “application and perseverance have been most commendable,” and that he wanted to appoint her as a junior teacher so that “she may become a teacher to her people.” The Minister of Education relented, took the “special circumstances” into consideration, and awarded Hardie a second class teaching certificate in October 1885. She completed her training at the Brantford Model School the following year and then attended Toronto Normal School. Hardie then began a teaching career at the Mohawk Institute that lasted for fifty years until she retired at age seventy in 1936.

When she started teaching at the Institute, Hardie was the only Native teacher but others joined her. She was considered a successful teacher and role model by the school and community. In a 1921 letter, School Inspector Standing wrote that “she is an excellent disciplinarian, not severe, but firm in her control, and I believe, secures the affection as well as the respect of her pupils. In teaching, she has been uniformly successful, as is shown by the success of her pupils at the [high school] Entrance Examination.” Hardie took great pride in the fact that all of the students that she trained for the high school entrance exam passed and attended high school. Many went on to careers as teachers. Of course, Hardie was a strong supporter of the Institute. In an interview on her ninetieth birthday, Hardie thought that it “very

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125 Ashton to Secretary, Education Department, 4 September 1885. RG-10, Vol.2007, File 7825-1B, Minutes of the Six Nations Council Concerning Schools, 1877-1905, LAC.

126 Education Department to Ashton, 8 October 1885. RG-10, Vol.2007, File 7825-1B, Minutes of the Six Nations Council Concerning Schools, 1877-1905, LAC.


129 Finlay, "Institute Teacher Is 90."
strange people don’t appreciate that the Institute, the New England Company, and other educational institutions, have produced a race of clear-headed and straight-thinking people.”

However, she was not universally appreciated (as few teachers are). In December 1921, Principal Alice Boyce wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs and she wanted to hire new, young teachers and for the Department to provide a pension so that Hardie could retire. She explained that she would prefer “a younger, brighter teacher.” She added that “Miss Hardie is a capable teacher – but she has spent her life here since twelve years of age – and her horizon is very limited – and she knows practically nothing of the ways of the world. I think a pension plan would solve our difficulty.” However, Hardie taught for fifteen years more before retiring. She was a member of the Remembrance Chapter, IODE, and of the Teachers Federation of Ontario. Hardie had few family connections, as she first lived with Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Rogers in Brantford, the previous principal of the school, and then, until her death in 1961, with the daughter of another principal, Gwen Snell, in Oshawa.

Susan Hardie is fondly remembered by the community. She is the only Native woman to be honoured by a stained glass window in the historic Mohawk Chapel, unveiled in 1960. The

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130 Ibid.
132 She was finally given a pension, but payments were often late or did not come at all. See various letters between the school administrators and the DIA in RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 3, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1936-1945, LAC.
133 Hardie used her connections with the I.O.D.E. to have the organization donate prizes for competitions to the school. Rogers Quarterly Report, 30 June 1925. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.
134 The University Women's Club of Brantford, "Susan Hardy: Dedicated Teacher," 53-54. Hardie's own family history is still obscure within the community. Her mother was apparently Mary J. Davis, whom she is buried next to in the Mohawk Chapel cemetery. Her mother's maiden name may have been Johnson. Some community sources suggest that she was the daughter of Judge Hardy. Some sources cite that she is the granddaughter of William Johnson and Molly Brant, but this is unlikely, given her birth date in 1867. One other member of the community told me that she was an illegitimate daughter of Pauline Johnson. Her parentage remains unknown.
window features a young Susan Hardie in front of the old Mohawk Institute, reading a book with several Native children gathered around her. The inscription below the window reads “The children are particularly taught religious and moral duties – it is an agreeable sight to observe the rising generation employed in acquiring knowledge, and in a spirit of true worship, attending divine service on the Sabbath.” 135 While Susan Hardie was a long-time and revered teacher of the Mohawk Institute, there were many other women graduates who went on to teach at schools on the reserve, at other residential schools, and across the country. 136 They are examples of women who worked to improve the community in formal ways that it appears Native women in the rest of Canada were not yet doing. The Six Nations were different in part due to their matrilineal traditions which placed importance on women’s role in education.

Teachers and Mobility

Six Nations women were willing to leave the reserve community for higher education, including high school and Normal School training, which allowed them to become teachers within the community. Their interest in teaching is an outgrowth of the traditional role that Iroquois women played in education, and in the community. This willingness to move or travel for training and work is common for the Six Nations. It was (and is) not a closed community, in which the people stayed within the confines of the reserve. Men and women frequently traveled to work at jobs in Brantford, Hamilton, Buffalo or even Toronto. 137 They also left their homes to

135 Canon W. J. Zimmerman, Story of the Windows, Her Majesty’s Chapel of the Mohawks (Brantford: 1965), 9-11.
136 For instance Sarah Russell, later Mrs. William Smith, was a graduate of the Mohawk Institute. She taught at the No. 1 School, which was later moved to No. 8, and the No. 3 when it was erected at Smith’s corners (where No 1 had stood). Jamieson, Echoes of the Past, 4.
137 See Carl Benn, “Chapter 4: Mohawks as Workers,” in Mohawks on the Nile: Natives among the Canadian Voyageurs in Egypt, 1884-85 (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009). Robin Jarvis Brownlie also suggests that Mohawk women from Tyendinaga had considerable mobility “related largely to the availability of work for themselves, and in some cases, their husbands.” Brownlie, "Living the Same as the White People," 67.
go berrying, or berry-picking during the summer months, often with their children. So although it may seem surprising that women from Six Nations boarded at homes in Brantford, Caledonia and Hagersville, or at the Mohawk Institute in order to attend high school, as well as in Toronto and Hamilton for Normal School, it was part of a pattern of leaving Grand River for work. The vast majority of the Six Nations teachers during this period attended either Toronto Normal School or Hamilton Normal School after it opened in 1908. For instance, Mary Anderson Longboat attended No. 10 School on the reserve as a child, went to high school in Caledonia, then went to Hamilton Normal School. She returned to teach at No. 2 before stopping to have children in the mid 1930s. She also went back to Hamilton for additional courses in primary teaching methods. Several women graduates of the Mohawk Institute went to teach at residential schools or day schools on reserves in Ontario, including Muncey, Oneida, and Tyendinaga. Six Nations women’s willingness to leave their community for training enabled them to become teachers, and even leaders, within the community.

Leaders and Activists: Julia Jamieson and Emily General

As in other communities, the teachers at Six Nations were frequently seen as leaders. However, they were not all of the same political mind. Two very different examples of community leaders can be seen in Emily C. General and Julia L. Jamieson. Both taught at Six

138 Interview with Mary Anderson Longboat and Carl Longboat. File 16, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.

139 For instance, Amelia Checkock taught at Muncey Town, Stone Ridge, and Parry Sound. Carrie Crow was from Muncey, and after she attended the Mohawk Institute, she went and taught at the Muncey Day School before returning to the Mohawk to be a housekeeper. Phoebe Waddilove went to teach at the Oneida School. Josephine Good, who received the Nelles medal for general proficiency in high school, taught at Parry Sound for four years, then the Bay of Quinte. Catherine Maracle taught at No. 2 School at Six Nations, before teaching at St. Regis and then the Bay of Quinte. Russell T. Ferrier, “History of the Mohawk Institute, Successful Graduates,” RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 2, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1926-1936, LAC.
Nations schools, but their careers could not have been more different. As previously mentioned, Julia Jamieson (1889-1975) was the daughter of teacher and Six Nations School Board member Augustus Jamieson and Emmeline Echo-Hill. The Jamiesons were a family of teachers; five of the eight children taught school. Julia finished high school in Caledonia in 1908 and began teaching almost immediately without any teacher training. In October 1918, the School Board voted to increase her salary not because she applied for an increase but because “she has taught a great many years and is highly recommended by the Inspector although she has no professional qualifications.” After teaching at day schools for almost 15 years, she attended the Toronto Normal School in 1923, and later became a founding member of the Six Nations Teacher’s Organization in 1937. Jamieson was heavily involved in the Ohsweken Baptist Church, and worked as their treasurer, as a clerk, and as a member of the music committee; she

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140 Today, both have schools named after them (although the Jamieson school is named after Julia’s family; her father and siblings were also teachers).
141 “Jamieson, Julia Laurine,” The Expositor, February 1975. Her father is a great great grandson of Mary Jemison, the “White Woman of the Genesee.” Mary was Irish, was captured by the Shawnee in the French and Indian War, before being traded to the Seneca. Mary chose to remain with the Seneca, married, and had children. See James E. Seaver and June Namias, A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison, 1st ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), June Namias, White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
142 Mary Helen Jamieson, Elmer Ernest Jamieson, Nora Elsie Jamieson, and Andrew Northe Augustus Jamieson all worked as teachers. Her brother Thomas James Jamieson was a doctor in Detroit.
143 In 1908 Dr. Holmes challenged Julia’s hiring, as she did not have any provincial qualifications. However, according to Martin Benson, “she has passed the Entrance examination to the Normal School and is most likely the best teacher they could obtain for the salary available...Miss Jamieson has only been in the school less than a month and it would only be fair to give her a try... The qualified teacher is not always the most successful in Indian schools and it is only one that cannot better himself that will take such position.” Jamieson was supported by the members of the School Board, and remained. Martin Benson to the Deputy Superintendent General, September 16 1908. RG-10, Vol. 2010, File 7825-3, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1908-1913, LAC.
144 By that time she was teaching at No. 8 School, and her salary rose from $500 a year to $550. Minutes of the Meeting, 25 September 1918. RG-10, Vol. 2010, File 7825-4, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1913-1918, LAC.
145 Moses, Henhawk, and King, History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve, 65. The Organization was founded in 1937 by the day school teachers on the reserve, and was concerned with professional development and improving education on the reserve. In many ways, they were very similar to non-Native teachers organizations of the period. Barbara Richter, “It’s Elementary: A Brief History of Ontario’s Teachers and Their Federations,” EFTO Voice (2007).
also wrote the church history.\footnote{Julia L. Jamieson, \textit{The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Ohsweken Baptist Church} (Brantford: n.p., 1940). “Ohsweken Baptist” File 5, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, Canadian Museum of Civilization.} She taught at several different schools on the reserve, including No. 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, and the Thomas School.\footnote{Moses, Henhawk, and King, \textit{History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve}. Six Nations School Board records, Annual Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs. Along with her family, she was interested in preserving the Mohawk language, and worked in 1958 to compile a book and tape recordings. These included a speech from a 1905 Tea Meeting, the Lord’s Prayer, Psalm 23, lyrics to an Indian hymn, and other Bible verses. Jake Thomas and Julia L. Jamieson, \textit{Grand River Territory Mohawk Language} (1958, 1995).} Along with her father and siblings, the Jamieson School was named after her.\footnote{“1924 Chiefs - Socio-Economic Data” File 20, Box 468, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.} After her retirement, she wrote a history of education on the Six Nations Reserve, titled \textit{Echoes of the Past: A History of Education from the time of the Six Nations Settlement on the Banks of the Grand River in 1784 to 1924}. She retired in the 1940s.

Emily General, or Gaw hen dena (“she is going along in the front or in the lead”\footnote{Translation from Jeremy Green, Mohawk Language/Culture Teacher, Oliver M. Smith School, Six Nations.}), was also a strong advocate of education but of a somewhat different sort. She was born to a Cayuga father, Alexander General, and a Mohawk mother, Sophia Jones, in 1903. Her father’s family was very politically active. Alexander (or Sandy) General was an assistant hereditary chief in the Upper Cayuga Longhouse.\footnote{Ibid. David was also a founder of the Indian Defense League of America in the 1920s. “The Indian Defense League of America,” in \textit{The Encyclopedia of Native American Legal Tradition}, ed. Bruce Elliott Johansen (Greenwood Press, 1998) 143-44.} Alexander’s brother was Levi General, or Deskaheh, the hereditary chief who traveled to Geneva and London in the early 1920s to argue for Six Nations sovereignty. Another brother, Samson, was also a hereditary chief, and a second brother, David, was a Dehorner and elected Councilor after 1924.\footnote{Ibid.} David’s sons (Emily’s cousins) were also elected councillors. Many in the General family were successful farmers, and were also involved...
in the Six Nations Agricultural Society. Emily’s paternal grandmother, Lydia General, was a clan matron.

Emily attended a day school on the reserve but when she was 13, the truant officer reported that Alexander General was not sending his children to school. It seems that Emily was at least partly educated at home. When she attended high school in Caledonia in the early 1920s, she was driven by horse and buggy to the train which took her into Caledonia, where she boarded with a Native family during the week. While she might have skipped school as a child to learn at home, clearly education was important to her family, as they made such an effort to get her to school. In 1925, she enrolled at Hamilton Normal School. She began teaching at No. 6 School before moving to No. 9. General was fluent in Mohawk and Cayuga, and “used traditional stories and customs to bring to life for her students the heritage of their people.”

She taught for a total of twenty-two years, and was president of the Six Nations Teacher’s Organization in 1938. However, in 1948 General was fired by the Department of Indian Affairs for refusing to swear an oath of allegiance to the Crown; this was the beginning of the

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152 David was treasurer for many years in the 1920s as was Alexander, while Levi was 2nd Vice President in 1922 and honorary director in 1923. File 9 “S.N.A.S.”, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.

153 1917. “Chiefs” File 2, Box 468, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.


156 Hamilton Normal School, The Eleventh Annual Year Book (Published by the Students of the Hamilton Normal School, 1926).


second stage of her career as an activist and public educator.\textsuperscript{160} In 1949, she founded the Six Nations Reserve Forest Theatre, and the annual pageant which taught people the traditional history of the Six Nations, much of which, she believed, had been forgotten.\textsuperscript{161} In the 1950s, Julia Jamieson also worked on these pageants. Emily later became involved in the Indian Defence League of America and later became their President.\textsuperscript{162} She also taught Sunday School for years at St. Luke’s Anglican Church.\textsuperscript{163} Two years before her death, a new school was built on the reserve and was named after her.

Both Emily General and Julia Jamieson are fondly remembered by the people as excellent teachers and leaders. However, they had different means of achieving their goals of educating the Six Nations youth and instilling pride in their community. Jamieson was more of a “progressive,” and worked to improve the community through her work in schools and the Baptist Church, whereas General was a political activist who broke the mould of both the traditional Iroquois woman and model assimilated Christian womanhood. Due to the complexities of the community, it was possible for women to achieve their goals through differing means.

\textsuperscript{160} Emily wrote a letter to the Department of Indian Affairs, asking them to reconsider her termination. In part, her letter said: “The Six Nations are living on this Grand River lands under special treaty as allies of the British Crown. So it is out of order to expect a Six Nations to subjugate himself in order to teach his own people, in his own land. I do not think that the Canadian government, the people of Canada, or the Crown, would respect me otherwise than to be true to my own noble race who have done so much for England on this continent.” Quoted in White, “School Named for Six Nations Teacher Emily General.”


\textsuperscript{163} “General, Emily C. - "Gaw Hen Dena".”
Another Six Nations woman teacher who worked to instil pride in the community, as well as to educate non-Native Ontarians about the Six Nations, was Bernice Loft. Loft’s mother was Elizabeth Ann Johnson who taught at the No. 7 School through the 1880s and 90s, and also taught her daughter Iroquois crafts and medicine. Loft’s father was a hereditary Mohawk Chief, and her uncle Frederick Loft founded the League of Indian Nations. She was raised learning multiple Iroquois languages, as well as the history and traditions of the Six Nations. She taught at No. 6 School in 1924 and 1925 but she soon began giving lectures and touring and gave up teaching in the classroom. Her familial background, as well as her experience as a teacher, helped her performances during the rest of her career. Although Loft ceased teaching at Grand River schools, she continued to teach Six Nations culture and history in other venues for the rest of her life.

Teachers as Role Models

Not only were teachers important leaders and cultural communicators, they were also often seen as examples of good womanhood on the reserve. Government and education officials remarked on educated, “proper” women, and hoped that they would be influential, even after they stopped teaching to raise families. The particular meanings of “good womanhood,” of course, are unclear. This was a label applied by officials, not the women or the community themselves. The community would have agreed with the descriptions of some of these teachers


as proper women and good role models, but it is impossible to know what the women themselves would have thought of such a label. “Good womanhood” probably meant that the teacher in question was sexually pure or monogamous, morally upright, attended church, kept a neat home, and spent time volunteering in the community. According to Lynne Marks, respectability was cultivated in rural Ontario through church attendance and involvement. She notes that “race was also key,” and “while white Canadians considered churchgoing African Canadians and Native Canadians more respectable than their non-churchgoing counterparts, the racism of Canadian society meant that even a complete adherence to dominant religious practices could never make African Canadians and Native Canadians fully respectable.”

So it is intriguing that (white) government and education officials were willing to suggest that certain Six Nations women were “civilized” enough to be examples of “good womanhood.”

For example, Superintendent of Education Russell Ferrier collected information on those he deemed to be “Successful Graduates” of the Mohawk Institute and published it as part of his history of the school in 1930. He noted that Catherine Maracle, a graduate and teacher on the reserve, “keeps a good home and educated her children.” Another example was Sarah Cecilia Russell (later Mrs. William Smith Jr.), who worked as a teacher on the reserve for eleven years. She first attended No. 7 school on the reserve, and then the Mohawk Institute for five years until Grade Eight, before going to high school in Brantford. Russell earned the Nelles medal from

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169 Interview with Florence Hill, about her parents William Smith Jr. and Sarah Cecilia Russell, File 17, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
the Six Nations School Board for general proficiency. She began teaching in 1888 at the No. 7 school and then at the No. 3 school where she met her husband, William, a Dehorner and later an elected councillor. Aside from teaching, Sarah was involved in volunteer work in the community. She was also the Vice President of the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League (Kanyengeh Church) during World War I and the founder of the Sour Springs Women’s Institute in 1921. Sarah was also the representative on the Mother’s Allowance Board in the 1920s, visiting families and widows on the reserve. When she died in 1929, Russell Ferrier noted that she was “influential for good on the reserve,” as she had “brought up and educated a large family who are all doing well.” For the 1930 centennial of the Mohawk Institute, the Department of Indian Affairs proudly discussed their graduates: “Many Indian girls who have left the Mohawk Institute have been noted as successful homemakers and splendid mothers. Special mention should be made of Sarah Russell ’88.”

One of Sarah’s daughters was Wilma Grace Smith (Mrs. Andrew Jamieson) who also worked as a teacher after attending a day school, the Mohawk Institute and Hamilton Normal

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170 Graham, The Mush Hole, 220.
173 Interview with Florence Hill, about her parents William Smith Jr. and Sarah Cecilia Russell, File 17, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC
School.\textsuperscript{176} She began teaching at No. 8 School; when the School Board wished to give her a raise, they noted that she “is a very clever girl and if she stays in the teaching profession she would be of great use on the reserve.”\textsuperscript{177} She left the No. 8 School, and moved to the Mount Elgin Indian Residential School before returning to Grand River to teach at schools No. 4, No. 10, and No. 3.\textsuperscript{178} She retired in 1929 upon her marriage. In the 1930 Centennial History of the Mohawk Institute, the Department of Indian Affairs made special mention of Wilma Smith:

> The Mohawk Institute is still turning out teachers who give fine service among their own people. Wilma Smith, a graduate of 1918, obtained professional standing and taught very successfully for 10 years. She was the first Indian student to graduate in music and she has been organist, respectively, at the Mohawk Chapel and Sour Springs Church on the reserve. Miss Smith resigned her school a year ago, upon the occasion of her marriage to Andrew Jamieson, who will be the first Indian to graduate from the Agricultural College at Guelph.\textsuperscript{179}

Both Sarah Russell Smith and Wilma Smith Jamieson were seen as examples of good womanhood on the reserve, and especially so because they were teachers.\textsuperscript{180}

### The Alexander Family of Teachers

While white teachers were accepted in Grand River schools up until the early part of the twentieth century, the advent of African-Canadian teachers at Grand River in 1914 sparked some protest in the community. The arrival of the Alexander family was unusual, since African-
Canadian teachers generally taught within their own communities. While much has been written on race and education in history, less work has been done on the race and gender of Canadian teachers in the twentieth century. Despite important research on African Canadian teachers in the nineteenth century, little has been written about them in the twentieth. Moreover, while the history of African-Canadians at Grand River is a subject deserving of scholarly attention, very little has been written so far. However, it is clear that blacks came to the reserve as both slaves and immigrants in the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century. Although it was uncommon for teachers to be a racial minority in the school setting, the case of these teachers allows us to explore the complications of relationships between race, gender and teaching during this time period, as well as racial politics on the reserve.

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The Alexander family had a long history of teaching and had been educated and trained in southern Ontario schools. They were also of mixed ancestry, although they identified themselves primarily as African Canadian. Their father, John Harding Alexander taught at the King Street Public School in Amherstburg in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. John’s mother was an English woman named Catherine Harding and his father, Thomas Alexander, was an escaped slave from Kentucky. John’s wife, Annie Louise Crawford, was the daughter of George


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Crawford, a Cherokee from the U.S., and Laura Virginia Crawford, an African American from Kentucky. All were immigrants to the Amherstburg area in the mid-nineteenth century.

In August 1914, Mae and Ethel Alexander replied to an advertisement posted by the Six Nations School Board and were hired as teachers. As a result of the enlistment of several male teachers in the war, including James D. Moses, Elmer Jamieson, Milton Martin and Frank Churchill, teachers were in short supply. In 1916, Mae and Ethel’s brother Arthur was also hired by the School Board. Mae and Ethel both taught at the No. 2 School, while their brother taught at No. 7. Arthur lived with his wife in the teacher’s residence in Ohsweken and his two sisters boarded with him.

All three siblings worked throughout the war with “universally favourable” reports and then in January 1919 a letter arrived in the office of Deputy Superintendent General Duncan Campbell Scott, sent by the President of the Indian Moral Association, Mrs. George D. Styres. Styres was active in several church and reform groups on the reserve, and along with other members of the IMA, aimed to “uplift the moral and social life of the reserve.” The organization was originally founded in 1908 and had 160 members by 1919. In her letter to Scott, President Styres explained that “we resent the appointment of negroes as teachers on our Reserve. We do

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185 Gordon J. Smith to Duncan Campbell Scott. January 26th, 1919. RG-10, Volume 2011, File 7825-4A, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1918-1930, LAC. Ethel had a third class certificate, five years teaching experience and was paid $500/year, while Mae had a second class certificate and made $650/year. 25 September 1914, Minutes of the Meeting. RG-10, Vol. 10, File 7825-4, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1913-1918, LAC. The average salary for a female teacher in a rural school in 1914 was $543. Table 4: Teachers’ Salaries and Experience. Ontario Department of Education, "Annual Report," (Toronto: 1915), 80.


Figure 4: Ethel and Nina Mae Alexander at the No. 2 School, where they taught between 1913 and 1920. The Spencer Alexander Collection.

not consider it uplifting to the Indian.”

As teachers were often seen as examples of “good womanhood” on the reserve, the IMA was concerned that Ethel and Mae Alexander could not be good examples for Native children. They might also have been insulted that the School Board was receiving “cast-off” teachers that no other communities wanted and that they deserved

better. This undoubtedly was not the case, as the Alexanders had multiple teaching opportunities in Southern Ontario but the racist ideology of the IMA may have led them to believe it was. The community also had good reason to suspect the Department of treating them as second class citizens.

After receiving the letter from Mrs. Styres, Scott consulted with Indian Agent Gordon Smith, an ally of many Native teachers on the reserve who first explained that the Alexanders were “mulatto,” not “negro” as their mother was white (which was incorrect, as she was half Cherokee and half black). He then defended the Alexanders, saying that the family “are highly respectable and well thought of, and they have a brother who is a doctor in Detroit.” Smith
explained that he had had “no complaints from the parents at these schools and he understands that Arthur Alexander is very highly though of at No. 7 School.” He pointed out that all of the qualified Native teachers had already been hired, and that it was difficult to find teachers to work at Grand River. Smith added that a few years before this case, a principal of a public school in Paris, Ontario who also was “mulatto,” was fired. Smith warned that the local newspapers “raised the race cry,” and argued that it was “most unfair and un-British to dismiss a good teacher on account of his colour.” According to Brant County Inspector Standing, the principal was fired due to inefficiency and “colour never had anything to do with it.” However, Smith was warning Scott of a possible reaction if the Alexanders were fired.

It is clear from his letter that Agent Smith (and possibly others) did not realize that the Alexanders were part African Canadian until Arthur and his wife arrived. Apparently, Ethel and Mae had lighter skin than their brother, and Arthur’s wife was much darker. It is possible that the sisters passed for white. Race was (and continues to be) a slippery category: not only was the Alexander family of mixed descent and could seemingly pass as First Nations but the Six Nations community itself was not a mono-racial place. After centuries of contact with Anglo and Euro-North Americans, much intermarriage had taken place. Escaped slaves and other African Canadian families had developed friendships and kinship ties, had moved onto the reserve and were given land in the 1840s during the consolidation of the reserve. It is noteworthy, then,

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that some members of the Six Nations community had such a strong reaction to mixed-race teachers on the reserve.

In response to the protest, J. D. McLean, Assistant Deputy and Secretary of the DIA wrote back to Styres to let her know that the Alexanders were “mulatto,” and not “negro,” that they were qualified and experienced teachers, and that they were very successful in their work. As such, “the Department does not consider that there should be any objection to their teaching on the reserve.” The Indian Moral Association thus was unsuccessful in getting rid of the Alexanders, but Arthur left soon after the protest, in 1920. A few years later, there was apparently another protest and counter-protest which might have precipitated the departure of Ethel and Mae but there is no documented evidence of this in the records of the School Board.

Although Arthur enjoyed his years teaching at Grand River, he apparently left for a better-paid job in Buxton, an African Canadian community near Chatham. In July, 1920, Arthur asked the Six Nations School Board for a raise of $150 which would take his salary up to $900. He had been offered a job in Buxton that would have paid him $1100, $350 more than his current salary at Six Nations. Alexander told the Board that he would stay for $900, because it would be equivalent to $1100 in Buxton, but they refused to give him a raise beyond $825. Because of this refusal, Arthur resigned. Brantford Indian Agent Gordon Smith noted that Alexander “is a good teacher and has given better satisfaction at No. 7 School than any other teacher who has been there before, and the Trustees admitted that. It is a great misfortune to the Reserve to lose this teacher and I fear it will be difficult to secure a successor at a reasonable

194 Moses, Henhawk, and King, History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve, 12. Moses et al. make reference to this conflict, but there is no evidence of it in the records of the Six Nations School Board.
Salary.” 195 Mae asked for a raise of $50 at the same time and was also refused. Arthur thus left Six Nations, but he maintained some contact with the community. According to the family’s oral history, he was well thought of by the Six Nations. In 1918, Albert and Hannah Wright of Hagersville named their son Arthur Alexander Wright after Arthur; in turn, he named his son Arthur Alexander Jr.. 196 The Wright family remained friendly with the Alexanders for years, and visited each other in Buxton and Grand River. 197

Whether the Alexanders ever felt any personal hostility towards them is difficult to know. When the Ohsweken Women’s Institute was founded in 1921, Ethel and Mae were both members, along with Styres. However, in late 1921 the School Board decided that “the services of Miss. N.M. Alexander and Miss Ethel Alexander be dispensed with at the close of the School term at mid-summer. The progress of the pupils of this School has not been satisfactory according to the reports of the Inspector.” 198 Whether their work was unsatisfactory is impossible to know but in June 1922 Mae and Ethel resigned from the School Board. 199 Ethel moved to Belize in the summer of 1922 to work as a missionary teacher, where she stayed until 1950. 200

195 Gordon J. Smith to the Secretary, DIA, 12 July 1920. RG-10, Volume 2011, File 7825-4A, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1918-1930, LAC.
197 Personal Communication with Spencer Alexander, October 22, 2008. I believe that this family is connected to the Samuel Wright family who were fugitive slaves that arrived at Grand River in the nineteenth century. Linda Brown-Kubisch, The Queen’s Bush Settlement: Black Pioneers, 1839-1865 (Toronto: Dundurn Press Ltd., 2004), 56.
198 Minutes of the meeting, 17 December, 1921. RG-10, Volume 2011, File 7825-4A, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1918-1930, LAC.
200 Alvin D. McCurdy Fonds, F 2076-16-3-6-48, Acc. 24094, AO.
However, she returned to Ontario to visit her family, and she also returned to at least two Institute meetings at Ohsweken. In July 1925, she “gave an interesting address on her mission work in B. Honduras” and in July 1929 she gave a talk on “the strange marriage customs and ideas of the people of British Honduras.” Mae also left Grand River in 1922 and returned to teaching in Amherstburg. Arthur and his wife had one child while living in Ohsweken but they left in 1920. Arthur returned to teach and (later act as principal) in North Buxton, where he had taught prior to his arrival at Grand River. Although the Alexander siblings established some lasting ties with the Six Nations community, none of them remained at Grand River. It is likely

that the discrimination that they faced led to their departure. Some Six Nations people suggest that racism did not exist in the community prior to the cultural assimilation brought by the colonial government. They suggest that the assimilated Natives internalized the racism of their colonizers, and discriminate against blacks and others.\textsuperscript{203} While this argument needs further explanation, the members of the Indian Moral Association certainly seemed to be taking part in the racial discourses of the social reform movement occurring in Euro-Canadian society.\textsuperscript{204}

\section*{Labour Patterns of Six Nations Women Teachers}

Despite the fact that the teachers throughout the period were predominantly Native women, with some African Canadian and non-Native (as well as mixed-race) teachers, many of the labour patterns were similar to those in non-Native schools in Ontario. For instance, the predominance of women teaching at Grand River was quite comparable to the feminization of teaching in Ontario and the rest of Canada. Coined by Alison Prentice, the term denotes “the gradual increase in the numbers and proportions of women teaching in most state school systems, along with their low status and pay within those systems.”\textsuperscript{205} In comparison to the rest of the province, dominance of women teaching was somewhat delayed at Six Nations. Male Six Nations teachers tended to outnumber women until the Great War; at that time, female teachers became the majority. After the war, Six Nations women dominated the profession significantly, often making up three-quarters or more of the teachers (See Table 2).

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{203} Personal communication with Spencer Alexander, Buxton Museum. October 22, 2008.
\item \textsuperscript{204} Mariana Valverde, \textit{The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925} (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991).
\end{itemize}
Alison Prentice found that the major reason that school boards had for hiring women teachers was financial: “Women teachers saved their employers money, for they could be paid as little as half the male teacher’s wage.”\textsuperscript{206} At Six Nations until the 1930s women were almost always paid less than men, probably because no women ever sat on the Six Nations School Board.\textsuperscript{207} In 1895, DIA clerk Martin Benson commented on the salaries of teachers at Six Nations:

the salaries paid are not sufficient to induce the right kind of persons to look for such employment, and most of these who seek such situations are generally unfitted for the work, either lacking in energy or qualifications. This does not, however, apply to the female teachers who are as a rule contented to receive even the small salaries offered by the Department.\textsuperscript{208}

This might have been the case in 1895, but female teachers frequently asked for raises throughout the early twentieth century and were often granted them. For instance, in 1919 Ethel Alexander, Julia Jamieson, Nora Jamieson, Mary Jamieson, and Minnie Martin all requested raises and the School Board had to ask for an increase in funding from the Six Nations Council. The Board received the grant, and the women received their raises.\textsuperscript{209} In 1921, on average men were paid $950 annually, while women earned $850.\textsuperscript{210} In comparison, male teachers in Brant County were earning $1,020 annually, and females were earning $754 in 1920.\textsuperscript{211} Therefore, while men earned more at non-Six Nations schools, women’s salaries on the reserve were higher than those of women teachers in non-Native schools. By the mid 1930s, male and female teachers were paid approximately the same at Six Nations schools.

\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{207} The Board was abolished in 1933 by the Department of Indian Affairs, despite protests and requests for school Supervisors. Moses, Henhawk, and King, \textit{History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve}, 16.
\textsuperscript{208} Quoted in Abate, \textit{Iroquois Control of Iroquois Education}, 142.
\textsuperscript{209} Minutes of the Meeting, 10 December 1919. RG-10, Volume 2011, File 7825-4A, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1918-1930, LAC.
\textsuperscript{211} Table C: The Public School, Teachers, Salaries, Certificates, Experience, etc. Ontario Department of Education, "Annual Report," (Toronto: 1920), 150-51.
teachers were earning the same salaries at the Six Nations day schools.\textsuperscript{212} Compared to non-Native teachers in Canadian public schools, women were better off. In Brant County, the average male wage was $961 and the average female wage was $710.\textsuperscript{213} While discrimination caused financial inequalities in the early twentieth century, Six Nations women’s persistence in asking for raises and their increasing dominance in the profession resulted in equal wages over time.

It was not just financial discrimination which Six Nations teachers had in common with their non-Native peers. They also shared career patterns. Women teachers at Six Nations resigned from their positions upon their marriages as did non-Native women. For instance, Mabel Styres taught at No. 3 School for several years before resigning in 1908 prior to her marriage to Hilton Hill, chief clerk of the Indian Office at Brantford and later an elected councillor.\textsuperscript{214} In the minutes of the meeting, the School Board noted that “Miss Mabel Styres an Indian teacher, for a number of years has sent in her resignation, which is very much regretted by the Board as she was a good teacher in every way. Her resignation was accepted by the Board.”\textsuperscript{215} She did not return to teaching, but enjoyed an active career in voluntary work as founding member of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute, clerk and organist for the Ohsweken


\textsuperscript{214} Moses, Henhawk, and King, History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve, 7.

\textsuperscript{215} Minutes of the Meeting, 21 September 1908. RG-10, Vol. 2010, File 7825-3, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1908-1913, LAC.
Baptist Church, and secretary of the Six Nations Agricultural Fair Board. In what became a pattern with Six Nations women teachers, Mabel’s daughter Mary K. Hill also became a teacher, training at the Hamilton Normal School, and teaching for several decades. As with non-Natives, teaching often ran in the family.

Like their non-Native counterparts, Six Nations teachers organized a Teacher’s Organization, and also attended teacher’s conventions. For instance, the teacher’s organization was founded in 1937 “to help the teachers and to exchange teaching ideas.” It is unclear exactly how or why the organization began but contact with teachers from Brantford and Brant County inspired the Six Nations teachers. In its second year of operation, Emily General served as President, and she continued to be involved in the organization for years. The Teacher’s Organization also created a traveling library for use by teachers, one member being in charge. The books were bought with funds donated by the Ohsweken and Sour Springs Women’s Institutes and from the teacher’s funds; they were able to borrow and return them at meetings. Professional development was important, and the books were one way that Six Nations teachers tried to improve their teaching skills. It was also obligatory for all of the teachers to attend the

216 “Ohsweken Baptist” File 5, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC. Also, interview with Hilton M Hill and Mabel Styres Hill, File 15, Box 471, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC. "Hilton M. Hill and Mabel Styres 50th Anniversary," *The Expositor*, January 27 1960.


218 Harry Smaller, "‘a Room of One's Own’: The Early Years of the Toronto Women Teachers' Association " in Gender and Education in Ontario: A Historical Reader, ed. Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press Inc., 1991) 103-124.


220 As with the Brant County Historical Society, interested parties often communicated with non-Native organizations in the community during the inter-war period. Asa Hill, Secretary of the Six Nations Council in 1922, made overtures to the Ontario Historical Society. See Cecilia Morgan, "History and the Six Nations, 1890s-1960s': Commemoration and Colonial Knowledge" (paper presented at the Canadian Historical Association's 86th Annual Conference, University of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, May 28-30 2007), 11-13.

meetings of the Public School Teacher’s Convention in Brantford every year. These gatherings were a further example of the cross-cultural communication that occurred between Grand River and Brant County of which we know very little. Julia Jamieson noted that “it was indeed a pleasure to listen to the Educator’s addresses presenting the teachers with new ideas to put into practice in the Six Nations Schools.” Teachers from the Mohawk Institute also attended; on those days, no classes were held. Instead, staff and students did general housekeeping of the building when the teachers were away. Thus, although they did not teach in non-Native schools, Six Nations women teachers shared many labour patterns and concerns with their non-Native colleagues of Brant County and the rest of the province. They also shared the curriculum, a programme designed to foster Anglo-Canadian patriotism and promote Anglo-Canadian gender roles.

Conclusion

The fact that people, and women in particular, from within the Native community worked as teachers on the largest reserve in Canada in the early decades of the twentieth century suggests several possible conclusions. The community’s control over education has led to a greater pride in their history and better knowledge of their culture. Although much culture was “lost” during the process of Western education, much remained, in comparison to other First Nations communities in Canada. Traditions were able to be revived because they had not completely disappeared. Since culture is critical to a community’s sense of worth, that the Six Nations were

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222 Jamieson, Echoes of the Past, 20.

223 For example, in October 1922, teachers from the Mohawk Institute attended the meetings, and the students and staff did housecleaning, and replaced the window screens with storm sashes. Rogers Quarterly Report, 31 December 1922. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.
able to retain much of their history and culture suggests that it has contributed to their present
day vitality.

The Six Nations benefited from having teachers from within their own community at day
schools controlled by their own School Board. In many ways, the Mohawk Institute also
provided some benefits to the community by training teachers and other community leaders.
While classrooms at times were led by non-Native women and men, including the Alexanders,
they were increasingly led by single women from Six Nations. These women, many of whom
taught for decades, educated several generations of children, and contributed to the relative
success of the reserve community in the twentieth century. The teachers, school system, and
community in general adopted parts of Western traditions and values that they found useful and
necessary in order to deal with the Anglo-Canadian community around them. They also
succeeded in producing a community that was loyal to Britain and performed Anglo-Canadian
gender roles. The following two chapters consider what was taught in both the day schools and
the Mohawk Institute.
Chapter 2

“The woman is the civilizer:”¹ Gender and Education at Grand River Schools

“Mr. Ashton [the principal of the Mohawk Institute] told me that he proposed having more girls than boys in the school, not because they are less troublesome, but because he is convinced from experience that by educating and training girls in household duties, greater advantages can be made in civilization than by training an equal number of boys. A boy leaves the school, marries and Indian girl who has not had similar advantages and the result is that he reverts to the Indian language, and habits and customs and his children are Indians pure and simple. While a girl who has been thoroughly trained returns to her people, she takes pride in her cooking and household duties, and when she marries and has a family, her children are taught to speak English and are brought up to follow her habits of civilization. The man may be the breadwinner, but the woman is the civilizer.”

Martin Benson, Department of Indian Affairs, in his Report on the Mohawk Institute and Six Nations Schools, 1895.²

“We learned everything about housekeeping there was to learn – cooking and everything. We even learned how to look after a baby when a baby was born. We had a celluloid doll, and we had to dress it, put a diaper on it, pretend we were feeding it. I’ll tell you, and this is not a word of a lie, when I came out of there, there wasn’t a thing that I didn’t know how to do in the house – cooking, ironing, washing, mending, everything. That’s why it was a little easier on my having my kids – I knew how to do everything – I could make clothes for ‘em, cuz we were taught.”

Martha Hill, student at the Mohawk Institute, 1912-1918.³

² Ibid.
³ Interview with Martha Hill, as quoted in Graham, The Mush Hole, 355.
As in other schools in Canada and in other white settler societies, school officials placed special emphasis on educating Native girls at Grand River residential and day schools. Girls and women were to be the mothers of their race, and so their education was critical to the assimilation process. In particular, concerns over morality and sexuality led to education in morality and also gender segregation, especially at the Mohawk Institute. Both girls and boys were also given instruction in gender specific skills to train them for their future roles as Anglo-Canadian mothers, homemakers, husbands, fathers, and farmers. Native girls were taught domestic science and clerical skills to help them get jobs in these areas, as well as teachers and nurses. At times, boys were taught carpentry and other manual training but because boys stayed in school for a shorter period of time, they received less schooling. Because girls generally stayed in school longer they gained more useful and marketable skills. In general, girls succeeded at finding skilled employment after schooling in greater numbers than boys. Despite some protests by female family and community members, as well as the children themselves, many Six Nations girls received an adequate education and some skill training which enabled them to become active members of the community and, as we have seen, even community leaders.

Gender and Native Education

J. R. Miller suggests that “gender was an omnipresent factor in the lives of those who lived, worked, studied, and often suffered in the residential schools, as it was in the lives of non-Native Canadians everywhere.”\(^4\) Although Miller’s study does not consider day schools, it is clear that gender was also a factor in those institutions. The education of the girls at Grand River was considered particularly important for several reasons. Not only did colonial authorities

\(^4\) Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 248.
believe that it was necessary to save Native girls from the degraded state of Native women’s lives, but they also believed that the future survival of the race lay in women’s hands. In North America, there is a long history of the concept of Native women as living degraded, drudgery-filled lives.⁵ Travelers, missionaries and settlers often believed that Native women were workhorses, forced to carry heavy burdens in hunting parties, or labour in the fields, which they considered to be men’s work; they did not understand that the gendered division of labour in some Native cultures meant that women performed agricultural work while men hunted, fished, and waged war. Missionaries, colonial officials, and the Canadian government wished to change the labour practices of Native peoples in Canada and make men farmers and women homemakers.⁶ Schools were the most important place where girls could be trained to be housewives and homemakers.

Furthermore, by the late nineteenth century, there was a growing belief in North America and the British colonial world that white women were the mothers of the race and were responsible for the uplift of society.⁷ Carol Devens notes that there was a “growing belief among

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Americans that [Native] women, as mothers, must be educated in order to raise virtuous male citizens.\textsuperscript{8} It was up to every woman to take good care of her home, her family, and to be a good example for her children. In the United States, African American women felt the same way, and worked through teaching, activism, and the churches to improve their community.\textsuperscript{9} This belief was translated to apply to Native women as well.\textsuperscript{10} As a result of these trends, schools at Grand River, as well as in the rest of Canada, the United States, and elsewhere in the British Empire, were the location of specialized education for Native girls. In the United States, mission schools’ programs for girls were intended to indoctrinate them with the ideals of Christian womanhood – piety, domesticity, submissiveness, and purity. By the missionaries’ Victorian standards, Native American women were careless, dirty, and unfamiliar with the concept of hard work. Indian girls, they complained, were woefully unfamiliar with the lore, paraphernalia, and routines of female domesticity.\textsuperscript{11}

In British Columbia, the women of the Methodist Women’s Missionary Society were also concerned with the state of Native womanhood. They believed that “the condition of the Indian woman on the Pacific coast is one of extreme degradation, and in order to save some of the girls from a life of utter wretchedness and infamy, it was absolutely necessary to gather them into a

\textsuperscript{8} Devens, "If We Get the Girls, We Get the Race" 224.


\textsuperscript{11} Devens, "If We Get the Girls, We Get the Race" 228.
Home where they could be protected from lawless violence."\textsuperscript{12} The Methodist women saw danger within Native girls’ own communities, and saw education as a saving grace. Schools across North America, including the Cherokee Female Seminary, the Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females, and many others, aimed to teach girls the skills they needed to be the moral examples and civilizers of their race.\textsuperscript{13} Australian historian Fiona Paisley writes that

Girls were necessarily of particular interest to imperial and colonial authorities concerned in managing contact between, as well as the internal constitution of, incoming indigenous settler populations. As key figures in the emergence of racial policy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, native and indigenous girls in the Empire bore the brunt of the civilizing aims of governments, missionaries, and humanitarian campaigners alike.\textsuperscript{14}

In Canada, it was the job of both the residential schools and day schools, to properly educate Native girls. The Prime Minister of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald, noted that it was “of the greatest importance with a view to the future progress of the Indian race in the arts of civilization and in intelligence that every effort should be made to educate and train the young Indian females as well as the male members of the different Bands of Indians throughout the Territories.”\textsuperscript{15} As Miller explains, “women were the centre of the home and the formative character influence on children.”\textsuperscript{16} In fact, it was generally agreed that it was useless to educate the boys and not the girls. One Oblate father in British Columbia wrote, “I also consider a school for Indian girls a far greater benefit here than a school for boys. Both would be required…but the girl’s [sic] is undoubtedly the most required. In vain would we teach the boys so long as the girls

\textsuperscript{12} Miller, \textit{Shingwauk’s Vision}, 217.


\textsuperscript{14} Paisley, "Childhood and Race: Growing up in the Empire," 252.

\textsuperscript{15} Miller, \textit{Shingwauk’s Vision}.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 218. Miller quotes one Father at Lebret Residential School, who writes that a school for girls was “absolutely necessary to effect the civilization of the next generation of Indians.” 219.
are ignorant and wicked.”¹⁷ A nineteenth century missionary in Wisconsin explained “the girls will need the training more than the boys & they will wield a greater influence in the future. If we get the girls, we get the race.”¹⁸

The protective impulse drove missionaries in particular to take a special interest in educating girls; “the missionaries’ perception of the need to rescue young girls from the clutches of men with designs on their virtue had long driven church representatives to take in... the vulnerable young women.”¹⁹ They believed that there was sexual danger in the community for a young single girl. But of course they were just as much, or more, at risk of sexual assault at the hands of white society. Teachers placed the responsibility for sexual morality on the girls; they often faced more rules and more stringent demands on their behaviour.²⁰ Concern over girls’ sexuality was the main reason that children were segregated along gender lines. Miller explains that “Native girls required even more supervision because of an assumed lasciviousness made them more likely candidates for sexual activity. Such attitudes justified the ruthlessly repressive segregation of the sexes and vicious insults about Native morality.”²¹ Attempts to teach and control girls at the Mohawk Institute were part of this project.

¹⁷ Fiske, "Gender and the Paradox of Residential Education," 171.
¹⁸ As cited in, Devens, "If We Get the Girls, We Get the Race" 225.
¹⁹ Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 123.
Educating girls was extremely important at Grand River. In August 1895, Department of Indian Affairs clerk Martin Benson visited the day schools and the Mohawk Institute and he produced a “Report on the Mohawk Institute and Six Nations Boarding Schools” for the School Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs. He wrote that Mr. Ashton, the principal:

told me that he proposed having more girls than boys in the school, not because they are less troublesome, but because he is convinced from experience that by educating and training girls in household duties, greater advantages can be made in civilization than by training an equal number of boys. A boy leaves the school, marries and Indian girl who has not had similar advantages and the result is that he reverts to the Indian language, and habits and customs and his children are Indians pure and simple. While a girl who has been thoroughly trained returns to her people, she takes pride in her cooking and household duties, and when she marries and has a family, her children are taught to speak English and are brought up to follow her habits of civilization. The man may be the breadwinner, but the woman is the civilizer. 22

Thus, at the Mohawk Institute and to some extent at the day schools on the reserve, girls were taught the skills and proper moral instruction that their teachers believed they would need to become the ideal homemakers on the reserve.

Manners and Morals

Both the Mohawk Institute and the day schools made an effort to teach “manners and morals,” as suggested by the Ontario Curriculum. It was believed that students should be given instruction in moral principles and practice in good manners. The following virtues were explained in the curriculum as “Duties to oneself: Purity, health, nobility, self-control, self-reliance, generosity, truthfulness, good taste in dress, cultivation of will power, economy, moral value of work, etc.” 23 Individual teachers also attempted to teach morality. One Mohawk

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Institute student remembers how a teacher in the late 1930s attempted to teach the girls the importance of keeping their virginity:

She was very good to the girls, and she told us – one night up there before we went to bed “Now girls,” she says, “I’m going to tell you this” – maybe she knew she was going to leave – “When you leave here,” she says, “I want you to be able to be your husband-to-be’s – your first kiss, let it be your husband’s.” I think she meant more than kissing, I think she meant sex, but sex wasn’t mentioned then.  

Clearly the Six Nations schools, similarly to the non-Native schools during the period, were concerned with morality and particularly sexual morality.

Sexual Morality – Agency and Abuse

At the Mohawk Institute, Western sexual morality was very important to the institution but it was not always successful in enforcing such standards. Principal Boyce noted in her summer report in 1921 that Lily Fox, a student at Brantford Collegiate who was boarding at the Mohawk Institute “went out with a man who was employed on the farm... the man was discharged.” These sorts of transgressions often occurred off school property. Students ran away from the school to spend time with friends or suitors. However, students sometimes suffered assault or rape on their time off. One fourteen year old student, Cornelia Thomas, was apparently “seduced on her way back to the school” in the summer of 1920. A warrant was

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25 Boyce Report, July and August 1921, RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1A, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda Regarding the Mohawk Institute, 1915-1921, LAC. Boyce adds that “as we had had trouble with her before we secured her a place as cook.” It is unclear where that job as cook was, but likely she stopped attending the Collegiate to work. Her transgressions resulted in the end of her formal schooling.

26 Of course, it is very possible that girls (and boys) suffered from rape and assault within the school, but these stories are not told in the archive.

issued for the arrest of Hiram Bumberry, but it is unclear what happened to him. Cornelia also ran away from the Mohawk Institute to spend a night with a “beau” at the Brantford Hotel. She was originally from the Moravians of the Thames Reserve, an Algonkian community near London. Her family had been deserted by her father and she was at the Institute because authorities believed that she needed the “protection of a school.” As her running away suggests, it is likely that Cornelia did not want the “protection” of the school. However, we cannot know whether the time she spent with her “beau” was coerced or consensual.

In March 1922, there was much concern when the Six Nations Council and the Superintendent of Indian Affairs discovered that a thirteen year old pupil named Nettie Clench was pregnant and being looked after at the school by the principal’s wife. Apparently she had been assaulted when home for the summer holidays and returned to the school pregnant and


29 Joan Sangster found that a girl who ran away from her residential school was sent to the Ontario Training School for Girls because she had “run away with a man and spent the night in his cabin.” Sangster, “She Is Hostile to Our Ways”: First Nations Girls Sentenced to the Ontario Training School for Girls, 1933–1960,” 73.

30 “Mohawk Institute Returns for the year ending March 31st, 1921, showing orphans, destitute and those needing protection of a school.” RG-10, Volume 6200, file 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.

31 James G. White to the Bishop of Huron, 1 March 1922, and Duncan Campbell Scott to Canon Gould, 1 March 1922, RG-10, Volume 6200, file 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC. Nettie (Nancy) began attending the school in the fall of 1917, and was considered one of the “orphans,” as her mother Annie was dead and her father Charles “takes no interest.”

“Mohawk Institute Returns for the year ending March 31st, 1921, showing orphans, destitute and those needing protection of a school.” RG-10, Volume 6200, file 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.
infected with a venereal disease. The Council demanded that the school be closed down, but instead Duncan Campbell Scott removed the girl from the school to a local hospital where “she might have proper care.” Clearly the school was not the suitable place for a pregnant young teenager. The Department of Indian Affairs records demonstrate that the school and the Department expressed much concern over her situation. Brantford Superintendent Gordon J. Smith met with a Crown attorney but, according to the Criminal Code, they needed “corroborative evidence,” which they did not have. Attempts were made to get a confession from the man Nettie accused of assault, Harry Miller, but much to the dismay of the school and DIA officials, the Crown could not prosecute.

Another student, Isobel Hill, was assaulted while home for the holidays in 1928.

Principal Rogers noted that

On September 28, Isobel Hill was taken to Hamilton to appear in Court in connection with an assault committed against her during the holidays and whilst in her Mother’s care. We lent every assistance in the prosecution of this case and a conviction was secured. It was a matter of satisfaction to us to find the girl’s mother so willing to take action in this case as unfortunately the Indian mother is inclined to be callous on the question of the daughter’s morals.

His suggestion that Native mothers were generally uncaring is typical of the stereotypes that suggested Native women were not compassionate mothers. Despite the occasional praise of

34 Alice Boyce had Nettie send a letter to Miller inviting him to the Mohawk Institute to visit her. The plan was for Boyce to “overhear the conversation in hope that Miller might make some confessions,” but Miller did not respond to the letter, and did not visit. Gordon J. Smith to Duncan Campbell Scott, November 16, 1921. RG10, Vol. 6200, file 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.
Native mothers at Six Nations, in this case it was quickly dropped in favour of prejudiced attitudes.

**Keeping Girls Safe**

In an attempt to keep girls safe from sexual danger in the community, many institutions, including the Mohawk Institute, tried to keep girls there longer than they kept boys. Native girls were seen to be vulnerable, and the impulse was to protect them until they were grown up. Miller suggests that “it became routine for schools to keep young women for whom they could not arrange a marriage and who, in the opinion of the missionaries, did not have a safe home to return well beyond normal school-leaving age.” In general, schools hoped to keep female students until they could find work or were married and, as a result, some schools promoted marriage between their graduates. Jo-Anne Fiske has shown that the Oblates in charge of the Lejac Residential School often tried to keep Carrier girls beyond Grade Eight, and protect them from the “so-called vices of the frontier.” She adds that “they frequently requested that they remain at the school until a marriage was arranged for them.” While the Mohawk Institute did not actively try to arrange marriages for their graduates, the school did sometimes try to keep the girls there. This might have been the case with Susan Hardie, who, as we have seen, entered the Mohawk Institute at age twelve and became a longstanding teacher there. In 1923, Principal Rogers noted in his Annual Report that some children’s parents “realising the state of the morals

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37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 229.
39 Fiske, "Gender and the Paradox of Residential Education," 172.
40 Hardie arrived at the school in 1879 as a twelve year old. She began teaching there in 1886, and remained until 1936 when she retired after fifty years of teaching.
on the Reserve they are prepared to leave the girls in the safe-keeping of the School until they are older.”

Concerns over sexual morality may not have been the only issue. Having more older girls at the school meant that the school could make good use of their free labour in the kitchen, the laundry, the classroom, or the nursery. For example, in 1920, the local Indian Agent wrote to the Secretary of the DIA regarding several children, including Floretta and Hazel Elliott. Both girls were from the Mississaug of New Credit and were considered “neglected.” Floretta was orphaned. Hazel’s father had deserted her and her mother was deceased; her grandmother was listed as her guardian. Both girls would turn sixteen in December 1920 and wanted to leave the school. The Indian Agent wrote that “it would be much better for them if they can be kept there for about two years as I know of no suitable place for them.” The girls stayed on at the school. In a very personal and friendly letter from Hazel to Principal Boyce during the summer holidays of 1922 she wrote of missing the school and being anxious to get back, or raspberry picking with her grandmother, and also about her need to get money from Boyce for clothing. A month later, at the girls’ request, the Principal asked that the DIA provide financial support for Hazel, Floretta, and two other girls for more schooling. Hazel wanted to study “telephoning” at the Brantford Telephone Company, and Floretta wished to take a course in telegraphy from Canadian National Telegraph. The Department granted each girl $100 a year, and in September, Floretta was taking a course in telegraphy at G.N.W. (Great North Western) Telegraph

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42 Indian Agent, Hagersville, to the Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, 30 October 1920, RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part. 1A, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda Regarding the Mohawk Institute, 1915-1921, LAC.

Company, while Hazel had apparently changed her mind and gone into nurse training at the Brantford General Hospital. Floretta left the Institute in 1923 after working at the Mohawk Institute as a sub-officer and Girl Guide lieutenant. She found work as a domestic in Toronto before marrying and moving to Windsor. Hazel moved to Detroit in 1927 to work as a domestic. Although it seems that both girls’ lives benefited from remaining at the Institute, keeping them there was part of a growing trend in which Native girls were thought to be both in danger from and a danger to the community.

The Mohawk Institute also had problems with girls who boarded there while attending high school in Brantford. Often girls came home late, made the younger students do errands for them, did not do chores assigned to them, and were “impertinent to the staff.” The principal thought that “possibly the lack of discipline in the Collegiate and Business College accounts for their attitude.” In the spring of 1925, female students who were causing problems or who failed their first examinations were expelled from the Institute. The following fall, Principal Rogers noted that


The following year, Hazel decided to leave the nursing training and return home, and the Mohawk Institute returned the grant that the DIA had provided her to attend the schooling. Sydney Rogers to the Secretary DIA, 27 March 1923. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.


49 Ibid.
there has been a decided improvement in the general discipline since the [summer] holidays. We have two pupils attending Collegiate and very definite rules have been laid down for their guidance, with quite severe punishments for misdemeanours. As a result they are only too anxious to do their share in maintaining their place in the school. We were also able to dismiss a number of older girls who were not a good influence. We are now, for the first time, able to maintain a Waiting List and as all the parents and pupils know this, there is a very decided effort on everyone’s part to retain a place in the school.  

The Mohawk Institute constantly had to attempt to control students’ (and especially girls’) behaviour, including their sexual behaviour, but this was not easy because of girls’ own agency. The school attempted to do so by teaching morality and instituting rules. However, simply separating the sexes was the most common and easiest method.

Gender Segregation

From the 1870s on, gender segregation in Canadian schools became more common as educators were concerned with the children’s sexual precociousness. Paul Axelrod explains that “from this perspective, restraining the passions of youth required keeping girls and boys apart.”

The Ontario Department of Education encouraged explicit separation of the sexes in the middle of the nineteenth century, and this practice continued into the early twentieth century as well. In Canadian classrooms, children were generally kept in separate sections of the room, or if possible, in different rooms. Miller notes that “one of the most marked features of Canada’s

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52 Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling, 34-35.

residential schools was their fanatical segregation of female and male students.” While some residential schools were single sex, many were coeducational and children were generally kept apart in those schools as well. The Mohawk Institute was a coeducational school from its inception in 1834 and it seems probable that, like other missionary schools of the time, it was founded to educate and civilize both sexes, particularly girls, for the future benefit of the race. In most schools, the genders were kept apart in the dormitories, playrooms, pews in church, as well as the classrooms. Gender segregation was necessary due to the contemporary belief that gender mixing could be problematic, especially for girls. Jo-Anne Fiske writes that at the Lejac Residential School in British Columbia,

sexual segregation was enforced rigidly. All social activities, routine chores, and, where possible, lessons, were undertaken separately. The classroom was divided into a ‘girls’ side’ and a ‘boys’ side’; it was considered a serious offence merely to glance across the room. Communication was forbidden; even sisters and brothers were prohibited from speaking to one another.

At the Mohawk Institute, much of the time boys and girls were kept apart. The central building contained the classrooms and staff offices, while there were wings on either side of the building for the dormitories. Staff were situated so as to prevent the mingling of the genders. One Mohawk Institute graduate remembered how “the girls played with the girls over here, and the boys played with the boys. The only time you might say we mixed together was when we went into church, because there wasn’t enough seats and we had to mix. But even our dining

55 Ibid., 218-19. For instance, Peter Jones appealed to the missionary society for funds in 1835, arguing that, without the funds, they had not been able to provide the girls with “proper instruction in work... and other domestic duties.” The result was that “when they leave the schools and become parents themselves [girls] are very little prepared to take care of a family than their parents were.” ———, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 218.
57 Fiske, “Gender and the Paradox of Residential Education,” 172.
rooms – our dining room was here – the boys’ dining room over there.” Photographs of assemblies show students divided by gender. Students were also kept apart during field trips. For example, when they were taken to the two day Ohsweken Fall Fair every year in October, the girls would go one day, and the boys the next. The children would be driven there in the back of a truck, and every year the school alternated between which gender attended the Fair on “the good day,” Saturday.

Of course, children often made attempts to communicate with each other. In the early 1920s, the Principal, Sydney Rogers, found that letting the children have some social time together reduced the attempts to visit each other “illegally.” In June of 1923, he wrote in his Quarterly Report that “we have made arrangements for both boys and girls to swim in the river and during this past quarter we have greatly encouraged sports between the boys and the girls. We find that this opportunity for the boys and the girls to get together is reducing the passage of letters and the clandestine meetings which were so troublesome before.” Ironically, he found that when permission was given for the children to play together, rather than separately, they soon grew tired of it anyway: “we find that by making the whole school play together that they soon divide and the boys begin to play alone and the girls play their games, forgetful entirely of the boys.” A few years later, however, gender mixing was again prohibited. Rogers reported to the Superintendent of Education: “It is with great regret that I have to report a very serious breach of discipline on the part of a number of the senior boys and girls of this school. For a

62 Ibid.,
period of two or three weeks a number of boys and girls found means of meeting in different parts of this Institute and in fact a party of boys on several occasions made a trip to the Girls dormitory.\textsuperscript{63} Upon discovery of this “breach,” Rogers made every pupil involved write a confession, cancelled their holiday leave, and gave them two extra hours of work daily. There is no record of corporal punishment, such as lashes, given for their misdeed. However, Rogers set up a system of alarms to “warn of any movement during the night,” and prevent further intermingling.\textsuperscript{64} In the 1930s, Principal Horace Snell had electric alarm bells installed at all of the fire exits to prevent children from leaving the building at night.\textsuperscript{65} Clearly, keeping the sexes separated was important to those in charge.

In the day schools on the Six Nations reserve, some attempts were also made to keep children separate with separate doors and seating. The newer schools built towards the end of the nineteenth century were similar to other schools built in Ontario, with two doors, one for each gender to enter the building. The ideal nineteenth century school house had separate entrances, classrooms, and outdoor play areas for boys and girls.\textsuperscript{66} The No. 10 School was built in 1882 with separate entrances for boys and girls.\textsuperscript{67} When the Six Nations School Board decided to build new day schools, they created a committee to visit other non-Native schools in the surrounding communities and modeled their new schools after the ones they saw. When the new


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{65} Snell to the Secretary of the DIA, 15 November 1934. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 3, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1936-1945, LAC.


No. 2 School was built in 1904, it was a replica of the school at Mt. Pleasant, Brantford, a large brick building with two entrances.

Figure 7: No. 2 School, Ohsweken. About 1920. The Spencer Alexander Collection.

However, among all the other rules regarding truancy, illness, and bad behaviour, there are no rules detailing gender separation listed in the regulations of the Six Nations School Board in the twentieth century. There is no discussion of the need for teachers to keep the genders apart. However as Ethel and Mae’s class photo in the late 1910s suggests, boys and girls were kept apart. Yet the lack of formal segregation might have resulted from the vast resources needed

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68 Abate, *Iroquois Control of Iroquois Education.* (Appendixes).
to keep children apart or the fact that children did not board at the day schools and thus there were fewer chances for the genders to mix. It seems, however, that the School Board and the teachers were less concerned with segregation than were the principals of the Mohawk Institute and the Department of Indian Affairs. They may have been less concerned about girls being “ruined” at school.

**Curriculum**

Although, as we have seen, girls and boys were generally taught the same academic curriculum at schools on Six Nations, “vocational training” was gendered. Miller points out that this was common in residential schools across the country and he suggests that in Canadian residential schools, “where the gender difference became overt was in the provision of vocationally oriented instruction, or training outside the classroom.” However, although they were taught the same material, boys were more likely to miss school due to farm labour than girls. They were also more likely to leave school at an earlier age to work. As we will see, this was certainly the case at the Mohawk Institute.

Girls and boys were to be taught Anglo-Canadian gender roles because of the futures imagined for them by the state and their communities. It was assumed by DIA officials but also by many parents that although girls might become either domestic workers, clerical workers, or teachers, eventually they would also become mothers and homemakers. In turn, boys would

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69 Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 220.
70 Ibid. Jo-Anne Fiske explains that girls often had more time in class than boys since they spent much time doing farm work with irregular hours. Fiske, "Gender and the Paradox of Residential Education,” 173.
become either farmers or skilled craftsmen, as well as fathers and breadwinners. As a result, girls and boys were trained in subjects to help them achieve these goals and be successful homemakers and farmers. This was a common trend in Canadian residential schools, as well as similar schools in the United States and other parts of the British empire. For girls in many schools, learning vocational skills were more important than academic skills. They generally spent their time as unpaid labourers, cooking, cleaning, sewing, doing laundry, and acting as caregivers to younger students. Boys also spent a significant part of their days doing manual labour that was identified as vocational training but was actually free manual labour for the school. They were generally responsible for most of the work outside of the school building, including most farm work, and cutting and hauling wood for the furnaces. A 1924 Brantford Expositor article described their training:

besides the usual public school work, the girls take up and learn thoroughly domestic science, needle work, cooking in all its branches, horticulture and truck farming, fancy work and the art of home-making. The boys learn general stock farming, truck farming, greenhouse work, gardening, shoe repairing, and manual training.

Much of the work done by children at the Mohawk Institute, as in other residential schools, was indispensable free labour for the institution. One former student suggests that “they had built-in servants” in the students.

71 From the beginning of the school’s history, boys and girls were taught gendered skills: “In 1838, there were suitable buildings and equipment for the maintenance and training of 30 boys and 10 girls. The older boys were trained as wagon-makers, blacksmiths and carpenters and the girls, in the duties of housekeeping and the arts of needle work, spinning and knitting.” Government of Canada, “Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31 1930,” 16.
72 Miller, Shingwua’s Vision, 263-65.
73 Ibid., 221-22. See also 257-62.
74 “Brantford’s Oldest Educational Institution,” Brantford Junior Expositor, December 20 1924.
Teaching Girls to be Good Homemakers

As part of a wider movement to teach girls how to be good homemakers and as part of the professionalization of domestic work, girls at the Mohawk Institute were taught domestic science. At the turn of the century, domestic science education was formalized and institutionalized “in response to the demands of educators, social activists, and reformers for a more practical and socially responsive curriculum.” The schools on the reserve followed the trend. The Mohawk Institute often had a domestic science teacher on staff, and emphasis was placed on learning how to “scientifically run a home.” This became more common in the 1920s, as the DIA reported that “Indian schools follow the provincial curricula, but special emphasis is placed on language, reading, domestic science, manual training and agriculture.”

Sewing was one of the most common skills taught at the Institute, and the girls made most of the clothing for the pupils. They were generally taught by a female sewing teacher but in 1922 a tailor was hired to remake all the boys’ uniforms and teach the girls in the process. As Principal Boyce explained in her quarterly report, "this was an excellent opportunity for the girls to work at tailoring and some became quite expert." Over time, the girls became proficient at producing uniforms for the student body. In 1924, School Inspector Standing noted in his report that “beyond keeping every article of clothing in repair they have made a complete issue of new serge

77 Danylewycz, "Domestic Science Education in Ontario: 1900-1940," 140.
78 "Brantford's Oldest Educational Institution."
dresses and aprons ready for Spring wear. They had in addition... completed two issues of boys shirts.” 81 In 1940, Mohawk lecturer and performer and Ethel Brant Monture commented on Six Nations girls’ accomplishments in dress-making at extension courses offered by the agricultural colleges. She believed that they could “find self-expression in making a truly pretty dress,” and that “this bolstering of the ego is one of our best by-products.” 82 To be sure, the girls learned a useful skill and may have gained some self-confidence but they were also taken advantage of by the school which used them as free labour.

Laundry was another skill which the girls were taught, although it might be better classified as a task or chore. In 1925, Miss Allen, the staff member in charge of laundry at the Institute, took twenty five senior girls on an inspection tour of the Brantford Laundry. The president of the company took the group around the plant on a “highly instructive” tour, and also presented the girls with five dollars which they placed in the Radio Fund back at the school. 83 It is unclear how instructive a tour of a massive laundry operation would be to girls who would need to do a family’s laundry, but it might have been helpful for girls who helped with the laundry of an entire residential school and its staff. It also might have impressed on them the expediency and superiority of western technology. Girls at the Mohawk Institute were also given some lessons in light farm work. In 1921, a farmerette named Miss Buchanon, who “possessed certificates for Social Service Work,” was engaged to teach the girls farm skills by Principal

Boyce.\textsuperscript{84} She believed that the girls who remained at the Mohawk Institute over the summer holidays needed supervision or “no satisfactory work would be accomplished and she feels that they must be employed for at least half the day during the holidays.”\textsuperscript{85} Not only would the farmerette teach the girls skills, she would keep them out of trouble. Two years later, “a number of girls fitted as farmerettes undertook the milking of the herd.”\textsuperscript{86} Farmerettes were generally dairy maids or women who, prior to World War II, had taken short courses in dairying at Guelph or other agricultural colleges.\textsuperscript{87} It is likely that Buchanon had taken a course, and taught the Institute girls about dairying so that they could participate in the farm work. According to the school records, it seems as though farmerettes were only employed in the early 1920s and under the direction of Principal Alice Boyce. Although agriculture had traditionally been Iroquois women’s work, dairying was not part of the tradition. Clearly, the girls were being taught how to be a good Anglo-Canadian farmer’s wife.

Boyce, the only female principal of the Mohawk Institute, took a great interest in the more genteel and feminine skills taught to the senior girls and aimed to improve them. In 1921, she discussed plans to “give the senior girls a short course in knitting, crocheting, embroidery, cooking in small quantities making them right down the receipts and directions.”\textsuperscript{88} The following year, the new principal (her new husband, Sydney Rogers) reported that the older girls

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\textsuperscript{84} Smith to Secretary DIA, 4 August 1921. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{88} Boyce to Secretary DIA, 17 December 1921. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.
were given lessons in the more feminine pursuits of elocution and memory training, embroidery, crocheting, and fancy work. He added that “our girls greatly enjoyed this and we discovered some very skilful and artistic workers.” These classes were often taught by the principal’s wife or the other non-Native female teachers employed at the Institute. Occasionally, it seems as though they were taught these subjects when teacher Susan Hardie was away from the school on vacation in the summer or early fall and was not there to teach the regular curriculum. For example, in September 1924, “special lessons were given in all kinds of fancy work, knitting, embroidery and crocheting,” when “Miss Hardie...was not back for school opening and consequently the Senior School was carried on by Mrs. Rogers.” These were traditionally upper and middle class white women’s skills that were being taught to Native girls and were part of Alice Boyce Roger’s effort to “improve” the girls.

However, knitting, sewing, quilt-making and embroidery were skills that Six Nations women had been doing for some time, skills that mothers taught their daughters. Although little historical research has been done on the evolution of Iroquois women’s crafts, it is clear


90 Ibid.


that changes did occur with colonialism and western education. It is likely that Iroquois women learned quilt-making from Quaker women or missionaries’ wives in the eighteenth century when they lived in upstate New York. In 1872, quilt-making had become one of the judged categories at the Six Nations Agricultural Fair, where women from the community were able to show their handiwork. In 1875, students from the Mohawk Institute won several of the “Ladies Department” categories: Lucy Aaron won first prize for her hand-made men’s fine shirt, and Maggie Martin won first prize for her machine-made men’s fine shirt. Mohawk Institute students scooped up the prizes in embroidery, with Sarah J. Davis claiming first, Maggie Brant second, and Susannah Wood third. A student named A. Chechock won second prize for her crochet work.

Clerical Training

Moreover, senior girls were sometimes taught clerical skills that would prepare them for business college and clerical jobs after they graduated. For the first time in 1911 typing and stenography were added to the curriculum at the Mohawk Institute. In 1921, Mrs. Boyce again initiated another course by adding telegraphy to the curriculum. She hired Mr. Coutts of the Great Northern Railway (G.N.R.) Telegraph Company to teach the course in telegraphy, using

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95 Ibid.


equipment donated by the Department of Soldier’s Civil Re-establishment (D.S.C.R).  

Apparently, “the seniors are taking great interest in the class – after passing our standard we hope some will continue the course at the G.N.W. office.” The teacher “expressed his pleasure at the progress made,” and Principal Boyce hoped that “when qualified... they can earn eighty a month in small towns – one hundred and twenty dollars... in the cities.”

Some graduates were encouraged to attend business college, especially by the Lady Principal, Alice Boyce Rogers. For instance, Beulah Wilson graduated from the Institute in 1920 and as she had little family support, she was sent to the business college by a Hamilton Chapter of the I.O.D.E. In the summer of 1923, Alice Rogers received letters from Irene Longboat and Reta Green requesting her help so that they could attend the Business College in Brantford. Irene wrote

I hope you understood mother, about you making an application for me to attend the Business College, if you will please do that, I will be very glad, for I wish very much to continue in my schooling. My intentions are to go to Business College for a year, and take everything up, then take a position as a stenographer in Brantford, if possible. I will try my best to be back on time, to get a good start.

As a result, Principal Rogers wrote to the DIA requesting an Advanced Educational Grant for Longboat, as well as Mary Jacobs, Reta Green and Cassie Maracle. Rogers included Irene

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98 Boyce Report, September and October 1921. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC. Boyce noted that “the telegraphy class under Mr. Coutts is held weekly and the pupils are making good progress. Boyce Report, November and December, 1921. Ibid.


100 Ibid.

101 Her father, Louis Wilson, had been killed in the war and her mother, Catherine Miller, was nearly blind. Beulah later married John Spooner in 1952 in Hamilton. “Mohawk Institute Returns for the year ending March 31st, 1921, showing orphans, destitute and those needing protection of a school.” RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.

102 Irene Longboat to Alice Rogers, July 18, 1923, RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Mohawk Institute – General Administration 1921-1926, LAC. Longboat’s father Joseph had also attended the Mohawk Institute, and was a veteran of World War I. Sydney Rogers wrote that “since his return [from overseas] we are given to understand that he does little to support family.” Sydney Rogers to Indian Agent, Brantford, 4 August 1923, RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.
Longboat’s letter, as well as one from Reta Green. The decision was made that the girls would board at the Mohawk Institute, and the Department gave $50 for each student per school year, on top of the regular per capita grant. Not only was the school and administration supportive and helpful towards the girls’ desire to attend Business College but the girls were able to use the school to get grants and be able to further their education.

More than a few female graduates went on to clerical and administrative jobs after they graduated in part, no doubt, because the training they received at the Mohawk Institute. They were part of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century feminization of clerical work in Canada. Women were given comparatively low paying and low status jobs, and Native women were able to get jobs in the field. This suggests that race did not inhibit them completely from getting clerical work. Brownlie suggests that “these positions required relatively high levels of education, literacy, and facility with the English language, and would have carried

103 Green wrote “Dear Mrs. Rogers, I wish to return to the school on the 11th of August and attend the Business College. Would you kindly get my grant from the nation for me, my father is willing to buy my clothes and also pay for other expenses. I have a small brother about eleven years old. My parents would like him to get in the school by next term. Could you make any arrangements for him to get in.” Reta Green to Alice Rogers, July 17 1923, RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.

104 Letter Sydney Rogers to Indian Agent, Brantford, August 4 1923; Letter C. C. Parker, Acting Superintendent Brantford, to the Secretary, DIA August 9, 1923; Letter A. F. Mackenzie to Acting Indian Superintendent, Brantford September 5 1923, RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.

105 While not enough research on the topic has been done, it seems that the Mohawk Institute was particularly successful in acquiring financial assistance from the Department of Indian Affairs for girls’ clerical education. Personal communication, Jarvis Brownlie, September 28, 2009.


107 Brownlie also found Mohawk and Anishnabe women who worked as clerical workers or stenographers, although the numbers were low. She notes that “DIA policy was not designed to move First Nations people into the middle class, but somehow these women had acquired more than the average education,” which helped them get clerical employment. Brownlie, "Living the Same as the White People," 57. See also Katrina Srigley’s discussion of difficulties faced by African Canadian women clerical workers: Katrina Srigley, “Working Lives and Simple Pleasures: Single, Employed Women in a Depression-Era City, 1929-1939” (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2005), 141-3.
higher status and salaries” than domestic work.\textsuperscript{108} One such clerical worker was Luella Moses, who graduated in 1920 from the Mohawk Institute and attended high school in Brantford and Caledonia before moving to Toledo, Ohio where she worked in a telephone office for several years before moving to Toronto.\textsuperscript{109} Three sisters, Ida, Mary and Eva Curley left the Institute in 1917 and 1918 and attended Brantford Collegiate briefly before going to Business College. “All have had good office positions in Brantford and in the U.S.A.,” Ferrier wrote proudly.\textsuperscript{110} In Ferrier’s 1930 list of “successful graduates of the Mohawk Institute,” out of thirty-eight girls, nine had “office jobs,” and another worked for the Indian Department.\textsuperscript{111}

Training Boys

Boys were supposedly taught skills to help them in their future jobs as farmers or manual labourers at the Mohawk Institute. However, farm work was an ongoing job for male students. It is not likely that they were “taught” agricultural skills; more often they worked simply to support the school. Every residential school relied on its male students for farm labour.\textsuperscript{112} At the Mohawk Institute, during the summer vacation when there was often a “shortage of big boys,” the Principal would hire men to complete the work.\textsuperscript{113} Boys’ labour was thus unquestionably necessary to the running of the farm and, in turn, to the school. To be sure, some boys also had

\textsuperscript{108} Brownlie, “Living the Same as the White People,” 57.


\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{112} Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 257-62.

the opportunity to take a particular course in farm work offered by the school. The principal reported that “one of our boys has been taking a course on farm work, and has become a very useful hand. He expects to run his mother’s farm when he leaves so we have given him every opportunity and so far as he is concerned the experiment is a success.” ¹¹⁴ Male students were also taken to local plowing matches as educational experiences in the 1920s and the principal believed that there was “a marked difference in the quality of work done by our teamsters since that date shows the benefit derived already.”¹¹⁵ Under Principal Rogers, in November 1922, they also began to host their own plowing matches. Prizes were donated by the Indian Department and two experienced men were secured as judges “who claimed they had never seen better plowing accomplished.”¹¹⁶ One student, Emmert General, who attended the Institute in the 1930s, remembers using his skills in competition: “I was a plough man – I belonged to the ploughman’s association on the Reserve, ever since I was 12 years old. I got first prize at the Ploughman’s match in Ohsweken here when I was 12 years old – I was the youngest.”¹¹⁷

Plowing competitions and agricultural exhibitions were part of the DIA’s “programme to encourage farming and to remedy what they deemed to be deficient agricultural practices.”¹¹⁸ Through competing with and observing other non-Native farmers, the DIA hoped that Six Nations boys and men would improve as farmers and better assimilate into Anglo-Canadian culture. According to E.A. Heaman, these events were “supposed to function as instruments of

¹¹⁷ Interview with Emmert General, Graham, The Mush Hole, 375.
[white] racial hegemony.” The Six Nations Plowmen’s Association and Six Nations Agricultural Society surely benefited from boys who were trained as Mohawk Institute and later joined their organizations. Their activities will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

The school also benefited from teaching the boys carpentry. Not only did they build chairs, desks and other items for the Mohawk Institute, their labour was also used for the day schools on the reserve. In his 1895 report, Martin Benson commented on the day schools: “the same style of desks, teacher’s desks and stationary cupboard are used in all the schools, and are made at the Institute by the Carpenter and his apprentices who also make an annual round to all the schools and make the necessary repairs before the re-opening of the schools after the summer holidays.”\(^\text{120}\) In 1896, Principal Rev. Ashton noted that the “boys are also instructed in carpentry, painting, etc, and under the direction of the trade-master, erect and repair all buildings connected with the institution, mission stations and school[s] (nine) on the reserve.”\(^\text{121}\) It is unclear whether the boys were paid for their work. In 1921, under the auspices of Principal Boyce, a new Manual Training Centre was built in the old Carpenters’ shop at the Institute, with electric lights and a stove. The principal noted that “all this work has been part of the Manual training programme which while it aims to teach the finer work also ensures that the pupils learn such carpentering and fitting as will be most useful to those who follow farming as a vocation.”\(^\text{122}\) She added that the class repaired a number of chairs and benches, built some

\(^{119}\) E.A. Heaman, The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society During the Nineteenth Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 295.

\(^{120}\) Report on the Mohawk Institute and Six Nations Boarding Schools by Martin Benson, 1895. RG-10, Vol. 2006, File 7825-1A, LAC. He added, “These schools receive as much, if not more attention than the usual country schools for white children.”


bobsleighs for the girls, learned picture framing, and were working on a set of coat hangers. The following year, the Institute acquired a shoe finishing machine for the Manual Training Centre that was used to teach the boys how to make shoes. The principal noted that “they are interested in this work which is made so much more attractive to them by the installation of the machine.”

The Institute also tried to interest the senior boys in the hog industry and meat packing. In the fall of 1925, the school arranged with the Canadian Packing Company in Brantford for a group of boys to visit their plant to learn about the hog industry. They were given a tour by the government meat grader. The principal noted that “this work is most interesting and the boys are quite enthusiastic. On December 30th, one of our boys was within ten pounds of the correct weight of any pig he saw when estimating weights.” This trip was quite similar to the trip the senior girls made to the laundry company in Brantford and was another attempt to educate the children in areas the school hoped would be useful to their future pursuits.

However, in 1923, Inspector Standing complained about the skills training of the students at the Mohawk Institute. He noted that

while the girls are given some good practical training in sewing, cooking and general housework, and the boys with some work with the gardener and on the farm, there is, nevertheless, no provision for systematic instruction in the principles, either of household science, manual training, or agriculture. It would be most desirable if the heads of the various industrial departments were also qualified to teach the principles of those subjects.

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124 Ibid.
It is evident in the school’s records that courses were taught when a teacher had been hired or at
the whim of a particular principal. As the skills training was not part of the regular curriculum,
there was no consistency. This lack of education in skills was also due in part to the problems
with recruiting and retaining teachers. Prior to the hiring of Six Nations teachers, non-Native
women teachers in particular often came and went; depending on their particular skills, certain
courses might or might not have been taught. Thus, although some students received proper
training, not all did or not enough to actually learn the skill.

The skills taught at the Mohawk Institute were similar to those taught in many other
residential schools in Canada, the United States and Australia. As Carole Devens points out, the
curriculum at many of these schools often placed a heavier emphasis on vocational instruction
for girls, than for boys. In Ontario, domestic training of girls began in some of the first
residential schools. In the 1840s, Ojibwa girls at the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society’s
Aldersville School spent much of their day milking cows, cooking, making cheese, doing
housework, and needlework. In British Columbia, Carrier girls at the Lejac Residential School
were taught “all the branches of domestic science,” and spent much of their time working,
including cleaning and sewing school uniforms. Girls at All Hallows Residential School were
trained in cooking, housework, laundry, waiting, gardening and needlework. They were often
pulled out of class to do domestic work, and when the school took white boarders, the Native

127 Devens, "If We Get the Girls, We Get the Race" 229.
Society Archives, London–North American correspondence, microfiche. United Methodist Archives and History
Center, Madison, N.J., Box 102,1841/42, 12C.
129 Fiske, "Gender and the Paradox of Residential Education," 173. Some girls complained that they could not study
more, they like reading and nath, and some thought it was criminal negligence that they were not taught more.
girls became their servants.\textsuperscript{130} In the United States, Cherokee girls at the Female Seminary and Chickasaw girls at the Bloomfield Academy were also taught domestic science.\textsuperscript{131} Aboriginal girls in Australian schools were also given domestic science training. For instance, “children incarcerated at Moore River in Western Australia in the 1930s were considered by authorities to have been saved from the damaging impact of their maternal culture and uplifted through training as domestic servants or as station hands and farm labourers.”\textsuperscript{132} Thus the training that Six Nations girls received at the Mohawk Institute was not uncommon.

**Gendered Education at the Day Schools**

Children were also taught gender specific skills in the day schools, although these were not such an integral part of the curriculum as at the Mohawk Institute. Agricultural education was important to both the parents and teachers of the day schools at Grand River. As Sarah Carter’s work on western Canadian reserves has shown, “it was the Indians, not the government, that showed an early and sustained interest in establishing agriculture on the reserves.”\textsuperscript{133} In 1915, Mr. Roy H. Abraham, from Guelph’s Ontario Agricultural College toured the day schools and noted in his report that “the schools on the whole are splendid. All the parents I talked to were anxious for agricultural education.”\textsuperscript{134} Clearly it was not just the DIA using agricultural education as a “civilizing” influence on the children. Parents and community members took an


\textsuperscript{131} Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds*, 60-61, Cobb, *Listening to Our Grandmothers' Stories: The Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females, 1852-1949*.

\textsuperscript{132} Paisley, “Childhood and Race: Growing up in the Empire,” 241.


active part in trying to improve farming on the reserve. In the years following the War, Abraham worked for the Department of Indian Affairs, and founded the School Fair, an exhibition held at the No. 2 School in Ohsweken, meant to parallel the “big” fair held by the Six Nations Agricultural Society. The Six Nations Council was also involved and supplied students with seeds. Teacher Julia Jamieson remembered that “each pupil in various schools were asked to have small gardens under the supervision of Mr. Abraham. These gardens were to be hoed, and cared for by the pupils themselves and the fruit of their labour was to be exhibited at the school fair in the fall.” There were also competitions in sewing and baking for the girls and in woodworking for the boys. Both genders could compete in the garden competition. In 1937, the Fair was cancelled due to a polio outbreak and when it returned the following year became part of the annual fair held by the Agricultural Society.

Domestic Science was taught to the girls in the day schools as well but somewhat sporadically, as it was generally not a part of the curriculum. For instance, in the summer of 1914, the Six Nations School Board met to discuss the organization of new domestic science classes to be held in the schools. A woman named Mrs. Parsons organized the meetings, with the support of Mr. Putnam of the Ontario Agricultural Department. Later that same year, a non-Native teacher, Clara Scragg, requested money from the School Board for the purchase of material for sewing classes at the No. 3 School. She was granted $10 and likely taught sewing.

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for the next two years until she resigned. Sewing and industrial arts classes were also offered to Six Nations high school students in Brantford. In 1912 free night courses were established at Brantford Collegiate Institute, and by 1920, 985 students were enrolled, although it is impossible to know how many were Six Nations. The courses included automobile mechanics, cooking, dressmaking, electricity, millinery, machine design, stenography and typewriting, and bookkeeping.

Domestic Work

Girls trained at the Mohawk Institute often worked as domestics once they left the school. The Institute’s principal often worked to place them in good jobs once they graduated. This practice was common at some other schools in Canada as well. However, little work has been done on Native women domestic workers in Canada and as records are scarce, it is very difficult to know how common it was or what domestics’ experiences were like. Robin Jarvis Brownlie’s study of Mohawk and Anishnabe women’s labour is a recent exception. Mary Jane McCallum’s thesis also looks at aboriginal women’s domestic labour, but in the post World War II period. Miller suggests that out-work was somewhat common in Canada from the 1880s to

139 Clara Porter Scragg lived in Toronto in 1911. The Census indicates that she was born in England, immigrated to Canada in 1907. In the Spring of 1915 she asked for a raise and was given one, but in March 1916, she resigned. Minutes of the Meeting, December 10, 1914, RG-10, Vol. 2010, File 7825-4, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1913-1918, LAC.

140 Reville, History of the County of Brant, 232.

141 Ibid.


143 Brownlie, "Living the Same as the White People."

the 1940s and that “for a long time it was considered advisable to send girls to town to work as maid, nannies, and general household assistants. To a considerable extent, this arrangement was merely a continuation of their employment as domestic workers in the schools, or in some cases as the private maids and helpers of the principal’s wives.” He adds that the system was thought to be advantageous to girls, as it would allow them to improve their English skills, learn the habits of Anglo-Canadians, and would also keep them isolated from their own people when they were of a marriageable age and, thus, hopefully delay their marriage. Native domestics also fulfilled the demand for labour, as there was an ongoing “servant problem” in Canada leading up to the First World War. Women looking for work as domestics rarely had a hard time finding it. The occupation was dominated by immigrant women, but clearly Native women also participated in this line of work. To what extent though, is unknown. Brownlie suggests that domestic work was the most common employment for Mohawk women of Tyendinaga and Anishnabe women, and that in 1931, thirty six percent of Aboriginal women listed domestic work as their employment in the census.

Unlike girls from some other schools, young women from the Mohawk Institute did not generally do “out-work,” or work as domestics in town while they were still students. But they were frequently hired upon graduation. The custom in Canada certainly was not as systematic as in Australia, where training girls for domestic work and finding them homes was part of the

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145 Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 253.
146 Ibid., 255.
148 Brownlie, “Living the Same as the White People,” 56.
149 Boys, however, did do agricultural out-work, especially in the summer.
overall government assimilation scheme. However, there are some similarities in the training of Native girls at other Canadian schools, as well as to Native American domestic workers in California at the same time.

In 1902, Duncan Milligan made a tour of the Mohawk Institute for the New England Company, and noted:

With regard to domestic work – sewing, repairing clothes, stockings, cooking, baking, laundry, and butter-making – this is done by the girls. This kind of training, with their schooling, causes them to be much sought after as domestic servants, and thanks to [the Principal’s wife] Mrs. Ashton’s care and forethought they are placed in safe and good situations at $10 per month with board, where most remain. Some few, however, owing to the interference of relatives, go back to the Reserve.

In Australia, the situation was somewhat different, as aboriginal girls were trained as domestics but often worked for the administrators of the settlement and school, as well as in white homes, but were generally unpaid. The large scale education and employment schemes in Australia are certainly different from the small scale efforts of principals and Indian agents in Canadian schools, but as “domestic service was viewed in the dominant white ideology as a fitting vocation for Aboriginal women” in Australia, so too was it at Grand River. Jackie Huggins, “Firing on in the Mind: Aboriginal Domestic Servants in the Inter-War Years,” Hecate 13, no. 2 (1987) 5-23, Paisley, “Childhood and Race: Growing up in the Empire,”, Victoria Haskins, “& So We Are “Slave Owners”!": Employers and the N.S.W. Aborigines Protection Board Trust Funds,” Labour History 88 (2005) 147-164, ———, "On the Doorstep: Aboriginal Domestic Service as a ‘Contact Zone.’" Australian Feminist Studies 16 (2001) 202-223.

In British Columbia, Jean Barman argues that graduates of All Hallows School were to become “a very useful, permanent element of the working community in the Province”: “Their practical training in household duties was intended to permit them to obtain the bottom rung of the White socio-economic order, while their academic achievement gave some girls the possibility of rising further… The work viewed most viable for Indian girls was domestic service, which also allowed acquisition of additional familiarity with the dominant culture in semi-sheltered conditions.” Barman, “Separate and Unequal: Indian and White Girls at All Hallows School, 1884-1920,” 349. See also Mary Jane McCallum, "Aboriginal Women Domestics in Mid-Twentieth Century Canada," paper presented at the Canadian Indigenous and Native Studies Association, Saskatoon, May 27-30 2007.

Margaret Jacobs’ recent article chronicling Native American domestic workers in the 1920s and 30s in California suggests that the pattern of white families hiring these women was more than private labour transactions, as the Bureau of Indian Affairs “envisioned such employment as a central component of its assimilation policy” (166). Unlike the situation in Canada, schools developed specific “outing” programs to employ girls in domestic service where they would often be subject to the white women’s efforts to both “uplift” and “civilize” them. These patterns are somewhat similar to Grand River in that most girls who worked as domestics did so for a short period of time before marrying. Some returned to the reserve, while others did not. Margaret D. Jacobs, "Working on the Domestic Frontier: American Indian Domestic Servants in White Women’s Households in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1920-1940," Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies 28, no. 1&2 (2007) 165-199.

Duncan Milligan to the New England Company, 1 October 1902, RG-10, Vol. 2771 File 154,845, Part. 1A, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda Regarding the Mohawk Institute, 1915-1921, LAC.
By 1910, the principal noted that twenty girls had graduated (with only eleven boys), and out of those twenty, twelve “are in good situations as domestic servants, earning from $9 to $15 a month. The girls trained here are in great demand.”\textsuperscript{154} While it is difficult to know how this wage compared to non-Native domestics in Brantford at the time, Brownlie suggests that in 1916 the average wage in Ontario was $18 to $20 a month.\textsuperscript{155} There are many examples of young women getting jobs as domestic workers in cities and towns in Southern Ontario, and in the north eastern United States.\textsuperscript{156} However, they found that the training they received at the school was more suitable for working at an institution then for a family. In 1925, Principal Rogers requested funding from the DIA in order to hire another housekeeping officer to teach domestic science to the girls. He wrote that

Many of our girls have to take positions as maids when they leave the school and whilst they have quite a good idea of cooking for large numbers they are absolutely incapable of cooking for a family. This is quite naturally the case, as there is no opportunity given under existing conditions, to acquire the necessary knowledge and experience... we are of the opinion that better results would be obtained could more time be given to instruction.\textsuperscript{157}

His request was not approved but young women continued to be hired out of the school.

By Alice Boyce’s tenure after the war though, fewer girls wanted to work as domestics; although accurate statistics are not available on graduates’ whereabouts, more were leaving for business college, nursing, or stenography, telegraph, or telephone courses. This was also the case with non-Native women in Canada, who left domestic service as soon as they could.\textsuperscript{158} However, one

\textsuperscript{154} Ashton Annual Report, 31 March 1910, RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
\textsuperscript{155} Brownlie, "Living the Same as the White People," 64.
\textsuperscript{157} Sydney Rogers to Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, 12 October 1925, RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.
\textsuperscript{158} Barber, Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada, 8.
student remembered that “in the ‘20s maybe and the early ‘30s that was the expectation – [the girls would] go into domestic work.”

Hilda Hill graduated from the Mohawk Institute in 1941, and recalls: “I was 16 when I left there. I went as far as Grade 9. I never went to high school – they never encouraged you there to do anything. I went to work as a maid in Galt, and I went from there and met my husband and I’ve been working for him every since!”

Boys at the Mohawk Institute found that the out-work system provided them with pocket money. Peter Smith, a student at the Institute from 1926 to 1935, remembers that the boys often worked in neighbouring gardens for pocket money:

If a guy wanted his lawn cut, or weeding, they’d give us a quarter or fifty cents if we’d go and do these jobs. A lot of us worked around the school – there were some big gardens around there and they’d pay us 5 cents a row, or 25 cents. If you earned 50 cents you earned a lot of money, two or three times a week, and it kept you in spending money.

Critics of the out-work system suggest that it resembled a “method of furnishing cheap, semi-skilled labour to Euro-Canadian homes more than it did a system of advanced training.” So although boys performed out-work, girls generally stayed at the Institute until they found jobs after graduating.

**Gendered Play**

When it came to play time, boys and girls were again treated differently at Six Nations schools. There were proper Anglo-Canadian gender roles for children’s play. Girls generally were given less outdoor play time than boys did in residential schools and often had less recreational equipment than their male peers. This was common in Native schools across

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160 Interview with Hilda Hill. Ibid., 369. Hilda left in 1941.

161 Interview with Peter Smith. Ibid., 361.

Canada: there were generally more clubs and activities for boys.\textsuperscript{163} Although it is unclear as to the reasoning behind this inequity, Miller suggest that it is possible that “perhaps because of a feeling that [boys’] more active nature required more outlets than did girls.”\textsuperscript{164} At the Mohawk Institute, girls and boys were kept separate during the majority of play time. In 1896, the boys’ side of the yard was furnished with swings and horizontal bars and a field where they played baseball, cricket, and football, whereas the girls were provided with swings and croquet.\textsuperscript{165} The boys also had a “Boys Play House” in the early part of the century.\textsuperscript{166} Former student Geronimo Henry remembers that the girls were allowed to play in a fenced-in area outside that was not very big, while the boys were allowed to roam to the Grand River and beyond.\textsuperscript{167} Edward Groat recalled that “Of course the boys had it a lot better because they could go down to the river fishing, or they could go for hikes, or they could go swimming.” His sister Marjorie remembered that “We just had the playground. Once in a great while if you had money you could go to a show Saturday afternoon. Miss Hardy would walk us up to the show.”\textsuperscript{168} There was also an ice rink built on school grounds but it was in the boys yard. In 1912 the principal noted that “we had a large rink (ice) for the pupils in the boys’ yard and both boys and girls enjoyed it.”\textsuperscript{169} However, students on the 1930s remembered that “the only time they ever let the girls come over

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 224-25.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 226.
\textsuperscript{166} Robert Ashton to Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, 11 May, 1903, RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC. It was burned down by the boys in 1903.
\textsuperscript{167} Geronimo Henry, "Two Row Understanding through Education", (Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario, April 20 2008).
\textsuperscript{169} Alfred Nelles Ashton Report, 31 March 1912, RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
when I was there was for ice skating. They let ‘em come around cuz they never had no ice on the girls’ side, so they had to come around to the boys’ side, and that was once in a great while.”

In 1936, there was a terrible incident in which a female student at the Mohawk Institute died from playing with old playground equipment. Ada Effie Smith “was fatally injured...when a wheel from a maypole around which she was swinging with four other girls fell off and struck her in the abdomen.” There was an inquest into her death and, although it was found that the equipment was old and made by the Institute, the school was not held responsible for her death. The court recommended that the equipment be inspected every three months. Apparently her mother sent a letter to the school saying that she did not blame them and, in fact, asked if they could find a place for her son at the school.

As well as having less space to play in and less equipment to play with, girls were often relegated to being spectators of the boy’s activities. On a rare occasion when the Institute girls attempted to participate in a boys game, they were laughed at. In March 1924, Principal Rogers initiated boxing matches in the dining hall for the boys. He commented that after watching the boys, “the girls thought it looked so simple and they asked to be allowed to box. We all found their efforts very amusing.” It is likely they were discouraged from trying a boy’s game again.

Girls in the day schools faced similar problems. Boys generally had more equipment and more space in which to play. In 1915, Inspector Standing’s Report “recommend that basketball

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be provided for the girls, as teachers complain that the girls have no games while the boys have football and baseball.”¹⁷⁵ A few years later, Roy Abraham of Guelph’s Ontario Agricultural College mentioned in his report on the schools that “the trees at the side and back of the [No. 4 ] school are so thick that the children cannot engage in sports properly. While I was there the girls were trying to play ball among the trees, and one, in trying to catch the ball, collided with a tree and hurt herself. They should be cut down, leaving only a few along the fences.”¹⁷⁶ Clearly, girls’ recreation was not a priority. However, it seems that equipment was lacking at many of the schools for both boys and girls. In the 1920s and 30s, “any type of playground equipment was non-existent” at Grand River schools.¹⁷⁷ Boys played shinny on snow or ice, with no skates, and used tree branches as a stick, and a tin can or piece of ice as a puck. They also played a game called “dingballs” which revolved around scoring a point by using a stick to throw a stuffed sock into a goal, made with sticks. Girls’ games were often singing games that required no equipment at all.¹⁷⁸

Problems at Six Nations Schools

Children of both genders faced problems in the schools at Grand River that were similar to those encountered by Native children in other parts of Canada. In particular, the education system resulted in a loss of culture, including female-centred family traditions and material culture. In many other Native communities, Iroquois children were traditionally taught by their

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. Girls may also have played games that required little to no equipment, such as skipping games, jacks, hopscotch, or snowball fights.
mothers and grandmothers, and other women in the community. In writing about the education of Ojibwa girls, Carole Devens states that “female kin were responsible for instructing the child in both the practical and ritual activities that would shape her life as an adult within the community. Schooling removed a girl from the warmth of her kin’s care, left her with no one to teach, comfort, or guide her as they would at home.” She adds that non-Native teachers, even if they were female could not replace female relatives, as teachers were so often transient. The shift from female centred education likely caused crises and problems. However, as Chapter 1 has outlined, students in both the residential school and the day schools at Six Nations were taught by a number of women from within the community who did so for decades: Susan Hardie, Sarah Davis, Emily General, and Julia, Mary, and Nora Jamieson. In addition to Hardie’s career at the Mohawk Institute, older girls were often kept on after graduation to work as sewing teachers, cooks, housekeepers, or teachers in the Junior school classroom before leaving to teach in the day schools or other residential schools. Although certainly the context and possibly the content of education would not have been the same as being taught by a mother or other female kin, the presence of Six Nations women teachers would have provided some continuity and familiarity with the teachers for many children. Students at Grand River were not subject to as many non-Native and transient teachers, as other Native children in Canada.

Nevertheless, graduates of the Mohawk Institute still suffered the effects of growing up removed from their families. For instance, Wilma Smith Jamieson (Mrs. Andrew Jamieson) began attending the Mohawk Institute when she was 9 years old in 1910. She remained there until 1918 when she left for Hamilton Teacher’s College. In an interview, she explained that

179 Both male and female children were educated by their mother and other female relatives, until the boys reached a certain age, at which time, their education became their father’s (and other male relatives’) responsibility. Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," The William and Mary Quarterly 40, no. 4 (1983): 530.
180 Devens, “If We Get the Girls, We Get the Race” 232.
“people, particularly her relatives thought that she was “stuck up” when she returned from the Mohawk. She said she wasn’t, she just simply didn’t know them, she had been gone for so long.”\textsuperscript{181} As Chapter 1 has discussed, Wilma’s mother, Sarah Russell Smith, was also a teacher, and so she must have believed that her child would receive a good education at the Mohawk Institute. However, when she was interviewed over forty years later Wilma clearly remembered feeling shunned by her family. However, she went on to have a successful and fulfilling life, earning a degree in music, working as a teacher, marrying and having children, and being heavily involved in the Anglican church.\textsuperscript{182}

The loss of traditional knowledge was also an issue for students at Grand River, although this process had begun well before 1899. As previously discussed, children in the day schools sometimes were taught their own history and culture in the classroom by Native teachers and it was also displayed in School Fairs. Children at the Mohawk Institute seemed to have learned much less about their culture and, in fact, were often denied the chance to do so. In October 1924, after a corn-husking competition, Lady Principal Alice Rogers suggested that the girls make corn-husk dolls.\textsuperscript{183} However, she “found that that was a lost art.”\textsuperscript{184} The girls did not know how to make them. Several male students in the 1930s remembered a boys’ teacher named Mr.

\textsuperscript{181} “Interview with Wilma Jamieson,” File 15, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
\textsuperscript{183} “Uses of corn husks.” Arthur Caswell Parker, \textit{Iroquois Uses of Maize and Other Food Plants} (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1910), 80-84.
Roy Pengelly who was the school mechanic, and an inventor. Peter Smith remembers that “another thing he’d do for us kids while he was there – we built boats. He’d tell us how to build a boat. Nobody else would ever do anything like that for us. How to make ribs for a boat.” But he also taught the boys how to build canoes, something they may have otherwise learned at home. Edward Groat remembers:

[Mr. Pengelly] brought his brother down – his brother lived up near Rice Lake – and he spent a month of two there. He brought all his tools and all his forms and everything he needed and the boys – I helped on this one – we built a canoe. We actually built a canoe. When that canoe was finished, we could borrow it – he got a cart for it someplace – a four wheel buggy took the body off it – and we’d put the canoe on there and take it down to Mohawk Lake and he taught us how to paddle a canoe. Here’s a white man teaching Indians how to paddle a canoe! But I have never forgotten that... I think if he’d stayed longer than that we’d have learned an awful lot more.

Although children at the Mohawk Institute did not have the opportunities to learn traditional knowledge that they may have had at home, some efforts were made at the school to teach aspects of the culture. This was minimal, though, in comparison to what they would have learned at home or possibly even learned in the day schools. In general, they were taught the dominant Anglo-Canadian culture and were dissuaded from learning anything about their own.

Another common source of pain and suffering in Native communities was the loss of control over the education system. However, the creation of the Six Nations School Board and the involvement of the chiefs in the running of the schools lessened the pain at Grand River schools. Clearly the Native members of the board were often frustrated when they

185 Olympus Roy Pengelly was a public school teacher from South Monaghan Township near Rice Lake. He was of English descent, Baptist, born in Ontario. He had several siblings, at least one of whom was a teacher, and one a carpenter. His father was a farmer. Born April 22, 1887 in Port Hope. 1911 census.
187 Interview with Edward S. Groat. Ibid., 367.
encountered resistance to their demands from the non-Native members of the board, usually the missionaries and Indian agent, but they were still able to control much of the education system. That control included hiring Native teachers and, after 1908, choosing their own curriculum.

Protests

There were many instances of protest at the Mohawk Institute by female students and women community members, including mothers and Native teachers. Children protested in many different ways in residential schools across the country and the Mohawk Institute was no different. The largest (and most costly) protest at the school took place in April 1903, when four boys burned down the school and several of the buildings and barns. They were convicted and sentenced to three to five years in either the Mimico Industrial School or the Kingston Penitentiary. Most commonly, children ran away. In August 1913 four girls, sisters Hazel and Ruth Miller and sisters Emma and Edith Isaac ran away from the school. Ruth had used sheets from the school to sew new clothing for each of the girls so that they would not be recognized in their school uniforms. They climbed out of a window at midnight, and walked for three hours until they reached their parents’ homes. Chief George Miller, Ruth and Hazel’s father, returned his daughters to school the next day since he had no one to look after them. Although he lived very close to the Ohsweken school, after his wife passed away he enrolled them in the Mohawk Institute. He himself had attended the residential school as a child. All four girls were returned to the school and punished. Ruth, as the leader, was locked in a small cell for

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190 “Blaze at Brantford: the Mohawk Institute Totally Destroyed. Eighty Indian Students in Bed When the Fire Breaks out - All Escaped,” Toronto Star, 19 April 1903. Martin Benson to Duncan Campbell Scott, 21 April 1903, Robert Ashton to Duncan Campbell Scott, 11 May 1903, RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
at least a day and later whipped, while the other three girls were locked in a small room. They all had their hair cut short and were not given full rations to eat. George Miller and Jefferson Isaac then complained to the Six Nations Council, which asked the New England Company to investigate. After an investigation, George Miller decided to press charges, and after a twelve hour trial, the jury rewarded Ruth Miller $400. Ruth, as the leader of the girls, testified that she had run away because she did not like the food. When brought back, she was put in a cell on the third floor, which was 3 feet by 6 feet, with a little hole in the door. There was no light, no bed and no chair. In this she remained for three days, getting bread and water on Sunday. Her hair was cut off on Monday. She was put on the black list, having to walk in a ring in place of playing, and not being allowed to talk to the other girls.

Ashton resigned and later enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, while his daughter Alice Boyce became acting principal. All four girls testified in the trial, as did eleven other girls, all students at the school. The four girls did not return to the school after their father withdrew them in the fall of 1913, but attended the Ohsweken day school. The girls thus were successful in their attempts to leave the school. Their perseverance and bravery in both running away and testifying resulted in their achieving their goal, and winning compensation for their suffering. However, the DIA disapproved of the Six Nations Council’s support of the Miller

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191 “Damages for Plaintiff in Miller Vs. Ashton Case - Girls Too Severely Punished,” The Expositor, 1 April 1914.
192 Ohsweken Council House meeting, 3 September 1913, RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
193 “Damages for Plaintiff in Miller Vs. Ashton Case - Girls Too Severely Punished.” Geneva Van Every, Mary Hearns, Evelyn Miller, Ada Maracle, Sarah Hill (who collapsed on the stand), Beatrice Jamieson, Laura Howard, Mildred Lottridge, Alice Snake, Eliza Snake, and Helen Clench. In her testimony, Alice Snake explained that she “had also had her hair cut off like a boy’s.” Her younger sister Eliza then testified that she “had her hair cut to be like her sister.” Ibid.
194 A. Nelles to J. D. McLean, December 1913. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
family and they refused to release the funds to pay for the legal expenses. This formal type of resistance and protest was very uncommon during this period.

Mothers, grandmothers and aunts also protested the treatment of their children. Immediately upon her appointment to Principal in the fall of 1914, Alice Boyce wrote a lengthy report of “refractory students” for Duncan Campbell Scott. In it, she mentioned that the mothers of many of the difficult children were causing problems for her. Amelia Wilson, mother of Floretta and Sheila Wilson “thinks that her children should not be punished, and that we should make exceptions [to the rules].... If the mother would uphold the discipline of the school, there would be much less trouble with the children. Abigail Sherry had three children at the Mohawk Institute and Boyce complained that “the mother encourages them in being defiant... the mother visits children every month and stirs up trouble by her rude and impertinent behaviour. Boyce also argued that Abigail Sherry’s daughter Mabel “be transferred to the Shingwauk Home, as she needs discipline and to be away from the influence of her mother.”

Clearly some mothers voiced their opinions to the principal and still had an impact on their children. Although Martin Benson wrote to Duncan Campbell Scott that he believed “the pupils are disciplined to

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196 J. D. Mclean to Gordon J. Smith, 3 March 1914. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
197 This is the only court case that Miller cites. Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 357-58.
198 Alice Boyce to Duncan Campbell Scott, 9 October 1914. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC. Abigail Wilson remarried, and was named in the letter as Mrs. F. Shulur.
199 Alice Boyce to Scott, 9 October 1914. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
200 Alice Boyce to Scott, 9 October 1914. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
death,” letters were drafted and sent to the parents of the “refractory” students.\footnote{201} The letter explained that unless the Department received assurances from the parent – in most cases the mother – that the child would conform to the rules, they would no longer be allowed to remain at the school.\footnote{202}

In another example, the Hill brothers were granted leave to attend their sister’s funeral in December 1924 but when their mother brought them back to the school afterwards, according to the unsympathetic Principal Sydney Rogers, “she was in a very impudent frame of mind. She refused to sign a duplicate set of papers to replace those lost in the mail and was very rude in her criticisms on the clothing and food given to her boys. As she became abusive, the Principal decided that she could keep her boys and discharged them forthwith.”\footnote{203} It is doubtful that, despite her complaints, Hill wished to remove her sons from the Institute, since she returned them to the school. In this case, her complaints resulted in her children’s expulsion. In another example, a 17 year old student’s grandmother tried to secure his release in May of 1926. John Antone was from the Oneida of Muncey. His mother had been murdered, and he was in the care of his grandmother, Lizzie Doxdator. In an explanatory letter to the Superintendent of Indian Education, Principal Rogers argued that John “is very simple minded and I feel sure that the only reason any interest is taken in him by his relatives is that they hope to secure his money. I have refused to allow him home for two years and I am trying to keep him interested in the farm here.” John had a sum of money to his credit with the DIA, and Rogers suggested that $25 be

\footnote{201} Martin Benson to Duncan Campbell Scott, 19 October 1914. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1X, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.

\footnote{202} For instance, J. D. McLean to Mrs. Mary Obe, mother of Matilda and Orsen Lottridge. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1X, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.

granted to the boy as “spending money” in an effort to keep the boy contented with being at the school.\textsuperscript{204} The money was not granted to him, and it is unclear when he left the school. Of course, it is also unclear whether Rogers’ allegation over the money is true or whether his grandmother wished him home to help with the running of the farm.

Finally, in 1937, Edna Chrysler consulted a lawyer over injuries that her son Ross sustained while being punished at the school. When her sister picked him up from school, she had seen bruising all over her nephew’s body. His mother launched a complaint, and after the teacher, the principal, and the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs all discussed the matter, the DIA ended up defending the teacher who inflicted the punishment. The teacher, Mr. Lager, suggested that “I am inclined to think that both the mother and the aunt exaggerated the boy’s story to them and the condition in which he was found.”\textsuperscript{205} Although the women protested, the school did not admit to wrongdoing and the boy left the school. Although mothers and female family members certainly influenced their children’s behaviour, protested about the treatment of their children, and tried to remove them from the school at times, they also often enrolled them and made efforts to make sure they did go to school. They had some power, but could not control what happened to their children once they were in the Institute. These cases are very similar to situations faced by parents who used family courts in the early-mid twentieth century; once the case was in the court’s hands, they couldn’t control the outcome.\textsuperscript{206}


\textsuperscript{205} H. H. Craig to Rev. H. A. Snell, 29 July 1937; Rev. H. A. Snell to Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, 11 August 1937; Lager to Secretary Department of Indian Affairs, 31 August 1937, Secretary DIA to Snell, 3 September 1937. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 3, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1936-1945, LAC.

Another prominent Six Nations woman complained about the treatment of children at the Mohawk Institute. Evelyn Johnson, sister to poet Pauline, took up the cause of the children of the Mohawk Institute. She was a frequent writer of letters to the editor; in November, 1923, Johnson wrote a letter to the *Toronto Sunday World* which drew the ire of the school. Although she was living in New York at the time, Johnson complained about the state of education on the reserve, explained that “Indians of both opposing factions are asking and begging the Indian department for higher and better education,” and objected to the lack of a high school on the reserve. She also criticized the Mohawk Institute in particular and referred to the runaways, suggesting that “there is something radically wrong when children abandon by wholesale an institution such as this is supposed to be.” Johnson also reminded the public of the boys who burned the school down, and the legal action against Nelles Ashton. She asked:

> Why not clean up this sore in the reserve and turn the Mohawk Institution into a first-class educational school, teaching trades, nursing and domestic science by qualified teachers of these subjects, and turning out boys and girls fitted to make their way in life, even if they do not wish to or cannot afford to take up higher education?  

While some of her complaints were certainly legitimate, Johnson may have been a little out of touch with the school, as it continued to have a lengthy waiting list through the 1920s, and the Six Nations Council was generally happy with it. Her suggestion of better training in the trades, nursing, and domestic science were logical ones, as instead of being formally taught these skills the children in the school mostly learned cooking, cleaning, and farming by performing these tasks for the school and farm. Brant County Inspector Standing’s Report of the same month noted that “there is no provision for systematic instruction in the principles, either of domestic

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209 Ibid.
science, manual training or agriculture.”\textsuperscript{210} Johnson’s letter does not seem to have had a direct impact on the school; nevertheless, according to the quarterly reports the school continued to make efforts to improve the children’s instruction in sewing, trades, and agriculture.

Emily General also protested the removal of twenty-one children from the reserve in April, 1925. On April 6, a group of children were rounded up by the truant officer with the help of mounted RCMP officers from their classrooms in the day schools and were taken to the Mohawk Institute for the night.\textsuperscript{211} According to Emily General, the next day, “amid cries and screams,” they left for Chapleau Residential School.\textsuperscript{212} Cecil Morgan, Superintendent of the Six Nations, maintained that the children left happily eating apples and candies: “not one cried or expressed regret at leaving their former squalid surroundings.”\textsuperscript{213} General then acted as an advocate for some of the families on the reserve who demanded the return of their children. She contacted Frederica Flemyng Gyll, an English woman who had a passion for Native rights and who had been a supporter of Emily’s uncle, Levi General or Deskaheh. Through her correspondence with Emily General, Gyll was well aware of the political situation and events on the reserve; she was already furious with the Canadian government and the DIA for what she saw as the imposition of the new elected government the previous year. Her anger grew when she received letters from Emily asking for her help. She responded with numerous letters of protest to DIA officials, the Governor General, the Dominions Office in London, and to the


\textsuperscript{211} Principal Sydney Rogers noted “April 6th: A party of children were outfitted for Chapleau. These children were boarded at the school and slept in a cottage nearby. Some were in a very filthy condition and although we took utmost precautions we had quite a lot of cleaning up to do after they left.” Rogers Quarterly Report. June 30\textsuperscript{th}, 1925. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.

\textsuperscript{212} Letter from Emily General to Rica Flemyng Gyll, April 11, 1924. British Foreign Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society Fonds. Library and Archives Canada. Reel a-1649.

\textsuperscript{213} Letter from Col. Cecil E. Morgan to G. H. Muirhead, Esq., October 5, 1925. Ibid.
Aborigines Protection Society, in which she often enclosed copies of letters written by Emily General and Emily’s mother, Sophia Jones General. She demanded that the “kidnapped” children be returned home. Gyll wrote to General Lord Byng of Vimy, the Governor General of Canada, telling him “I must seriously ask Your Excellency to take immediate steps to restore those children to their parents and homes as soon as possible, for I am sure that it is quite within Your Excellency’s power to do so.” However, the Governor General consistently forwarded her letters to the Department of Indian Affairs, and aside from a letter of acknowledgement, she rarely received a response from them. The Acting Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, A. M. Mackenzie, replied to Gyll’s letters to the Department, suggesting that she “will be glad to know” that the removed children were considered orphaned and destitute, and that the institution they were taken to was “a Christian home where Indian children receive both academic and vocational training.” Gyll responded that:

However admirable this Institution may be, I cannot but condemn very strongly the method by which these unfortunate children were suddenly taken from the Grand River Lands without any warning or time given to prepare for the change. I felt that it was nothing less than kidnapping, especially in view of the fact that the “truant officer” got so much money per head for every child he took!

General used Gyll as an ally in her efforts to get the children returned, while Gyll used General’s letters as evidence of the wrongdoing being done on the reserve. Despite General’s efforts and Gyll’s numerous letters, the children remained at Chapleau. Perhaps General was

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214 Rica Flemying Gyll to His Excellency General Lord Byng of Vimy, Governor General of His Majesty’s Dominion of Canada, April 27, 1925. Ibid.

215 A. F. Mackenzie, Acting Assistant Deputy and Secretary, to Miss Rica Flemying Gyll, July 24, 1925. RG-10, Vol. 2287, File 57,169, Part 1X Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, Reports, Newspaper Clippings Regarding Agitation for the Political Status of the Six Nations, 1923-1926, LAC.

216 Rica Flemying Gyll to the Acting Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Indian Affairs, December 31, 1925. RG-10, Vol. 2287, File 57,169, Part 1X Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, Reports, Newspaper Clippings Regarding Agitation for the Political Status of the Six Nations, 1923-1926, LAC.
encouraged to become a teacher after this episode, as she enrolled at the Hamilton Teacher’s College that fall and soon after began teaching.

Successes

Despite the numerous and serious problems with schooling in both the residential school and the day schools, a number of children from Six Nations grew up to have relatively successful or more prosperous lives in comparison to other First Nations in Canada. In particular, girls had a wider range of choices for employment because of the education they received. At the residential school, girls’ education prepared them for high school, business college, teacher’s college and other training courses. In general, there were always more girls at the school than boys. In 1894, “the application for the admission of girls far outnumbered those for boys. This fact is worthy of note, as formerly the Indians would not readily allow their girls away from home, therefore the mothers of the present generation grew up in ignorance. Now we may hope for rapid improvement, as English will be more frequently the language of the family.” That year there were sixty girls enrolled and forty seven boys. Throughout the first few decades of the twentieth century, the Institute had approximately one-third more girls than boys. This proportion differed from the residential school population in Ontario, where the total number of boys and girls was close to even.

217 Shimony, Conservatism among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve, xiii.
218 R. Ashton Annual Report, 6 September 1894. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894–1914, LAC.
220 Data collected from Annual Reports. In 1900, there were 74 girls and 58 boys, in 1910 72 girls and 56 boys, in 1920 78 girls and 56 boys, and in 1938 81 girls and 64 boys. Annual Reports.
221 In 1900, there were 180 girls and 243 boys at residential schools in Ontario. In 1910, there were 221 girls and 217 boys. In 1920, there were 265 boys and 280 girls. Annual Reports.
Part of the reason for lower rates of male attendance at the Mohawk Institute was that older boys ran away or left early to work on family farms. The Principal’s Reports often describe problems with boys running away. Clearly this was a problem for the school, as they depended on the boys to do the farm work. Also, when boys did not return to school, they were struck off the school roll and the school then received smaller grants. Boys sometimes received tempting offers to work on farms and so they left as soon as they could upon turning sixteen. In 1923, for instance, there were three times as many girls as boys in the senior school. As well, some members of the community felt that boys did not get as good an education as the girls. In 1908, the Six Nations Council told New England Company Employee Mr. Webster that:

The boys’ education at the Mohawk Institute is not as good as that of the girls, and that the boys could learn farming just as well at home – in fact, that the Institute does little for them beyond feeding and clothing them... the land surrounding the Institute is at present used for farming and for teaching the boys the ordinary work of the farm labourer.

In 1924, Inspector Standing noted that “there is a difficulty in retaining the boys long enough at the School to enable them to reach the high School entrance Standard.” Fewer boys went on to high school or trained as teachers. They also did not tend to take courses that would provide them with skills in areas such as business. In general, they left the school with fewer skills than the girls and were rarely encouraged to do anything but farm. This is similar to some findings at the Lejac Residential School in northern British Columbia where male graduates “were more

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222 It is unclear from the records whether boys who ran away from the school went home, or went to live elsewhere.


225 Webster Report, 1908. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154, 845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.

bitter and negative about their school experiences than were women, apparently because they left
the school with fewer skills appropriate to the workaday world than their female counterparts
reported."\(^{227}\) While boys left early and received a less useful education at the Institute, many
girls went on to become better equipped to support themselves off the reserve.

Despite the problematic nature of residential schooling in particular, some graduates of
the school defend it as a place of learning. For instance, Martha Hill suggests that:

> We learned everything about housekeeping there was to learn – cooking and everything.
> We even learned how to look after a baby when a baby was born. We had a celluloid doll,
> and we had to dress it, put a diaper on it, pretend we were feeding it. I’ll tell you, and this
> is not a word of a lie, when I came out of there, there wasn’t a thing that I didn’t know
> how to do in the house – cooking, ironing, washing, mending, everything. That’s why it
> was a little easier on my having my kids – I knew how to do everything – I could make
> clothes for ‘em, cuz we were taught."\(^{228}\)

Martha later married a non-Native man and had children: “I was going to put my kids in there
but my husband kicked against it because he was a white man – ‘I ain’t going to send my kids to
no damn Indian school.’”\(^{229}\) Although she did not send her children there, Martha felt that the
school taught her what she needed to know. Devens suggests that some girls left schools with
domestic training that was not useful to them, especially if they lived in traditional housing as
opposed to a “modern” frame house, but by the early twentieth century, most families at Six
Nations were no longer living in log houses or longhouses, and the skills that they learned were
relevant and useful to them.\(^{230}\) At Lejac Residential School, Jo-Anne Fiske also found that on
average, girls tended to be more successful than boys, that more girls completed Grade Eight

\(^{227}\) Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 220-1.

\(^{228}\) Interview with Martha Hill. Graham, *The Mush Hole*, 355.

\(^{229}\) Ibid.

\(^{230}\) Devens, "If We Get the Girls, We Get the Race” 231.
than boys, and that it was the girls who enrolled in secondary classes when they were offered. These are similar patterns to the Mohawk Institute. It was not unusual for girls coming out of residential schools to have careers in teaching, working for the state, and in social reform, a situation similar to Devon Mihesuah’s findings for the Cherokee Female Seminary.

Fiske argues that the Oblates and the government failed in their goal to colonize the female students. She explains that the school was useful for preparing women for leadership roles on the community, and giving them both domestic authority and personal autonomy. Carrier women became leaders in the community, as the school “unintentionally provided the foundation upon which Aboriginal leaders successfully built structures of resistance.” I would suggest that the education system at Grand River did the same for Six Nations women. The education and training that girls received, built on top of matrilocal and matrilineal traditions, gave Six Nations women in the early twentieth century the skills they needed to become leaders and work to improve their community. In particular, girls’ training to become proper Anglo-Canadian women stood them in good stead when it came to social reform work, patriotic work during World War I, and even political activism in the 1920s and 30s.

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232 Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds*, 101-03.
233 Fiske, “Gender and the Paradox of Residential Education,” 177.
234 Ibid., 181.
Chapter 3

““To cultivate a patriotic interest in their county:””¹ Teaching Empire in Grand River Schools

“The boys have a thorough military organization, being divided into four squads, forming a company, each squad having its corporals and sergeants who act as monitors, and the whole is in charge of a sergeant-major who is the head boy and chief monitor...The girls are under a modified form of the same system, and I have no hesitation in saying that a system that produces such good results in the way of cleanliness, punctuality, obedience and good behavior of the pupils is well worthy of the careful study of all interested in the education and training of Indian children.”

Martin Benson’s description of the children at the Mohawk Institute in 1895.²

The Six Nations have a long history of alliance with the British, going back at least to the Covenant Chain of the seventeenth century; they also have a military tradition of their own that is even older. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the ‘high noon’ of British imperial

¹ From the 1903 Regulations governing the Ohsweken Public School, Grand River Ontario. Appendix One. A bate, Iroquois Control of Iroquois Education, 9.
tradition found fertile ground at Grand River. While their traditions and history had always been a part of Six Nations’ children’s education prior to colonialism, the number of state-run schools on the reserve created a new space in which children were to be taught about the importance of the British Empire and the role of the community within it.

British historian J. A. Mangan suggests that “imperialism, both as a concept and a reality, has influenced the formal educational systems of Britain and her imperial possession, directly and indirectly... for over three hundred years.” 3 Several historians have written about citizenship education in Canada, but very few have considered the effect the imperial citizenship education had on Native children. 4 In the first few decades of the twentieth century, students at Grand River learned imperial citizenship, even though they were not granted the full rights of a British subject. 5 The schools’ emphasis on the historical connections to Britain, imperial history, and militarization produced a patriotic population at Grand River. The militarization of education, along with the commitment to the British Empire, also resulted in a patriotic population in 1914. Boys who had been educated on the reserve, particularly at the Mohawk Institute, enlisted and many women became involved in patriotic work at home.

While imperial citizenship was part of the curriculum, it was and remains an issue fraught with problems for the people at Six Nations. Many Iroquois have argued that the Six Nations are not citizens of either Canada or Britain but are in fact citizens of their own nations, and are allies


5 They were seen as British subjects by the Department of Indian Affairs, and their parents could not vote.
of the Crown. They insist that they are not subjects. Many Six Nations considered themselves allies to the British. This imperial education reinforced centuries-old alliances and connections to Britain for the Six Nations and ensured ongoing ties to Britain. Despite the fact that the schools’ patriotic education attempted to teach students that they were subjects of the Crown and not allies, the ideology of alliance persisted in many ways. This particular debate was especially intense in the 1920s and 1930s, when the Six Nations hereditary council sent delegations to meet with the Crown on multiple occasions.  

This issue will be discussed further later in the thesis but it is important to consider it in the context of the education received by the students of Grand River.

An Imperial Education

Through the curriculum taught at Grand River in both the residential school and the day schools, Six Nations children learned about being an important part of the British Empire. Throughout a significant portion of English Canada there was great devotion to Britain as the mother country, part of a larger movement and belief across the county which held that Britain was “the embodiment of progress and strength in the world.” Historian Paul Axelrod suggests that “in a period marked by the territorial expansion of the British Empire, English-Canadian educators sought to instil in schoolchildren a passionate commitment to their Anglo-Saxon heritage and identity.” In civics classes, children learned British and Canadian history, politics,
and geography, and the virtues that would make them good citizens. In his study of education in British Columbia, Timothy Stanley has shown that “imperialism and its ethos permeated BC text-books between 1885 and 1925,” and that “Canada [was] represented as an essential participant in the imperial mission.”

British culture had a particularly strong and important influence on many parts of Ontario. Moreover, children were seen as the best hope for the future of the country and, as a result, organizations, youth movements, teachers, and education officials attempted to teach children about the Empire and inculcate a sense of patriotism and loyalty to the Crown.

As has been previously noted, the curriculum at both the residential school and the day schools on the Grand River Reserve changed several times in the period between the South African War and the Second World War. Learning about patriotism and the history and geography of the British Empire was part of the Ontario curriculum taught at Native schools and non-Native schools in the province. Before the adoption of the Ontario curriculum in 1908, however, patriotism was also a part of the curriculum created by the Six Nations themselves. For instance, as part of the 1903 Regulations governing the Ohsweken Public School, the one school led by the Six Nations Council, teachers were to encourage students “to cultivate a patriotic interest in their county.”

They also celebrated Dominion Day, Victoria Day, and Empire Day at the Ohsweken School. At the Ohsweken School, students were taught Canadian and British

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11 Appendix One. Abate, Iroquois Control of Iroquois Education, 9.
history and geography in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Form. For instance, students learned “the geography of Canada and the British Empire,” and the “Leading Events in Canadian and British History, with special attention to Canadian History since 1841.”

Imperial History and Geography in the Classroom

After the introduction of the Ontario Programme of Studies, students in the day schools learned the same lessons as non-Native students in Ontario. In particular, history in the curriculum focused on the British Empire and Canada’s role in it. The 1924 Course of Study suggested that “the teacher should not fail to emphasize the extent, power, and responsibilities of the British Empire, its contributions to the highest form of civilization, the achievements of its statesmen and its generals, and the increasingly important place that Canada holds amongst the Overseas Dominions.” The curriculum also reflected the ethnocentrism, racism, and sexism apparent in Canadian society at the time. Mangan argues that a major purpose of imperial education was “to inculcate in the children of the British Empire appropriate attitudes of dominance and deference.” As well:

A large part of imperial image construction was concerned with the creation of positive and negative stereotypes. These stereotypes existed to manipulate reality so as to reflect imperial values, ambitions and priorities and to promote them as proper, necessary, and constructive: imperialisms required a carefully crafted image of the colonizer and colonized.

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12 Appendix One, Schedule A Public School Course of Study. Ibid., 16-18.
13 Ibid.
14 Minister of Education, Courses of Study, Public and Separate Schools, 1924, 18.
These sorts of stereotypes were present in the history courses taught at Grand River. They often began with lessons on “the Indian and Discovery periods.” The 1909 curriculum began in Form 1 with “stories of primitive people,” including “the North American Indians and Eskimos, their mode of life, their occupations and customs; with special reference to the Indian tribes inhabiting the school localities.” It is somewhat ironic that Six Nations students were taught their own community’s history in this course but it is unclear how much teachers knew or taught and the books that they used. It is possible that they used oral history and told of Iroquois traditions, as the books generally did not contain accurate (and non-racist) histories of the Six Nations. One book commonly used in Canadian schools was *A Canadian History for Boys and Girls* which explained that, in general, Indian men participated in war, while women were left to do the hard labour at home. There was little differentiation made between Canada’s First Nations, except that the Iroquois were portrayed as being vicious warriors disposed towards violence and trickery, especially the Mohawk. In Form II history, students spent much time on biographical sketches of early discoverers and explorers; the men students were recommended to study is a list of virtually every European conqueror to have arrived on Native land. In Form III, students were taught about “persons famous in history;” several local heroes were included, such as Joseph Brant, Sir Isaac Brock, Tecumseh, and Laura Secord. In Forms IV and V, students focused on “the most important events in Canadian and British history, especially

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18 *Public School Courses of Study, Duties of Teachers and Pupils. For the Use of the Teachers-in-Training in the Faculties of Education and the Normal and Model Schools of Ontario*, 6. The list reads: “the Cabots, Cartier, Champlain, Brebeuf, Lallement, La Salle, Frontenac, Fraser, Thompson, Henry, Iberville, Cook, Vancouver, Mackenzie, Selkirk, the Norsemen, Columbus, Magellan, Cortes, De Soto, Gilbert, Raleigh.”

19 Ibid., 8.
during the nineteenth century.”

More biographies were included, and these, the programme suggests, “furnish points of interest in every epoch of the history of Canada and the Mother Land.” These texts bear out Cecilia Morgan’s arguments that while aboriginal peoples were often included in textbooks prior to the First World War, especially in discussions of the Loyalists and the War of 1812, “the textbooks of the inter-war decades generally worked diligently to consign First Nations to the borders of Canadian history, designating them at certain critical moments as the ‘saviours’ of British military supremacy but then rendering them absent once such supremacy was guaranteed.”

To be sure, we cannot know exactly what the teachers at Six Nations taught, but we can assume that many of them did follow the curriculum. It is unclear how a Six Nations teacher could teach the exploits of Samuel de Champlain along the St. Lawrence or the missionary work and death of Jean de Brebeuf at the hands of the Iroquois. Lessons celebrating Joseph Brant and Laura Secord were also problematic, as Joseph Brant was and is a controversial figure, as some viewed him as a traitor to the community. In the popular textbooks, Laura Secord was often depicted as being afraid of the Mohawk scouts and images showed their fearful meetings in the forest during the War of 1812. How might students have felt seeing their ancestors thus depicted? We also cannot know how students felt when they learned about “discovery” and heroic European explorers who often waged war with their ancestors.

20 Ibid., 10.
21 Ibid., 11.
22 Colin Coates and Cecilia Morgan, Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine De Vercheres and Laura Secord (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 181.
23 See Elbourne, "Family Politics and Anglo-Mohawk Diplomacy: The Brant Family in Imperial Context."
24 Coates and Morgan, Heroines and History, 176-87.
We do know, however, that some teachers were concerned with the history suggested in the curriculum and the stereotypes presented in textbook images. One of the major concerns of the Six Nations Teacher’s Organization in its first year was “the biased presentation of Indian History in school textbooks and teachers were asked to gather factual material from as many other sources as they could.”25 Nora Jamieson, a daughter of Augustus Jamieson and a founding member of the Teacher’s Organization, taught on the reserve for many decades. In an interview towards the end of her life, Jamieson seemed less concerned with images of “Indians as half naked savages:”

Personally, the books written about the natives of Canada do not disturb me in the least. Whether the book be written pro or con, I have lived all my life on the Six Nations Indian Reserve and should know something about living in the Indian cultural way... As for the half naked Indian, he could be of any colour, not necessarily of the red race. I think we have savages in every race of people. A savage is just an uncultured individual, sometimes very cruel and barbarous, getting away with murder. We have many of them running around today.26

Aside from correcting misinformation in school books, some teachers also aimed to teach Six Nations culture to their students. In a newspaper article written a month before her death, activist and teacher Emily General was described as “painstaking in her transmission of Native culture, tradition and pride to her students, whom she thought of as her own children. She infused a whole generation at Six Nations with a pride in their heritage which all the efforts of the Department of Indian Affairs could not extinguish.”27 It seems clear, particularly in Emily General’s case, that there was a link between teaching and activism. Nora Jamieson also tried to incorporate Native culture in her classroom:

25 Moses, Henhawk, and King, History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve, 65. The authors Moses, Henhawk and King seem to have had access to the records of the Six Nations Teachers Organization, but they are now missing.
26 "Miss Nora Jamieson, Interviewed by Joanne McNaughton, Linda Hunks and Jim Hill," 15.
27 Mahoney, "Celebrating Women’s History: Emily General."
As S. S. No. 5 I did concentrate on the study of Indian culture. My class there was small and we had some time to do extra work. We decorated our classroom with Indian artefacts, made booklets of Indian stories and legends, made scraps books if Indian articles which appeared in newspapers and magazines including pictures. Our art work consisted of the drawing of masked Iroquois ways of living, longhouses, corn pounders, turtle rattles. After everything was in readiness we had an open house for a couple of days including Saturday. Pupils were to welcome the visitors and escort them around telling them about the different displays.

Not only did she teach her students about Iroquois culture and history but in turn the students may have taught their parents and the community as well. This was very different from the general attitude towards Six Nations culture at the Mohawk Institute, but it may not have been uncommon at the day schools. Teachers had more flexibility and freedom at these schools, as they reported to the Six Nations School Board, which was increasingly run by the Chiefs; teachers at the Mohawk Institute reported to the Department of Indian Affairs. It is likely that students who attended the day schools learned more about their culture than those who attended the Institute.

The geography of Canada and the British Empire was also an important subject in Grand River Schools. Again, once children were taught the Ontario Programme of Studies, they generally learned the same courses as non-Native students, which included Canadian and British geography, and the geography of the local region. It is clear that before the introduction of these geography classes, Six Nations people were well aware of Britain’s location, having sent

28 "Miss Nora Jamieson, Interviewed by Joanne McNaughton, Linda Hunks and Jim Hill." Jamieson began teaching at No. 5 in the fall of 1938, and stayed at the school for 5 years. The school generally had between 30 and 40 students at that time. Annual Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs.

29 Nora’s last comment in the interview was this: “Had Indians been educated earlier, the Federal and Provincial Government would not be having the problems they have today, especially in the matter of land settlement, now that the Indians are able to read and understand the treaties that were made in the past.” Ibid., 16.

30 Avril Maddrell considers the impact of imperial geography on British school children, and efforts to encourage emigration to the colonies through the valorization of the settler dominions. See Avril Maddrell, "Empire, Emigration and School Geography: Changing Discourses of Imperial Citizenship, 1880-1925," Journal of Historical Geography 22, no. 2 (1996) 373-387.
delegations there in the past few centuries.  

31 Children, may, though, have learned more about the rest of the British Empire in these classes. Maps, and the lack thereof, seems to have been an important issue for the day schools. In 1915, Brant County Inspector Standing recommended that all of the schools belonging to the Six Nations School Board should be furnished with an Imperial Map Case, as all of the teachers had requested them, and that all future maps purchased should be from the Imperial Series so as to fit the case. As per Standing’s recommendation, the School Board placed orders for the maps and map cases, although it is not clear exactly which maps in particular were purchased.  

32 However, they bought the items from Toronto’s George M. Hendry Company; the Imperial Series of Maps included much of the British Empire as well as of the Dominion of Canada.  

33 The map of the British Empire “accentuates the British Possessions throughout the world with red” and includes a photograph of King George V.”  

34 The map also includes a diagram that “illustrates the comparative sizes of the six principal Empires of the world in regard to population” and another “giving a complete alphabetical list of the British Possessions, together with the area in square miles, population, annual revenue, location and strategical importance.”  

35 It is probable that the teacher would have used these diagrams to teach the children about the size and strength of the British Empire, and Canada’s place within it. At the Mohawk Institute, maps were also important for teachers to teach about geography. In 1924, Inspector Standing made a report on the Mohawk Institute, and noted that “a Map of the

31 Miller, ”Petitioning the Great White Mother,” Rostkowski, ”The Redman’s Appeal for Justice.”
34 Ibid., 5.
35 Ibid.
British Isles and a new map of Europe are needed.” The school probably had outdated maps and purchased new ones. Both the day schools and the residential school often had problems acquiring enough books, maps, pictures and other educational tools.

**The IODE in Grand River Schools**

As they did in non-Native schools, the women of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) helped provide some patriotic learning materials. The IODE’s educational philosophy “was to develop in Canadians a love and respect for the British Empire and an understanding of Canada’s role as a member of the Empire.” They were particularly concerned with “Canadianizing” immigrant children through educational programs in schools, and clearly they were also concerned with Native children as well. In the published studies of the IODE, very little attention has been paid to the IODE’s work with Native children, although this close investigation at the local level suggests that branches near reserves might have been more likely to take an interest. The organization was composed of many former and some current teachers, including Susan Hardie, student and long time teacher at the Mohawk Institute, who was a member of the Remembrance Chapter of the IODE. While she and others like her might have been seen as “Indians in unexpected places,” Hardie was in fact one of the many Six Nations women who belonged to Anglo-Canadian women’s organizations during this period.

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40 Sheehan, "Philosophy, Pedagogy and Practice: The I.O.D.E. and the Schools in Canada, 1900-1945."
Although it is unclear whether the IODE worked with the day schools on the reserve, several chapters worked with the Mohawk Institute. For instance, on April 16 1924 the Remembrance Chapter of the IODE presented the school with a picture titled ‘Canadian Foresters at Windsor Castle.’ Schools across the city received various pictures as part of the IODE’s War Memorial program. At the Mohawk Institute, “the ceremony was very impressive and beautiful” as Susan Hardie held the colours and the “the pupils saluted the flag, and sang God Save the King most heartily and an Indian hymn which they had also sung on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales and they also gave their school yell very heartily.”

The image, a copy of an oil painting by Gerald Moira, depicts members of the Canadian Forestry Corps in England in 1917. Many men from Six Nations and many who were graduates of the Mohawk Institute enlisted and worked as Foresters in World War I. It is possible that the image presented to the Mohawk Institute instilled pride and patriotism in the students. At the very least, it gave students representations of Native men that were at odds with images prevalent in

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43 “Handsome War Memorial Pictures Are Presented by the I.O.D.E. To the City and Rural Schools: Impressive Ceremonies Take Place in Each Instance, and the Scholars Were Much Interested - Descriptions Given of the Various Patriotic and Historic Subjects So Skillfully Portrayed by the Artists,” Expositor, April 16 1924.

44 IODE’s efforts to distribute images to Canadian schools. In 1919, they had hundreds of sets of colour lithographs printed. Most featured paintings of Canadian War Memorials, all collected by Lord Beaverbrook. The picture of “Canadian Foresters at Windsor Castle,” seems to have been part of that project. Personal communications with Lloyd Bennett, April 7, 2008.

45 According to the Canadian Museum of Civilization, “This painting depicts the first battalion of Canadian foresters to come to England. Officially known as the 224th Canadian Forestry Battalion, here Moira shows them working below the walls of Windsor Castle. The fluttering flag on its roof indicates that King George V is in residence. The Corps brought their own equipment with them which, at the time, was valued at $250,000. In 1922, Moira’s biographer described the painting as ‘a document of Empire, a record of loyal labour, an epic of strength, with all of which it unites the qualities of highest art and powerful decoration.’
Figure 8: Canadian Foresters at Windsor Castle, 1917. Canadian War Museum.

Euro-North American popular culture, and in their textbooks. The men in the painting were not participating in violence but cutting trees.

In October 1926 the IODE gave a copy of a painting of Joseph Brant by George Romney to the Mohawk Institute. The portrait was originally completed in 1776 when Brant was in London, and features a proud-looking Brant wearing a white ruffled shirt, blanket, a feather headdress and carrying a tomahawk. Principal Rogers noted that “the pupils gave accounts of various incidents in Brant’s life and sung patriotic songs;” they may well have discussed his role
as a Mohawk leader and a British military officer in the American Revolutionary War. Despite Brant being a controversial figure, he was certainly part of the curriculum at the Mohawk Institute, in part at least thanks to the IODE.

The IODE education programme also involved offering prizes for essay contests, creating traveling libraries, and distributing copies of the British North America Act to schools. On May 22 1925, the Remembrance Chapter presented a prize for the best essay on hygiene to Mohawk Institute student Beulah Stonefish. Friday May 22 was Empire Day that year and the contest was likely part of those celebrations. In 1927, Principal Rogers noted that the Remembrance Chapter made their yearly visit on May 25 to present prizes; for that branch, at least, it was an annual commitment to the Institute. The IODE also was involved with the Girl Guides at the Mohawk Institute. The Sarah Jeannette Duncan Chapter presented the Girl Guide Corps with its Colours at the school on July 7, 1924. It is likely that Knowles, a teacher at the Institute and the leader of its Girl Guides, was a member of this IODE Chapter. The IODE’s efforts in the schools of Grand River contributed to the ongoing perceptions of Canada as an important part of the British Empire. While some teachers were involved in the IODE, few if any Six Nations women were, although their activities will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

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Imperial Citizenship and Empire Day

In addition to learning about the British Empire, imperial citizenship was a part of the curriculum in Canadian schools. The Ontario history curriculum in particular stressed that obligations of imperial citizenship should be stressed through history lessons. “Duties of citizenship” were frequently discussed in curriculum documents from the first few decades of the twentieth century. Teachers recognized that producing good citizens was part of their job. Nora Jamieson, who taught at several Six Nations day schools in the 1920s and 30s including No. 2 and No. 3, suggested that for teachers, “heart and soul are put into the work to produce good citizens.” In particular, students learned the stories of men and women who had made sacrifices for the country and the empire, with the intention that they would also be willing to make sacrifices when necessary. The 1897 “Instructions to Teachers” explains that “the courage and self-denial of men who had served the country at their peril might be told, and the patriotic efforts of the noted men and women of the past cited to stir up a similar spirit in the minds of the pupils.” The instructions continue: “Special attention should be paid to the history of Canada – how it is governed, its relations to the empire, and the obligations which citizenship imposes upon every Canadian to advance its prosperity.” The “obligations” to empire generally meant military service for men and patriotic work at home for women. Mark Moss has argued that this

52 Daniel Patrick Gorman, Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2007), McLean, "Education, Identity, and Citizenship in Early Modern Canada."
53 "Miss Nora Jamieson, Interviewed by Joanne McNaughton, Linda Hunks and Jim Hill," 12.
54 Instructions to Teachers with Respect to the Public School Course of Study, (February 1897).
55 Ibid.
sort of education did result in quick and large enlistments in both the South African War, and the
Great War.  

The celebration of Empire Day was another way in which Six Nations children were
taught to be imperial citizens. Historian Robert Stamp argues that “the importance of Empire
Day as both a school and civic festivity in the first three decades of the twentieth century cannot
be over-emphasized.” Although scholars have pointed to the importance of Empire Day in
Canadian schools, nothing has been written about it in day schools or residential schools.  Stamp
argues that “Empire Day was introduced at precisely the time when enthusiasm for the
imperial connection was at a fever-pitch in English-speaking Canada.” Hamilton resident
Clementina Fessenden proposed the idea of Empire Day in 1898; it was supported by Ontario
Education Minister George Ross who introduced the idea to schools across the province in 1899,
only months before the beginning of the South African War. Canada was at the forefront of the
movement, as schools in England did not begin to celebrate the holiday until 1904; it was not
celebrated in Australia until 1906 and in New Zealand Empire Day was only marked after World
War I. Moss suggests that “Empire Day was an invented tradition intended to strengthen the
ties of far-flung colonial outposts to the imperial centre. No country more enthusiastically
celebrated this ritual than Canada, and no place in Canada more enthusiastic than Ontario.”

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56 Moss, Manliness and Militarism, 95-96.
60 Ibid.: 33-34.
62 Moss, Manliness and Militarism, 95.
one day, both Canadian children and the students of Six Nations participated in a celebration of both Canada and the British Empire, while their teachers attempted to inculcate patriotic sentiment. In the morning, students were to study the “greatness of the British Empire,” and the afternoon was to be devoted to “public addresses, recitations, music, etc., of a patriotic character.” Patriotic groups were especially interested in encouraging and helping with Empire Day celebrations. The IODE generally offered prizes for student essay contests, sent patriotic materials to schools, and sometimes even sent members to talk about Canada’s place in the Empire.

Empire Day was celebrated at the day schools at Grand River early in the twentieth century. As part of the 1903 Regulations governing the Ohsweken Public School, Empire Day was included in a list of days on which the school’s flag must be raised. Other days on the flag list were Victoria Day, Indian National Day, Dominion Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Anniversary of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane, and the school’s opening and closing days. After 1908, when the day schools began using the Ontario Programme of Studies, Empire Day celebrations continued. At the Mohawk Institute, the holiday was also celebrated and especially after the Great War. Clearly, the involvement of students and teachers from the reserve in the War had had an impact on the students. In 1923, Principal Sydney Rogers reported that:

Empire Day was suitably observed. The IODE sent representatives to present a prize won by one of our pupils for general efficiency and after that an address on the Empire, by the Principal the Victrola Record of the King’s speech was played. One interesting feature of

63 The Department of Education, Empire Day in Ontario (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1914).
65 Appendix One. Abate, Iroquois Control of Iroquois Education, 13. It is unclear what Indian National Day was. There is no official Canadian holiday with that name, and National Aboriginal Day, June 21st, did not become a holiday until 1996.
this ceremony was the manner in which every boy stiffened to attention as soon as the record commenced playing the National Anthem.\textsuperscript{66}

The students spent the following day (Victoria Day) doing gender specific or appropriate activities: the boys visited “the largest purebred cattle and hog farm in this district,” looking at the stock and learning about the industry, while the girls went into town for a show and then a visit to the park.\textsuperscript{67} The following year, the girls surprised the staff with a play that they staged for Victoria Day, followed by ice cream, biscuits and candy that they had bought with their own savings. Unfortunately the title of the play is unknown, and its script has not survived; it was so successful though, that it was repeated the following day, friends were invited, and the Principal bought the treats.\textsuperscript{68} Clearly both Empire Day and Victoria Day were important celebrations and holidays for both teachers and students at the schools. As Moss suggests, the practical results of Empire Day and the increased patriotism and connection to the British Empire was the enlistment of boys and men from the reserve and patriotic work done by women at home.\textsuperscript{69}

\section*{Militarism}

As well as patriotism, Six Nations children also learned militarism. Moss suggests that there was “a strong current of militarism in pre-World War I Edwardian Britain, and a similar feeling was pervasive in Ontario.”\textsuperscript{70} He adds that interest in war and the military intensified annually during this period, especially after the South African War. There was also a culture of

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{67} Ibid.
\bibitem{69} Moss, \textit{Manliness and Militarism}, 95. Moss’s book focuses on boys, but militarism was not just about masculinity.
\bibitem{70} Ibid., 25.
\end{thebibliography}
war and militarism in Iroquois society, and particularly among the Six Nations of Grand River. The culture of war before and after European contact has been well discussed by several historians. It is clear that the Iroquois waged war for numerous reasons: mourning wars to replace lost populations; ensuring social continuity; and participating in Euro-American conflicts. \(^71\) After the American Revolution and the removal to Upper Canada, the Six Nations participated in the War of 1812. \(^72\) Some Iroquois men also responded to a British call for volunteers in 1884 during the Battle of Khartoum in the Sudan, and also attempted to fight in the South African War. \(^73\) The warrior tradition was also connected to gender roles in Iroquois culture and traditions that equated manliness with warring. Boys were trained to become warriors from a young age. Historian Daniel Richter notes that “participation in a war party was a benchmark episode in an Iroquois youth’s development, and later success in battle increased the young man’s stature in his clan and village.” \(^74\) However, although training boys for war was not new for Six Nations youth, uniforms, marching and drilling certainly were.

The Mohawk Institute was a militarized establishment; children there learned obedience, discipline, and order. When Department of Indian Affairs clerk Martin Benson visited the school in 1895, he was struck by the “the order, regularity and precision with which all the pupils

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\(^73\) Janice Summerby, Native Soldiers, Foreign Battlefields (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2005), 8-9, Moses, "A Sketch Account of Aboriginal Peoples in the Canadian Military," 34-35, 50-56, 60-61, Carl Benn, Mohawks on the Nile: Natives among the Canadian Voyagers in Egypt, 1884-85 (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009), John Brant-Sero traveled to South Africa and tried to enlist in a British unit, but was denied on the basis of his race. Cecilia Morgan, "a Wigwam to Westminster: Performing Mohawk Identity in Imperial Britain, 1890s-1990s," Gender & History 15, no. 2 (2003).

\(^74\) Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," 530.
conducted themselves.” He added that the school, was “as well regulated and controlled as a piece of machinery, going on without stop or hitch from morning to night.” He continues, explaining how the students were arranged into military squads:

The boys have a thorough military organization, being divided into four squads, forming a company, each squad having its corporals and sergeants who act as monitors, and the whole is in charge of a sergeant-major who is the head boy and chief monitor...The girls are under a modified form of the same system, and I have no hesitation in saying that a system that produces such good results in the way of cleanliness, punctuality, obedience and good behavior of the pupils is well worthy of the careful study of all interested in the education and training of Indian children.

The school also formed a brass band in 1898, made up of nineteen boys. Their leader left for South Africa the following year, but returned in November of 1900, and reorganized the band; it continued to perform for years.

Cadets were a very important part of the militarized experience of residential schooling during this period. J. R. Miller suggests that before the Great War, cadet corps “flourished at schools of all denominations and were often a sources of great pride and accomplishment for the boys.” The year 1898 was the beginning of “explosive growth” in the cadet movement in Ontario, when an agreement was made between the Royal Canadian Cadet Corps and the

77 Rev. Ashton Annual Report, 4 August 1898, and 7 August 1901. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
78 Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 278-79. However, parents in one First Nations community protested the cadets. Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island had both a brass band and a cadet troupe prior to World War I, but the cadets were terminated because parents “foresaw a possible forced enrolment of their sons in the ranks of the Canadian militia.” Clearly this was not a problem at Six Nations. ———, Shingwauk's Vision, 355.
province of Ontario. However the boys at the Mohawk Institute were actually going through cadet drills several years earlier. Benson provided a detailed description in 1895:

The boys receive regular instruction in drill and were put through their exercises three or four times while I was there – once in full uniform armed with their wooden muskets. On the ringing of the bell they all fall in on the parade ground, number, and are inspected by the Instructor and Sergeant. They wear a neat dark gray uniform, blouse and trousers, with black stripe and Glengarry cap, and with polished boots and nearly brushed hair they looked very smart and carried themselves like veterans. They were put through the manual and platoon exercises, squad and company drill, forming squares, marching in column and line, counter marching and marching in echelon. All those movements were gone through correctly and with precision and I have seen very few volunteer companies do better. A son of Mr. Ashton acted as Instructor. The boys evidently enjoyed the drill and took pride in it.

The corps participated in a military review on Dominion Day in 1896, and won the “chief prize of the day,” a silver tankard. In 1898, the company of cadets gave a public exhibition of drill at the Agricultural Park on July 1st, which was positively reported in the Brantford Expositor. The cadets marched in parades and put on exhibitions during holidays, as part of a tradition of “displaying the military,” which was popular during this period. The Mohawk Institute did not hide their students away from the interested eyes of nearby non-Native residents of Brantford, but instead put them on display. Moss argues that “the soldier was an emblem of national pride to the late Victorian male. Parading in uniform was a glorious way to demonstrate one’s passion for one’s country and one’s acceptance of martial values.” He adds that “such displays went a long way towards glamorizing things military. Mock battles, marching troops, military bands,

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79 Moss, Manliness and Militarism, 102.
cadet corps, boys’ brigades, church organizations: all offered the prestige of belonging to a regiment. Constantly exhorted to be a patriot, one had to be a part of these celebrations, if not as a participant then as an observer.”

British historian Anne Bloomfield’s work on English physical celebrations of patriotism in the early twentieth century shows that “this method was used successfully in the creation of an imperial mentality through the symbolic and ritualistic use of dances and drills performed as a public spectacle by children.” The cadet corps in Canada, and especially at Grand River, may well have fostered an imperial mentality in the minds of the Six Nations children. On 22 March 1907, the cadets were officially formed as the Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps No. 161; after that, their training became more serious. In 1909 the student cadets were supplied with arms by the Militia Regiment and two years later they were issued the new Ross Rifle. The Corps seems to have done very well in competitions and during inspections. In 1912 they took first place in the No. 2 Military District (Central Ontario), “a fact of which we are justly proud.” The following year, the Reverend Robert Ashton noted that “our Cadet Corps passed another excellent inspection in drill, and we hope this year to develop a goodly number of rifle shots.” In 1911, Rev. Ashton retired as principal and his son, Major Alfred Nelles Ashton, took his place. Major Ashton was a military man, having been a member of the Dufferin Rifles since

84 Moss, Manliness and Militarism.
85 Bloomfield, “Drill and Dance as Symbols of Imperialism,” 74.
87 Rev. R. Ashton Annual Report, 29 April 19099, and 31 March 1911. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
88 A. Nelles Ashton Annual Report, 31 March 1912. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
89 A. Nelles Ashton Annual Report, 31 March 1913, RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda regarding the Mohawk Institute and day schools, 1894-1914, LAC.
1895, the same year he began leading the cadets at the Institute. In the spring of 1915, Ashton enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. After the beginning of the War, the cadets at the Mohawk Institute continued their training. In 1915, out of the fifty-eight boys enrolled as students at the Institute, forty-six were cadets.

All of this military training, combined with their historic alliance with Britain, the teaching of British and Canadian history and the inculcation of a love of Empire in all likelihood led to the high rate of enlistment of Six Nations men in the Great War. For those students who were Iroquois, the warrior tradition provided a background and added to the militarization of their education. Despite the deaths of some of the enlistees, the boys continued to train after the war and the cadets were no less popular at the Mohawk Institute. In 1920, Lt. Col. Huggins came from Toronto to conduct the annual inspection and he was very impressed. He noted that “the cadets are very proud of their corps and of the service the Indians rendered overseas. They are all very keen, and one told me that he would join the Dufferin Rifles when he was too old to be a cadet.” In total, the Mohawk Institute had ninety-five graduates enlist and the No. 2 School in Ohsweken had sixty-five.

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90 Attestation Paper for Alfred Nelles Ashton, Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force, Personnel Files, RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 268 – 45, LAC.  
91 Smith to Secretary DIA, 26 May 1915.  RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part. 1A, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda Regarding the Mohawk Institute, 1915-1921, LAC.  
92 “Mohawk Cadets Passed Inspection: Youngsters Showed Keenness in Training and Received Merited Approval,” The Expositor, July 2 1920.  
93 "The Honour Roll of the Mohawk Institute, Brantford, Ontario, Canada, in the Great War," (The Woodland Cultural Centre), Reville, History of the County of Brant, 616.
The Girl Guides of the Mohawk Institute

While the cadets provided the boys with an opportunity to parade and practice their drills in uniform and demonstrate their military and patriotic allegiances, in 1923 the Girl Guides gave girls at the Mohawk Institute a similar opportunity. Some work has been done on the Girl Guides in Canada, other colonial locations, and in residential schools in Canada. The Girl Guides were founded in England in 1908 with two aims: “to put women in a position of higher standing as citizens, and to train them to be the comrades of men rather than continuing as dependents.” The 1920s saw the expansion of the Girl Guides across the British Commonwealth, including India, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand; the Guides claimed to be “an international peace organization, despite its military culture.” Bonnie MacQueen writes that the military hierarchy within the Girl Guides organization essentially made it a paramilitary organization. The militarism was also linked to patriotism, as the organization was “inherently connected to the imperatives of upholding the British Empire, and deeply embedded in a discourse of working to produce imperial subjects.” In her work on Guiding in residential schools in Canada, Mary Jane McCallum explains that “Guides mirrored the curriculum of Indian schools, emphasizing domestic skills training such as washing floors, preparing food and mending clothes.” She adds that “under the influence of predominantly White Guiders, Girl Guide groups worked in tandem

96 Paisley, "Childhood and Race: Growing up in the Empire," 246.
with the colonial Indian policy to train Aboriginal children to become useful Empire and Canadian citizens."

At the Mohawk Institute, the Girl Guides were formed in December of 1923 after Susan Hardie took twenty six girls to see a Girl Guides concert at Brantford Collegiate Institute the previous year. A "bright, enthusiastic teacher," [non-Native] Eva Knowles, was hired in June, 1923; in the fall, she became the Girl Guide Leader. The Corps was formally organized on December 14th 1923 as Girl Guide Corps No. 6, Brantford. The Principal noted that all are over twelve years were accepted on four months probation and were formed into the following patrols: Blue Bird, Canary, Oriole, Pheasant, and Robin. Col. and Mrs. Morgan were present and their daughter Betty with our gardener’s two daughters joined the Corps. The following two days our guides went to the Y.W.C.A. and the Collegiate for drill.

The girls were clearly taking part in drilling exercises that were similar to their brothers in the cadets. Non-Native girls on the reserve, such as the daughter of the Indian Agent, Col. Morgan, and the daughters of the gardener, were also members. In Canada, Guide troops were not specifically segregated by race but troops at residential schools generally consisted mostly of Native girls. However, if there were mixed race girls at the school or daughters of the staff, they too often joined the troop.

Kristine Alexander suggests that "the rally disease" struck Girl Guides and their leaders across Britain and Canada, resulting in massive public rallies, marching, and demonstrations of

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99 Ibid., 231.
103 McCallum, "To Make Good Canadians: Girl Guiding in Indian Residential Schools", 230.
patriotism. The training of the Guides at the Mohawk Institute was often practice for these sorts of rallies. The Corps seems to have been relatively active and successful with their inspections. School Inspector Standing noted that “Mrs. Knowles and Miss Elliott have taken a very active part in the newly organized Guides and rapidly bringing our girls to the front in Brantford.” Principal Rogers reported that in late January 1924,

The Girl Guides went in sleighs to the Armouries to practice for the Brantford Parade at which they were inspected by the Lieutenant Governor. This parade was on the 26th of January and our troupe were splendid. Each Guide wore a uniform made from the Blue Dressing Gowns we obtained from the D.S.C.R. by themselves since the first of January and a pink kerchief and scout hat completed their outfit… our girls secured the First Prize for their display of needle-work and second prize for first aid work. The drill display by our troop was second to none…

The uniforms were a particular point of pride for the school, as the girls had made them themselves, just as they made the daily uniforms of the students at the Institute. The principal noted in his Quarterly Report that “we are very proud to state that our Guide Corps is the smartest uniformed in the city of Brantford.” Apparently, the sewing teacher was “so pleased with the guides’ work that she gave them a party at which all the female officers helped to give the girls a jolly good time.” The Mohawk Institute Girl Guides participated in typical guiding activities, such as going for hikes, cooking over campfires, drilling and attending rallies. The community of Brantford seemed to appreciate their efforts, as they were given free tickets to

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106 Rogers Quarterly Report, 31 March 1924. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC. Rogers adds that “Mrs. Persall, our sewing teacher, was so pleased with the guides’ work that she gave them a party at which all the female officers helped to give the girls a jolly good time.”


attend the Brantford Oratorio Society’s concert in May, 1924.¹⁰⁹ That spring, Flo retta Elliott, a Mohawk Institute graduate in 1923 and then a staff member (sub-officer), organized the younger girls into a troop of Brownies. Rogers reported that:

Our small girls are quite enthusiastic and are always ready for their practices on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. The Girl Guides practice every Friday evening under the instruction of Miss Knowles and Miss Elliott in the Dining Hall. Their training includes games, country dances, singing, and camp fire stories in addition to drill and we attribute the improvement in the girls’ discipline to be largely due to this training.¹¹⁰

That the introduction of the Guiding program led to better discipline was a common finding in residential schools.¹¹¹ Inspector Standing noted that “the introduction of the Girl Guides has had the tendency to improve the general discipline of the girls.”¹¹² A student from the school in the 1940s remembers the success of the Mohawk Institute troop: “Lady Baden-Powell came down there and we all went to the Tutela Park and the ones from the Mohawk Institute – I’ll never forget, oh we were so proud – we won everything – the inspections for the Brownies and the Girl Guides, out of all the Troops in Brantford.”¹¹³ The success of the guides and cadets, compared to their non-Native comrades in Brantford, might have been due to the fact that the students already lived a life full of regimented and disciplined displays. This probably led to better marching and uniform care and resulted in a better performance of the troop.


¹¹⁰ Rogers Quarterly Report, 30 June 1924. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC. Miss Elliott was asked to leave the Institute September 1st, 1924, as “she had unfortunately been giving too much time to dances and neglecting her duties in consequence.” It is unclear if the Brownies continued after she left. She went into domestic service in Toronto after that, and by 1930, was married to Ollie Hill and living in Windsor, Ontario. Rogers Quarterly Report, 30 September 1924. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.

¹¹¹ McCallum, “To Make Good Canadians: Girl Guiding in Indian Residential Schools”.


¹¹³ Interview with Marguerite Beaver. Graham, The Mush Hole, 386.
Finally, the Mohawk Institute Girl Guides often participated in events with the local Commissioner in Brantford, further evidence that children from the Mohawk Institute were not hidden away from the nearby non-Native community. On June 30th, 1924, “a Garden Party for the Girl Guides was held at the Commissioner’s house. [The Mohawk Institute] contributed four gallons of ice-cream and [the] Guides danced and helped wait on the visitors.”114 Two weeks later, they were enrolled by the Commissioner and presented with their colours by the Sarah Jeanette Duncan Chapter of the IODE. The principal noted that “after the two events our girls gave an exhibition of singing and dancing. The whole affair reflected great credit upon the hard work of Mrs. Knowles our leader.”115 The following year Principal Rogers explained that Mrs. Knowles has kept the Girl Guide and Brownie movement active and has had good success despite the fact that the local Commissioner has been out of town and has therefore conducted no Rallies, which always serve to stimulate our girls interest. Outside competition always serve to increase our girls enthusiasm.116

Girl Guide rallies were in the same tradition of “displaying the military” as cadet parades, and students at the Mohawk Institute took part in both.

In October 1925, Knowles resigned from her position in the school but the Girl Guides were re-organized and their activities persisted.117 The Guides continued to operate in the post World War II period until the closing of the Institute in 1970. McCallum suggests that

117 “Mrs. Knowles was taken ill on the 25th October.” Rogers Quarterly Report, 31 December 1925. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC. Earlier that year, the principal noted that “Mrs. Knowles, who is a very energetic officer, was poorly and as a nervous breakdown was feared she was granted a week’s bed rest commencing March 2nd.” Rogers Quarterly Report, 31 March 1925. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.
Guiding supported and reflected Canadian Indian policy, seeking... to make Aboriginal girls into good Canadians. These aims had a particular meaning for First Nations and Inuit people, because for most of the twentieth century, becoming a Canadian citizen required them to reject their Aboriginal identity and forfeit their rights to self determination.  

At the Mohawk Institute, Girl Guides participated in the rituals of the organization which dovetailed nicely with the aims of the school: to graduate educated individuals who were employable, could run a proper (Euro-Canadian) home, and who would be role models of good womanhood on the reserve. The motives of the girls, though, are less obvious given the silence in the archives about this matter. They might have been motivated by the excitement associated with the Guides; it is unlikely that they were simply coerced to join.

The Great War

World War I had several direct effects on the schools at Grand River, including the enlistment of ex-pupils and teachers, the loss of some of those men, and the commemorations and remembrance activities at schools. In Grand River schools children also learned about the efforts of the Canadian military. In 1915, Brant County Inspector Standing suggested that the Six Nations School Board purchase the *Children’s Story of the War*, a series of books that were also in use in the non-Native public schools in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada. The book was also used in New Zealand after the war, as part of “an ongoing determination to teach children about the war.” The Six Nations School Board ordered the books and we can assume that they

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118 McCallum, "To Make Good Canadians: Girl Guiding in Indian Residential Schools".
used them in the schools. They painted a positive picture of Canada’s participation in the war. In a section called “The Battle Glory of Canada,” the book discusses the exciting battle of Ypres:

Every Briton may thank God that the Canadians were where they were when the cloud of poison gas sent the Turcos fleeing in panic to the rear. These sons of the eldest daughter of the Empire, who prior to the war knew little or nothing of the art and discipline of warfare, were now called upon to save the situation when all seemed lost.  

The story told was one of much suffering and death, and Canada’s sacrifices were recognized:

“When the tale of losses was unfolded there were many bleeding hearts in Canada; but mingled with the grief there was a sorrowful pride, and even those who had lost their dearest and best were as resolute as ever to continue the struggle to a triumphant end.”

There is no mention at all, however, of the enlistment of many Six Nations men, and their participation in the war effort. Children would certainly have been aware of family members, community members and teachers that had enlisted, as well as those that had died. The first Brant County enlistment and one of the first deaths death in the war (at Ypres) was Cameron Brant, the great-great-grandson of Joseph Brant. He was honoured during the war by the mayor of Brantford as well as by the hereditary council and his death was well-known in the community.

Six Nations children may well have wondered about the exclusion of their people in the story. Moreover, teachers at Grand River probably would have taught their students about the sacrifices being made by the Six Nations, especially since teachers from numerous schools on the reserve enlisted.

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122 Ibid., 203.
123 Donald B. Smith, “Cameron Dee Brant,” in The Dictionary of Canadian Biography 1911-1920 (Volume XIV) (The University of Toronto, 2000).
124 Enlistments include James D. Moses from No. 5 School, Milton Martin from No. 4, Frank Churchill from No. 5, Elmer Jamieson from No. 2, as well as Major Ashton from the Mohawk Institute. Minutes of the Meeting, 1914-1915. RG-10, Vol. 2010, File 7825-4, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1913-1918, LAC.
Military Uniforms at the Mohawk Institute

The Mohawk Institute was also a place of militarized education: in the 1920s the school and the students themselves were outfitted with Canadian army hand-me-downs. The Institute was given cots, bedding, kitchen utensils, and much clothing by the Department of Soldier’s Civil Re-establishment (DSCR) which was formed in February 1918 as part of a restructuring of services for veterans. Part of their work was the distribution of materials no longer needed by the army, especially after most veterans had recuperated. Veterans often encouraged the DSCR to donate leftover supplies to those who needed it during the economic recession following the war. In the past, they had received donations from hospitals and churches but it seems that they received goods in much greater amounts from the DSCR in this period. In the early 1920s, the Mohawk Institute received many loads of supplies which were quickly put to use by the students. For instance, the girls wore “new dresses of aeroplane linen” in June of 1921. In September 1922, the Principal explained that

The D.S.C.R. supplies have filled many long felt wants. The pupils now have feather pillows… Our office is now properly equipped and the typewriters are available for pupils who are taking courses. We feel especially grateful for a number of heavy green V.A.D. greatcoats which fit our older girls and are hoping to obtain a number more in order to make them over for our smaller pupils. The blue dressing gowns have been made over into useful and becoming dresses for our girls. We have just completed making the boys a suit of ‘teddy-bear’ overalls for outside wear this winter.

125 Desmond Morton and Glenn T. Wright, Winning the Second Battle : Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 89-92. It was originally the Military Hospitals Commission, and was later subsumed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.


128 Boyce Report, May and June 1921. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part. 1A, Six Nations Agency – Reports, Correspondence and Memoranda Regarding the Mohawk Institute, 1915-1921, LAC.

During this period, the female students seem to have been kept very busy re-making the donated soldier’s clothing into items suitable for children.\textsuperscript{130} They refitted bedding into bed covers for the student dormitories, made home-spun dressing gowns into work dresses, and altered Cadet Marine uniforms into clothing for the boys.\textsuperscript{131} As at many other residential schools, girls were used as cheap labour. In October 1923, Principal Boyce mentioned in her Quarterly Report that the “D.S.C.R. were closing down and we were able to get a good supply of chairs, lockers for the girls’ playroom, cinematograph and cabinet, kitchen and dining hall supplies, rugs, bath mats, furniture, an organ and some plants and shrubs.”\textsuperscript{132} As the budget was tight at the Mohawk Institute (and most other residential schools), these items, and other donated items, would have been much appreciated.

An intriguing issue, however, is what it meant for students to be wearing hand-me-down clothing from the Canadian army. It is unclear whether the children were aware of where their clothing came from but it is likely that they were. The girls who did the sewing certainly knew the clothing and supplies came from somewhere, and saw the items in their unaltered states. If they were aware that they were wearing military hand-me-downs, what effect might this have had on the children? What does it mean that soldier’s uniforms were turned into student’s uniforms? Wearing uniforms was a common experience for children in residential schools, as “the ultimate reflection of the ‘civilizing’ process was uniformity of grooming and dress.”\textsuperscript{133} All children in residential schools were subject to wearing uniforms but wearing actual soldiers’

\textsuperscript{130} See image from the Brantford Expositor, of the entire school, with children in uniform. "Brantford's Oldest Educational Institution."

\textsuperscript{131} Smith to Secretary DIA, 20 April 1922; Rogers Quarterly Reports, 30 September 1924 and 31 March 1925. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC.


\textsuperscript{133} Miller, \textit{Shingwauk's Vision}, 195.
uniforms seems to be another level of militarization and conformity, not to mention cheapness. As one former student of the Mohawk Institute of the 1940s said, “the Mohawk Institute was good training for the Marine Corps.”

Conclusion

It is clear that the Six Nations were loyal to Britain prior to the emphatically patriotic education received by students in the early twentieth century. The question remains whether the type of loyalty or patriotism changed with a Euro-Canadian education. It seems that the answer is that a different sort of loyalty to the Crown emerged leading up to the Great War. Students educated at Grand River Schools felt a loyalty to the British Crown that was somewhat in concert with their fellow Anglo-Canadians. When the call for war came, they immediately enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, rather than sending their own fighting force. Men enlisted before the hereditary chiefs could hold a war council. There was a growing rift between those “conservatives” who believed in the hereditary council and traditional ways, and those “progressives,” many of whom were well-educated, and educated at the Mohawk Institute, who were happy to work with the Canadian government, and who later demanded a new, elected council. It seems likely that the education many of these men and women received led to some of these changes.

Chapter 4

“In Defence of the Empire”: Gendered Patriotism and the Great War

When war broke out in Europe in 1914, the people of Six Nations responded with gendered patriotism. Their actions were shaped by long-held Iroquois military traditions, and they also resembled the reactions of patriotic Anglo-Canadians. In general, able-bodied men on the reserve enlisted, and women knitted socks and raised money through home-front volunteer work. While knitting was a relatively new skill, Iroquois women had been outfitting their men for war for centuries. These patriotic responses were in part encouraged by the militaristic and pro-imperial education the people had received at the Mohawk Institute and the day schools on the reserve. Imperial ties to Britain were reinforced in the classroom; students also learned to march and drill as cadets, and to bake, sew and knit in schools and domestic classes. These skills were put to use during the Great War.

As the Six Nations had long been allies of the British, for many members of the community these patriotic responses seemed normal or obvious. However, there were tensions and disagreements within the community during the war, in particular as a result of the

hereditary Council’s position on the war. Because they did not receive a direct request for help from the British Crown, they refused to support the war in any way. This did not have much of an impact on those Six Nations people who responded to the war effort.

Tensions also led in part to the introduction of the new elected council in 1924. Despite their efforts to help the war cause, Six Nations men and women also faced discrimination. For example, men who enlisted in the all-Native 114th Battalion were separated upon their arrival in Europe when the battalion was dismantled. While a few became airmen and snipers, most became foresters, cutting trees and digging ditches, or were used by the military for “recruiting and patriotic work by order of the authorities,” as in the case of the group of soldiers who toured the British Isles to bring attention to the recruiting drive.\(^2\) The menial labour they often performed was the result of racialized views about their abilities as soldiers. While Iroquois men had often been praised as ferocious warriors, their ability to participate in more formal Western armies was unknown. The Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League also raised money and knit socks, but faced difficulties in gaining financial support from their own Council. They were also discriminated against when smallpox broke out in Brant County; the military refused to accept care packages from the reserve while still accepting those from the more heavily infected city of Brantford. While both men and women responded in traditional and new ways to the war crisis, they faced challenges from within their own community, the military, and from the state via the Department of Indian Affairs, which refused to provide funding for many of their initiatives.

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\(^2\) Reville, *History of the County of Brant*, 615.
Historiography

Only recently have Native men been written into the history of the Great War. However, as P. Whitney Lackenbauer and R. Scott Sheffield suggest, “Now that authors have established that Aboriginal peoples made significant contributions to the war efforts, and that these contributions are mentioned in mainstream textbooks, it is time to move beyond “forgotten” and enrich our understandings of what was meant to Aboriginal peoples and what Aboriginal peoples’ contributions meant for the war efforts.” In particular, Lackenbauer and Sheffield’s own collection *Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian Military: Historical Perspectives* includes several articles that discuss the contributions that the Six Nations have made to the defence of Canada and Britain. Their involvement in wars has been studied and written about more than the efforts of any other First Nations. Historians have also begun to

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write about the experiences of colonized men from across the Empire who served in the Great War, and the racism they faced while serving. For example, work has been done on the experiences of Indian and African troops that suggests that they were more often forced to perform manual labour jobs and their liberties were more severely restricted while serving overseas in comparison to the work and movements of white British and Dominion troops. The services of Native Americans have also been studied in recent decades, and it seems that they suffered similar indignities. All of this work allows for comparisons to be made between the Six Nations and other Canadian First Nations, Native Americans, Maori, Australian Aborigines, and Indian and African soldiers. In general, it is clear that despite their patriotic work and sacrifices during the war, colonial and indigenous soldiers were discriminated against by imperial and national governments.

While the work that Native men did has been uncovered in recent scholarship, the role that Native women played in the Great War has generally been ignored in the scholarship of women’s wartime work. Some recent work on Native women nurses makes an important

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7 Levine, "Battle Colors: Race, Sex, and Colonial Soldiery in World War I.", Woollacott, "'Khaki Fever' and Its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in World War I."


contribution to the field, most of it focuses on the Second World War and beyond. The absence of discussion on women’s work on the home-front is a weakness in the scholarship. In addition, an investigation into the activities of Six Nations (and other First Nations) women’s work, including fundraising and knitting is also necessary.

The Iroquois tradition of loyalty and alliance to the British Crown

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Six Nations have a long history of military alliance and loyalty to England and the British Empire from the seventeenth century on. The first important alliance was made with the Covenant Chain that the Iroquois and English formed in the 1670s, in which councils and treaties were held to discuss colonial settlement, trade, and violence between the Iroquois and English colonists. Historians have documented the evolving relationships between the Iroquois and the British government throughout the centuries, focusing in particular on the Seven Years War, the American Revolution, and the War of 1812.


In the early twentieth century, the Six Nations continued to value their alliance with Britain, and many chose to ignore the government of the relatively new country of Canada in which their lands now lay. As Brantford historian F. D. Reville wrote in 1920: “As in the days of the Revolutionary War and later in the War of 1812, so in the Great War, the Six Nations stood by their ancient treaties with the British crown and proved their loyalty by the shedding of blood on the battle fields of Europe.”

In 1914, the traditions of loyalty to Britain and of warriors helping to defend the Crown were certainly in the minds of the Six Nations.

Gender and War

Within the Confederacy, men and women historically played different roles when it came to war. While these roles evolved over time and changed with continuing contact with non-Natives, the gendered division of wartime labour persisted in 1914. In general, men were warriors while women supplied the warriors with food and clothing. Traditionally women also made decisions about whether the men should wage mourning wars: raids to replace lost community members. Women decided what would be done with the captives, although by 1914 this tradition was no longer active because the Six Nations were no longer waging war on their own terms or as allies. Clan mothers were “responsible for selecting hereditary chiefs and participated in decisions regarding the activities of warriors and fate of captives.” In the past, women had the right to select and depose chiefs in Iroquois society. Although historians and

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14 Reville, History of the County of Brant, 614.
15 The term “Warriors” has multiple meanings and contexts in Iroquois history. Traditionally, it meant “men who embrace their responsibility to protect and defend their people and territory.” Some Iroquois communities have had, and still do, Warrior Societies, made up of men who are “responsible for national defense and public security” on their territories. See Kahnawake branch of the Mohawk Nation, “National Defense and Public Security” http://www.kahnawakelonghouse.com/index.php?mid=1&p=3. At Grand River, the Dehorners were also the known as the Warriors Association.
ethnologists debate the extent of Iroquois women’s political power, it is clear that clan mothers possessed a reasonable amount of influence. Although women did not speak in council, they attempted to influence the opinions of men, and advise them. As Nancy Shoemaker suggests, they were “diligent lobbyists.”

Furthermore, as women were responsible for agriculture they also held control over much of the economic production in the household and community, and this role gave them political and economic power. Although at times wives accompanied their husbands with the war party, in general they stayed home and cared for the agriculture and the children. It was their responsibility to outfit men for war: to make clothing, moccasins, and food, as well as to clean and repair weapons and equipment. Some women followed men to war to work as cooks and a few fought, although direct military participation was rare. Importantly, Iroquois women also had the power to initiate war, specifically to secure prisoners for adoption who would replace dead brothers, sons, or husbands. At times, Iroquois women prevented wars or caused them to end. In cases where the warriors disregarded the hereditary council and prepared for war, the chiefs could resort to the women to prevent them. Because women controlled the crops, they

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18 Shoemaker, "The Rise or Fall of Iroquois Women," 40.
19 Brown, "Economic Organization and the Position of Women among the Iroquois."
20 Beauchamp, "Iroquois Women," 82.
21 Benn, The Iroquois in the War of 1812, 58.
22 Laurence Hauptman writes about Dinah John, an Onondaga woman who participated in the War of 1812 with her husband, and worked as a cook, as well as other women who received pensions for their service in the war. See Laurence M. Hauptman, Seven Generations of Iroquois Leadership: The Six Nations since 1800, 1st ed. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 53.
24 Beauchamp, "Iroquois Women," 86.
could prevent war by refusing to provision the warriors. However, Iroquois women’s political and economic power changed over time with increased Euro-American contact, colonial efforts, and missionary work. The Iroquois’ role as allies to the British declined in the nineteenth century after the War of 1812, despite the fact that Six Nations men responded to calls for military help in 1837 and 1885.

Responses to 1914

The outbreak of the First World War resulted in swift action by both the men and women of Grand River, in ways that were customary for both the Six Nations and English Canadians. Without waiting for permission from the Council, many young men from Six Nations enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. While few Six Nations men had been overseas, travel for work fit long-standing labour patterns in which men left home to trade, hunt, and for military and diplomatic missions. Carl Benn explains that in these types of situations, “physical strength and a substantial measure of prowess normally were critical to the success of their endeavours. These demonstrations of vigour and ability in hostile environments in front of their peers were part of both the passage of males from adolescence to adulthood and the preservation of their status during their mature working lives.”

However, men were not supposed to act without the Council’s consent. The Six Nations Council considered themselves a sovereign nation; as such, tradition dictated that they receive a

26 Moses, "A Sketch Account of Aboriginal Peoples in the Canadian Military.", Benn, Mohawks on the Nile.
27 While Six Nations men could have enlisted in the British Army, an option taken by British immigrants in Canada, they chose to enlist in the CEF, in large part due to the recruitment campaigns organized by the Department of Indian Affairs.
28 Benn, Mohawks on the Nile, 98.
formal request for their military help from King George. They did not receive it and, thus, did not formally support the war effort. As Duncan Campbell Scott wrote in 1919, “throughout the war, the council constantly adhered to its position and would never consent to take any official part in recruiting or other patriotic work on the reserve.” In one of her letter-writing campaigns, Evelyn Johnson wrote to Prime Minister Borden insisting that he urge King George V to request the support of their long-time allies, the Six Nations. It is unclear if he replied but it is clear that no request was ever issued by the Crown, as it would have resulted in national recognition, a position that the Dominion government was not about to concede.

Moreover, official policy in the first year of the war was not to enlist First Nations, as there were fears that “Germans might refuse to extend to them the privileges of civilized warfare.” Although some First Nations men were turned away from recruitment centres, many were able to enlist after trying different locales. James Walker suggests that “To some extent this persistence must have been prompted by young men’s sense of adventure and patriotism, but they were moved as well by a consciousness that a contribution to the war effort could help them overcome the disadvantages faced by their communities.” Despite the refusal of the Council to help with recruitment and Canada’s policy, 292 men from the reserve enlisted. In total, about

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29 The last time that the British Crown contacted the Six Nations community to formally request their support was the 1885 Gordon Relief Expedition in Sudan. Ibid., 123.


31 Johnson to Borden, 18 March 1915. “Correspondence and notes of Evelyn Johnson, 1915-1923” Trent University Archives. See also Strong-Boag and Gerson, Paddling Her Own Canoe, 56-57.

32 Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I." 189.

33 Ibid. See also Duncan to Scott, 19 November 1915, RG-24-C-1-a, Vol. 1221, File HQ-593-1-7, Part 1Enlistment of Indians for Overseas Service, WWI, 1914-1921, LAC. Walker notes that a group of men from Cape Croker tried to enlist at four different recruitment centres, but were turned down at all. ———, "Race and Recruitment in World War I."

34 “The Honor Roll.” Reville, History of the County of Brant, 618-20.
3,500 Native men enlisted in the Canadian army during World War I.\textsuperscript{35} It is likely that they enlisted for different reasons: the historic alliance of the Six Nations with Britain, the warrior tradition in Iroquois culture, the desire for adventure and travel, the pay cheque, or because it was just something exciting to do.\textsuperscript{36} As has been previously suggested, the education and training that Six Nations boys received in schools likely led to their desire to defend the Empire in the Great War. Out of 292 men who enlisted, one third, or ninety-five were graduates of the Mohawk Institute, and sixty-five were from the No. 2 School in Ohsweken.\textsuperscript{37}

The story of the first Six Nations man to enlist became somewhat legendary in the local community, and shares many features of other narratives that, according to Jonathan Vance, were told in the war’s aftermath.\textsuperscript{38} As Reville noted in 1920, “No sooner had war been declared than many of the young Six Nations warriors sprang forward and enlisted in the nearest units available.”\textsuperscript{39} Alfred Styres, “an industrious young Indian farmer,” was apparently halfway through harvesting his oat crop when he heard of recruiting taking place in Hagersville.\textsuperscript{40} According to Reville, he decided that “his duty was elsewhere, so he turned about, called on a neighbour, arranged for the harvesting of his crops and care of his stock, walked to Hagersville and enlisted.”\textsuperscript{41} Styres ended up joining the 4\textsuperscript{th} Battalion, was wounded, and returned to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[37] "The Honour Roll of the Mohawk Institute, Brantford, Ontario, Canada, in the Great War.", Reville, History of the County of Brant, 616. The 130 or so men who enlisted who did not attend the Mohawk Institute or the No. 2 School may have attended other reserve day schools, or no school at all. Their educational background is unknown.
\item[39] Reville, History of the County of Brant, 614.
\item[40] Scott, "The Canadian Indians and the Great World War."
\item[41] Reville, History of the County of Brant, 614.
\end{footnotes}
Canada. Vance suggests that the motif of the agriculturalist turned soldier was common one in enlistment stories told after the war: “the agriculturalist bringing in the crops when news of the war reaches his farm. He quickly drops the implements of peace to come to the defence of humanity.”

The First Nations were not conscripted; the government decided that, although they were British subjects, they were wards of the Canadian state. As such, they and had no right to the franchise or other privileges of citizenship, but they also “should not be expected to assume responsibilities equal to those of enfranchised persons.” Despite this, they enlisted in high numbers and after the war Scott wrote, “the splendid record of the Indians in the Great War must be attributed to the personal loyalty, initiative, and high spirit of the young braves who flocked to the colours.” Despite his patronizing and racist language, Scott was a strong proponent of the enlistment of First Nations men, and he believed that veterans had proven their manhood and loyalty to Canada. For this reason, veterans were given the right to vote, but were not automatically “enfranchised,” or dispossessed of their Indian status.

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42 Styres lived with hereditary Chief Nicodemus Porter and his family from a young age, and was likely adopted by them. He was a farmer and a labourer who did odd jobs in 1911. (Census 1881, 1901.) Charles Porter, the Chief’s other son, also enlisted, but in December 1915. Attestation paper for Charles Porter, regimental number 739029, Canadian Expeditionary Force personnel files, RG150, accession 199293/166, Box 7908-29, LAC. Attestation paper for Alfred Styres, regimental number 10972, Canadian Expeditionary Force personnel files, RG150, accession 1992-93/166, box 9406-39, LAC.


44 Conscription was enacted in August 1917 via the Military Services Act.


46 Ibid., 302.

47 Titley, *A Narrow Vision*, 39, 44. See also Brownlie, "Work Hard and Be Grateful: Native Soldier Settlers in Ontario after the First World War."
Recruitment and the 114th Battalion

Recruitment on the reserve was a very political issue and the community was generally divided along longstanding religious lines. In general, the Hereditary chiefs and their Longhouse followers were either anti-war or indifferent to the cause. However, as Katherine McGowan and P. Whitney Lackenbauer have suggested, recruiting was not conducted by “outsiders” or Indian agents but rather by men with longstanding ties to the community, such as William Hamilton Merritt, E. S. Baxter, Charles Cooke, and Andrew Thompson. A recruiting league was also formed on the reserve, led by Chiefs A. G. Smith, Hilton M. Hill and Joseph Monture, Dr. Walter Davis, and John R. Lickers. These recruiters employed imperialist sentiment, and called on Six Nations men to mobilize and fight for Britain by enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. As Paul Maroney suggests, “Canadians may have been fighting their first modern war, but they did so on the basis of traditional assumptions and attitudes.” In November 1914, Merritt offered $25,000 to raise and equip two companies of Six Nations men. Merritt was an officer in the suppression of the 1885 Riel Rebellion, an ardent imperialist, a lieutenant-colonel, and an honourary Cayuga chief and long-time friend of the Six Nations, particularly of Mohawk writer and performer John Brant-Sero. His offer, however, was rejected by the Six Nations Council: “The council after much discussion, failed to act on the

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49 Ibid., 92.
50 Revile, History of the County of Brant, 616.
52 Paul Maroney and Stephen Harris, "Merritt, William Hamilton," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, University of Toronto, 2000. In 1885 Merritt took part in putting down the Northwest Rebellion, but he was also an ally of John Brant-Sero. See Morgan, "A Wigwam to Westminster,” 325-6.
suggestion which they think would be given if their war chief Onondiyoh, King George V. should ask for their services in the present war, which they claim would be in accordance with their longstanding alliance with Great Britain.”

By the fall of 1915, the 114th Battalion was raised out of the local militia unit, the 37th Haldimand Rifles. Mohawk Charles A. Cooke, “the only male Indian employed in the [DIA] Service at Ottawa,” was seconded to the 114th to act as recruiter. He toured reserves in Ontario with a band made up mostly of Six Nations men who gave concerts and war dances. A total of 287 men were recruited to serve first under Lieutenant-Colonel Edwy Sutherland Baxter from Cayuga, who was a local militia commander and recruiter among the Six Nations, and then under the command of Lieut. Col. Andrew Thompson, an honourary chief with familial and historical ties to the Six Nations. The 114th was an all-Native battalion with Six Nations men serving as officers, including Captain C. D Smith, Lieutenant James D. Moses, Lieutenant Oliver Milton Martin, and Lieutenant Frank Monture. The battalion was nicknamed the Brock Rangers and their crest was made up of two crossed tomahawks. The ancestors of many of the men in the battalion had fought for the British under Sir Isaac Brock in the Battle of Queenston Heights in

53 Reville, History of the County of Brant, 615.
the War of 1812. However, the majority of men enlisted in 1916 as a result of the increased recruiting efforts on the reserve, especially those of Charles Cooke.  

While we know the names of the men who enlisted, for many the details of their lives and personal identity is unclear. From their attestation papers it is apparent that, like Alfred Styres, the majority were farmers and labourers. Lieutenant Cameron Dee Brant, the first Brant County and first Six Nations man to die in the war seemed to have many different identities, and to have been posthumously adopted by several groups. He was the great great-grandson of Joseph Brant, on both his mother’s side and his father’s. Before he enlisted, he was a sheet metalworker in Hamilton, married to a non-Native woman. His family and employment history testifies to the complexity of the Six Nations community and the porous nature of the reserve. Brant was Mohawk but also part Scottish; he grew up among the Mississaugas of New Credit, and worshipped in the Methodist church. He attended the New Credit day school, Hagersville High School, and then military college at Wolseley Barracks in London. According to his family, he loved all things military from a young age. He joined the CEF days after war was declared and left for Britain with the First Canadian contingent in October 1914. He was killed in April 1915 during the Battle of Ypres.

Brant’s contribution was recognized by the non-Native community. The Mayor of Brantford wrote to the Chiefs of the Six Nations Council and to Brant’s family, stating that: “In his fall, and in the fall of other soldiers with him, we recognize the willing sacrifice of our Indian


58 Ibid. Jordan Baker’s unpublished paper is in part a statistical study of the men who enlisted. As only 202 of the 292 men who enlisted listed an occupation, Baker counts 89 farmers and 59 labourers. Only two list teaching as their occupation, but we know that at least four teachers enlisted.

59 Smith, “Cameron Dee Brant.”
compatriots in the defence of rights and liberties dear to every British heart. We desire to express to you our appreciation of the splendid contribution the Indians have made and will continue to make to the fighting forces of our Empire.”

While Cameron Brant was somewhat distinctive in his relation to Joseph Brant and his early death, his educational background and training

![Figure 9: The seventeen descendants of Joseph Brant who enlisted in the Great War.](image)

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60 The Mayor of Brantford etc. to the Chiefs of the Six Nations, 1 May 1915. MG30-E43, Part 1, “Letter to the Chiefs of the Six Nations,” LAC. Margaret Brown of the SNWPL was the last signatory.

61 Aryan Society and Women’s Institutes, The Voice of the Knight and His Lady, St. George and Maneita Other Poems and Historic Truths Written for the Brant Battalions and the Six Nation Indian Warriors, Issued for Red Cross and Patriotic Purposes (Brantford: Aryan Society, n.d.), 47.
nevertheless were similar to those of other enlisted men. At least 52 per cent of the Six Nations men who enlisted had documented militia experience prior to the war.  

Many had early training as cadets, or were members of militia companies, such as the Dufferin Rifles.

Many Six Nations men also may have enlisted because they saw war as a “chance to demonstrate [their] manliness in the great adventure.” Mark Moss suggests that for Anglo-European Ontario youth, enlistment was a “rite of passage.” He adds that “traditionally, it was in war that young males displayed their prowess, virility, chivalry, and manliness. Warriors were vital to their societies, and thus wielded enormous power and influence.” Of course, as Daniel Richter suggests, this was also the case for an Iroquois man: “His prospects of an advantageous marriage, his chances for recognition as a village leader, and his hopes for eventual selection to a sachemship depended largely – though by no means entirely – on his skills on the warpath.” As Six Nations men had had few opportunities since the War of 1812 to participate in their warrior tradition (there was minor participation by Iroquois men in Egypt, Red River, the Northwest, and South Africa), the Great War was a chance to take part in an Iroquois tradition and also to fight once again for Britain, following in their ancestors’ paths. The men nicknamed the 114th Battalion the “Brock’s Rangers” because so many of them had ancestors who fought with Brock. It was a self-conscious reference to the warrior role Iroquois men had played in the past, as well

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65 Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," 530.

66 Moses, "A Sketch Account of Aboriginal Peoples in the Canadian Military.", Benn, *Mohawks on the Nile*.

as recognition of the vital part the Iroquois played in several War of 1812 battles. Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Thompson recognized the importance of the Six Nations to the 114th, and when the badge was being designed for the battalion, Thompson suggested a change to the original design, adding a pair of crossed tomahawks. He explained that “the already approved design very well covers Haldimand’s contribution in men, but makes no reference whatever to the Indians, coming from without Haldimand, who will probably furnish one half of the strength. It is out of compliment to these Indians, and with a desire to meet their very natural wish to be referred to in the Battalion badge that I ask this change.” Like the flag, the badge incorporated symbols of the British Empire, of Canada, and the Six Nations themselves, and is evidence of the complicated identity of the Six Nations during the War.

![Figure 10: The redesigned badge of the 114th battalion, 1916.](image)

68 Benn, *The Iroquois in the War of 1812*.
70 Ibid.
Six Nations soldiers on display overseas

While Six Nations men likely volunteered with hopes of fighting the enemy alongside their peers, once the 114th battalion went to England it was broken up. Moreover, not all men actually engaged in battle. Some were transferred to combat units; others became foresters, part of a military lumberjack unit whose job it was to cut and process trees in the United Kingdom and Europe. Other men became part of a group who toured the United Kingdom for patriotic and recruitment purposes. A select few joined the Royal Air Force. However, it is significant that Native soldiers, as well as African Canadian soldiers and men from ethnic minorities, were often not given the “privilege” of actually engaging in combat. They were frequently segregated in separate units and put to work at manual labour, leaving the exciting and praise-worthy work to their white brothers. Even though these men were willing to give their lives to fight for Britain and Canada, they suffered from racism. The Six Nations experienced racism in varying degrees; some, though were able to transcend this treatment and earn considerable military achievements as soldiers and pilots.

One of the most unusual ways that Six Nations men served the Empire was through their work in Scotland. In December 1916, 165 men from the 114th were “despatched on a tour of the British Isles for recruiting and patriotic work by order of the authorities.” The tour was part of a tradition of First Nations peoples’ travels in Britain to raise funds and draw support. Moreover, “Indians” had been an exotic spectacle for the British for centuries, and perhaps this was part of

71 Walker, “Race and Recruitment in World War I.” Lyle Dick’s work on Japanese Canadians’ service in the Great War suggests that they suffered from less discrimination once they were able to enlist, and served in numerous battles including Vimy Ridge, and some assumed leadership roles in their battalions. Lyle Dick, “Sergeant Masumi Mitsui and the Japanese Canadian War Memorial: Intersections of National, Cultural, and Personal Memory” (paper presented at the 86th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, Saskatoon, May 28-30 2007).

72 Scott, “The Canadian Indians and the Great World War,” 299. They became part of the 35th Battalion for this trip.
the motivation behind sending the group off.\textsuperscript{73} The intended purpose for the group was likely to stir up interest, support, and possibly funds, as well as to draw attention to the British recruitment drive. Alden Vaughan’s recent study suggests that Native travelers to Britain prior to the American Revolution “became instant celebrities,” where they were ogled on the streets and in parks, and entertained by kings and queens.\textsuperscript{74} In the nineteenth century, Native missionary Peter Jones’ tours of Britain to raise funds for his Methodist mission in the 1840s drew huge crowds, particularly in Scotland.\textsuperscript{75} A number of Six Nations petitioners and performers travelled to Britain in the twentieth century: Pauline Johnson, John Brant-Sero, and, after the war, Deskaheh (Levi General), who would be followed in 1930 by a delegation of petitioners.\textsuperscript{76} Thus the soldiers in 1916 were not doing something new in touring Britain to gain support. However, unlike Johnson or Brant-Sero, they were not there on their own accord, and the cause was not entirely their own. They were there on behalf of the CEF and the allied war effort, and not for any direct political reasons of their own. They toured in order to inspire patriotism and encourage enlistment; it is clear from their trip that they were also “tourist-combatants,” colonial soldiers who were escorted around the sites.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{73} Morgan, “‘A Wigwam to Westminster’”, Christian Feest, \textit{Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays} (Göttingen: Herodot, 1987), Miller, “Petitioning the Great White Mother”.

\textsuperscript{74} Alden T. Vaughan, \textit{Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), xii.

\textsuperscript{75} Donald B. Smith, \textit{Sacred Feathers: The Reverend & the Mississauga Indians} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

\textsuperscript{76} Morgan, “‘A Wigwam to Westminster,’” Rostkowski, ”The Redman's Appeal for Justice,” Hauptman, ”The Idealist and the Realist: Chief Deskaheh, Attorney George Decker and the Six Nations' Struggle to Get to the World Court, 1921-1925.”

\textsuperscript{77} Philippa Levine describes how Indian soldiers were given supervised tours of London by Cook’s Tours which included visits to Royal sites, shopping, and a trip on the Underground. Levine, ”Battle Colors: Race, Sex, and Colonial Soldiery in World War I.” Although it is difficult to know what other sites men from Six Nations saw while in Britain, at least one soldier, Simeon Gibson, reported touring around. According to William Fenton, after the war, Gibson “loved to describe Oxford, Cambridge, Aldershot and the British Museum – places that he visited on furlough.” William N. Fenton, ”Simeon Gibson: Iroquois Informant, 1889-1943,” \textit{American Anthropologist} 46 (1944): 231.
The soldiers arrived by train in Glasgow on December 6 and were greeted at the Central Station by three representatives of the Railway corporation, John H. Samuel, Alexander Walker, and Walter Freer. The Scotsman reported that “the men are dressed in regulation khaki, with the exception of four, who wear Indian costume.” The four men in “Indian costume” were likely chosen to represent the battalion. None of the men were hereditary chiefs on the Six Nations Council but they were frequently given this title, a practice with a long history for the benefit of metropolitan audiences. There is a long history of men becoming “chiefs” or “kings” for such displays in order to impress metropolitan audiences. In the image below, the DIA employee and recruiter Charles A. Cooke stands on the far left. On the far right is Lieutenant John R. Stacey, a Mohawk from Kahnawake who had enlisted in Cayuga in May, 1916. He was also a recruiter and had worked previously in Toronto as a customs broker. Joseph Clear Sky was another [Mohawk] from Kahnawake, who enlisted in February 1916 at Montreal. Prior to enlisting, Clear Sky was a vaudevillian actor and, as his costume was the most elaborate, he may have


80 Attestation paper of Lieut. John Randolph Stacey, RG150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 9216-41, LAC. “One of their number was Captain John R. Stacey, who, as has already been mentioned, was transferred to the Royal Flying Corps after his arrival in England, and was subsequently killed in an accident. The famous Canadian "ace," Colonel "Billy " Bishop, V. C., the most distinguished aeronaut in the British Service, has stated that Captain Stacey was one of his most promising fliers. Colonel Bishop had selected Captain Stacey as one of his special "fighting circle," but the accident which caused his death occurred just as he was on the point of sailing for France to take his place in that illustrious body. Prior to his enlistment he was a successful customs broker in Toronto; and he did much, by both financial assistance and energetic recruiting work, to stimulate enlistment among the Iroquois. Captain Stacey went overseas as a lieutenant, but his abilities soon won him his promotion.” Scott, "The Canadian Indians and the Great World War," 303.

81 Ibid. Stacey believed that the shared background and cultural awareness would allow them “to reach the Indians were no white man could appeal to them.” Charles A. Cooke to Duncan Campbell Scott, 4 April 1916, RG10, Vol. 6765, File 452-7, “War 1914-1918 - Recruitment by Charles A. Cooke among the Indians of St. Regis, Caughnawaga and Oka,” LAC. Stacey’s name is on the Mohawk Institute’s Honour Roll.
brought his vaudeville outfits with him. According to Duncan Campbell Scott, “At the front [Clear Sky’s] exceptional gifts were soon recognized, and he used to travel up and down the lines entertaining the troops with his dancing and singing. His entertainments were unusually popular, and he became one of the most noted characters on the Western front.” This is in contrast to Scott’s efforts to repress displays of “savagery” in


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82 Clear Sky lists “vaudevillian actor” as his “trade or calling” on his attestation papers. Attestation paper of Joseph Henry Clear Sky, regimental number 739001, Canadian Expeditionary Force, RG150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1781-44, LAC.

Canada. Stacey and Clear Sky both attended the Carlisle School in Pennsylvania. It is unclear exactly who Chief Silversmith was; he may have been Christopher Silversmith, a farmer from Caledonia. They were welcomed by Glasgow Provost Sir Thomas Dunlop “who expressed, on behalf of the citizens, gratification with the visit, remarking that it was a striking evidence of the unity of the Empire at the present time.” The group spent two days in Glasgow, “inspecting the principal features of Glasgow,” including the Cathedral, the City Chambers, McClellan Galleries, and the shipbuilding yards on the River Clyde. They were treated to dinners, circus entertainments, and a concert in their honour.

On Saturday December 9th, they took the train from Glasgow to Edinburgh and arrived at Waverley Station, attracting much attention. In particular, Clear Sky’s attire was commented upon by the local paper:

Clear Sky, their leader, was resplendent in a spreading head-dress of black feathers, white-tipped, leather suit with fringes, an apron of black ornamented with animal figures, with a shawl in rich Indian design and colouring for a shoulder wrap. His costume was richly ornamented with bead-work, and strings of beads depended from his neck and head-dress. His conspicuously tall and muscled companion [Silversmith] wore a plain suit of brown with very little ornamentation, his head-feathers rising straight up from their circulet foundation. The others were similarly attired. One of them carried a tomahawk, a heavy-headed weapon, which had been used in a battle at Queenston in 1812.

Clear Sky was not the leader, but the paper likely assumed so because of his ornamental dress.

As a vaudeville performer he would have had experienced “playing Indian” for non-Native audiences. The clothing that Clear Sky wore was similar to other late nineteenth century

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84 “Senseless Drumming and Dancing” Titley, A Narrow Vision, 162-83.
85 “Mohawk Students at Carlisle Indian School, (1879-1918), Cumberland County Historical Society. http://home.epix.net/~landis/mohawk.html
86 Attestation paper of Christopher Silversmith, regimental number 739594, Canadian Expeditionary Force, RG150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1781-44, LAC. The only other Silversmith to enlist, Jacob, was only 5”6”.
87 “Canadian Indians in Expeditionary Force: Visit to Scotland.”
Iroquoian regalia worn by performers, including the Plains-like headdress and the clothing decorated with geometric beadwork and leather fringe. But not all of the men wore Native garb in 1916. Probably very few had these items of clothing, and by dressing in uniform, they projected a “civilized” and even trustworthy appearance to the British crowds that came to see them. They were on tour not to portray savagery, but the masculine militarism of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, a stance that represented a high degree of assimilation and support for the Empire.

At the train station, they were greeted and welcomed by Mary Pamela Milne-Home, the great great granddaughter of Sir William Johnson. Milne-Home was an Englishwoman who moved to Scotland upon her marriage to widower Col. David Milne-Home in 1890. Her husband died in 1901, and she seems to have spent much of her life working for various


90 Johnson was the first Indian agent for the British government from 1755-1774. He lived in upstate New York among the Iroquois, and fostered relations between the British and the Iroquois before his death in 1774. (His second wife was Molly Brant, a Mohawk clan matron and sister to Joseph Brant, but this was not Mary’s ancestor). Johnson seems to have had children with at least six women. The family believes that they are descendants of William Johnson and his first wife Catherine.

91 She was born in 1860 into a military family, as her father was a Major in the English army. One of her grandfathers, Augustus Frederick Ellis, was a Lieutenant Colonel, and the other was a major-General, Sir Guy Campbell, 1st baronet, who served in India. Although she was born in England, it seems that her childhood was spent in Fort George, Jamaica, where her father was stationed. She married a Scotsman, David Milne-Home who gained the rank of Colonel in the service of the Royal Horse Guards, and they lived outside of Edinburgh, at the Milne-Home family seat, Wedderburn Castle, in the Scottish Borders. She had one son Charles Alexander who enlisted and was injured in WWI. She was also stepmother to eight children. Her husband was the son of David Milne and Jean Home, and both became Milne-Home when they married in 1832. David Milne-Home Senior was a prominent geologist, and president of the Edinburgh Geographical Society. His father was Admiral Sir David Milne.
causes. Her meeting with Six Nations soldiers in 1916 was likely not the beginning of her interest in the Six Nations, but it may have sparked her later activist work.

Figure 12: Mary Pamela Ellis Milne-Home. Private Collection, William Milne-Home, Sydney, Australia.

92 After her husband’s death, she moved to Edinburgh, where she lived from 1903 until her move to the West Indies in 1930. She was also an author. In 1890, she published a collection of Jamaican folk tales, called Mamma’s Black Nurse Stories, and the following year, she published a translation of Aleksandr Pushkin’s novel, The Daughter of the Commandant: A Russian Romance. In 1902, she published Stray Leaves from a Border Garden, a book about the natural environment and folklore of her home Caldra House in Duns, east of Edinburgh. She later moved to Trinidad with her son, and built an estate she named “Five Rivers.” She remained there until her death in 1936. Personal communication, William Milne-Home, September 11, 2008. See also William C. Bates, “Creole Folk-Lore from Jamaica. II. Nancy Stories,” The Journal of American Folklore 9, no. 33 (1896) 121-128, The Quigley Collection, “Mary Pamela Milne-Home,” http://www2.soe.umd.umich.edu/quigley/author_index.php?link=16.
Ties of kinship, albeit distant ones, one may have sparked her interest in these soldiers. Milne-Home was also related to at least two Six Nations soldiers who were also descendants of Sir William Johnson (Johnson had children with several women). Clifford Styres and William Smith were also descendants of Johnson, although it is unclear when Milne-Home discovered this fact. 93 When given the chance to welcome the soldiers at the train station in Edinburgh, she said the fact that her [great great] grandfather had been made a chief was one of the proudest of her family’s memories. She would like to shake hands with every one of them and tell them how glad she was to see them in Edinburgh. She was proud to know that the Six Nations Indians had subscribed money for the Red Cross. She had many times told people that she looked to the Six Nations to fight for the Empire; and now that they were there, she could not say how glad she was to see them. On the call of one of the officers, the men gave hearty cheers as an acknowledgement of their welcome. 94

The regiment then left the station, and began to walk to Edinburgh Castle, where they attracted much attention. Upon arriving at the Castle, they were first unnerved by the firing of the one o’clock gun. They toured the public parts of the Castle, and the “four chiefs” ascended to the highest part of the Castle before visiting the Banqueting Hall which was filled with armour and weapons. 95 Much to the surprise of his tour guides, Clear Sky discussed his knowledge of Scottish history. 96 The “chiefs” signed the guestbook, were entertained with a luncheon, and then were welcomed by Lord Provost Lorne MacLeod. Later in the afternoon, Clear Sky put on an informal concert as “Chibiabos the Musician” during which he sang and played the piano. After

93 By the early 1920s, Milne-Home was working on behalf of the Six Nations veterans, writing letters to the Canadian government regarding the Soldier’s Settlement Act.

94 “Canadian Indians in Edinburgh: Chief Clear Sky at the Castle.”

95 Edinburgh Castle was a popular tourist attraction. See Cecilia Louise Morgan, A Happy Holiday: English Canadians and Transatlantic Tourism, 1870-1930 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 63-68.

96 Clear Sky had attended the Carlisle Indian School. The Scotsman reported that “The fact surely suggests something stranger than was ever conceived in Hiawatha’s vision of the future.” “Canadian Indians in Edinburgh: Chief Clear Sky at the Castle.”
tea, they attended a performance at the King’s Theatre where Clear Sky delivered a patriotic speech. Their trip ended that evening when they caught a train bound for the west of Scotland.\footnote{Ibid. According to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem Hiawatha, Chibiabos was Hiawatha’s friend and a musician.}

While their trip was brief, lasting friendships were formed between Mary Pamela Milne-Home and several Six Nations men, especially John Stacey. In July 1917, Stacey adopted her at Milne-Home’s home at 13 Gloucester Place in Edinburgh. The record of her adoption survives in a copy of William Stone’s \textit{Life of Joseph Brant}, pasted into the book by either Stacey or, more likely, Milne-Horne. Stacey wrote “Lieut. J. R. Stacey, “Sawatis Tawanladah” and Indian

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Milne_Home_adoption_info.png}
\caption{Page with Milne-Home’s adoption information. Private Collection, William Milne-Home, Sydney, Australia.}
\end{figure}
Soldiers (Iroquois) in the 1st Can. Inf. Bat. Awarded in July 1917 to Mrs. M.P. Milne Home of Wedderburn, the compliments of the Indian Title Kanee Kiio. “Sparkling Waters”... For befriending the Indian boys.” Stone’s biography of Brant was one of the many books on the Six Nations in Milne-Horne’s personal library. It is likely that James D. Moses was also

Figure 14: Undated photos of Mary Pamela Milne-Home. It is unknown when or from whom she acquired the headdress and clothing. Private Collection, William Milne-Home, Sydney, Australia.

98 The book (1865 edition) is in the private collection William Milne-Home, Australia.
99 Milne-Home did not write her name in the front of this book, as she had with most others in her collection. Possibly this was because the book was a gift from Stacey, but it is unknown. Mary was also a descendant of Lord Edward Fitzgerald who was adopted into the Seneca by Jacob Brant and David Hill in 1789. Personal communication with William Milne-Home, October 2, 2008. See also S. K. Tillyard, Citizen Lord: The Life of Edward Fitzgerald, Irish Revolutionary, 1st American ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), 107-8.
involved in the adoption. In a letter home to his father Nelson Moses in September 1917, Jim mentioned that he had been in touch with Milne-Home, and “the lady just must have an Indian name from me.” Apparently Moses told Milne-Home that his own “Indian name” was “Thundering Water,” so it is unclear if she was actually given Moses’ name, or if he was being insincere. The adoption, like other informal ones, was probably not sanctioned by the hereditary council at Grand River, but instead was a personal gesture of gratitude and appreciation by Stacey and his peers. At some point, Milne-Home also received (or maybe purchased) a headdress and costume. Possibly it was a gift when she was adopted by Stacey.

When Stacey was killed in a flying accident in April 1918, Milne-Home clearly grieved for him. In a letter to the editor of The Scotsman upon his death, she wrote:

After gallant service with his fellow Redskins in France, in which he was wounded, this fine young Iroquois transferred to the Royal Air Force, and quite recently met his death… The young chief was enthusiastically loyal and patriotic; he threw [gave] up a good business position to fight for King and country, and declared that one of his proudest recollections if he lived to return home would be that he had the honour of being presented to H.M. King George, and had good words spoken to him.

Milne-Home befriended many soldiers during this period, as they sent her postcards during and after the war. William Smith, Isaac Powless, Wesley Burnham, Kenneth General, and Fred Peters sent her cards featuring photos of themselves or Six Nations subject matter.

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100 John Moses, Ottawa, Ontario, Private Collection. John Moses suggests that this in itself may be an allusion to the Chief Thunderwater War movement that had been agitating on some of the Iroquois reserves during the early 1910s. Personal Communication, 3 February 2009. Jim Moses was John’s great-uncle, and Edith Anderson Monture was his grandmother.

101 Traditional Iroquois Clothing. The bag might be an Anishinaabeg bandolier bag.

102 “Killed While Flying: Lieut. John R. Stacey, a Young Iroquois Officer Meets His Death,” Toronto Evening Telegram, 12 April 1918.

103 Kanee Kiio, “A Lost Loyalist,” The Scotsman, Thursday May 9 1918.

Figure 15: Wesley Burnham of Ohsweken (left) and Kenneth General of Sixty-Nine Corners. Private Collection, William Milne-Home, Sydney Australia.

Figure 16: Isaac Powless of Kanyengeh. Private Collection, William Milne-Home, Sydney, Australia.

William M. Smith sent Milne-Home a postcard that was apparently printed by the Brock’s Rangers. It features a photo of the Mohawk Chapel, and a poem titled “The Red Man’s Grave.” Smith, from Hagersville, was also a descendant of William Johnson, and thus was a distant cousin to Milne-Home. Smith indicated on the card where the tomb of Joseph Brant lay in the church cemetery. The poem “Red Man’s Grave,” which appears to have been written about
Figure 17: Postcard of the Mohawk Chapel to Mary Pamela Milne-Home from William Smith. Private Collection, William Milne-Home, Sydney, Australia.
Cameron Brant, was published in the Report of the Aryan Society and Women’s Patriotic League. 105 

After their tour, the regiment returned to England, and they were dispatched to the front where they participated in numerous battles. As noted, Stacey was killed in a plane crash. Joe Clear Sky was wounded in a gas attack and was awarded the Military Medal for saving the life of a wounded companion whose gas mask had been destroyed. 106

Six Nations Women and the War: Edith Anderson Monture

While British women in Scotland were caring for Six Nations soldiers and supporting their war efforts abroad, one extraordinary woman from Six Nations actually served in the Great War as a nursing sister, the first and only woman from Six Nations to do so. Edith Anderson Monture, a Mohawk, was the youngest of the eight children of John Anderson and Mary Thomas Anderson. She attended day school on the reserve, and, as there was no high school at Six Nations, at the age of twenty Edith attended the Brantford Collegiate Institute. 107 However, before completing high school, she occasionally filled in for her brother Sam Anderson, teacher of No. 10 School. 108 Anderson applied to several nursing programs in Ontario but was turned down by all of them, which she believed was because of her race. Native women were generally not admitted into nursing programs in Canada at the time; many crossed the Canada-United

108 Personal Communication with Edith’s son Don Monture, October 5, 2008.
States border to enrol. She saw an advertisement in the Brantford *Expositor* for the New Rochelle Nursing School in New York, applied and was accepted. Anderson completed her training there, became a registered nurse in 1914, and was then hired as a nurse at a private school in New Rochelle. Her family had ties to wartime service: Edith’s brother-in-law, Richard Johnson, her sister Susan’s husband, enlisted in the 114th in 1916; and her sister-in-law, Mary, was Vice-President of the Stoneridge Methodist’s branch of the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League when it was formed in 1914.

In 1917, when the United States entered the war Anderson joined the Westchester County Unit B, American Expeditionary Force. This particular unit had twenty nurses, fifteen of whom

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109 Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, *Twice as Good.*
were Canadians.\textsuperscript{110} After three months of training in New York, Edith was scheduled to leave for France in February, 1918. Before she left, she came home to the reserve to visit her family. They gave her ceremonial Mohawk clothing for her to be buried in, in case she died overseas. Since so many soldiers were being killed, they did not expect her to return.\textsuperscript{111} Upon arriving in France, Anderson worked for over a year, treating soldiers who had been engaged in trench warfare and gas attacks.

Although it was strictly against the policy of the Army Nurse Corps, she kept a diary of her time as a nurse which her family published.\textsuperscript{112} Her experiences paralleled those of non-Native Canadian nurses in the war. Just over three thousand Canadian women enlisted in the war, the vast majority in the Canadian Army Nursing Corps. All were single and most had a high school education, which was unusual for many women. Nurses earned much respect in the field for their difficult and courageous work.\textsuperscript{113} When asked why she became a nurse, Edith replied “It was something to do,” and when asked how she had the courage to venture so far from home, she replied “I had nothing to do.”\textsuperscript{114} Clearly, Anderson had much nerve and determination to leave her home for training, work, and wartime service, but she downplayed these qualities. In her private diary, she did not report suffering from any discrimination. Her family suggests that, except for her exclusion from Canadian nursing schools, she denied being treated differently.

\textsuperscript{110} Terri L. Monture Wicks, ed., \textit{Diary of a War Nurse} (1996), 31.
\textsuperscript{111} Personal Communication with Edith’s son Don Monture, October 5, 2008.
\textsuperscript{112} Wicks, ed., \textit{Diary of a War Nurse}.
because she was Native. However, despite her denials, there is a strong possibility that she was discriminated against in her profession: it was a common experience for minority nurses in Canada.\textsuperscript{115} Barriers to Aboriginal nurses during this period included difficulty in acquiring enough high school education, assumptions by hospital officials that they suffered from ill-health, and costly and difficult relocation to a city with a nursing school that accepted aboriginal women.\textsuperscript{116} Anderson seems to have been able to overcome these obstacles, and was determined not to let her race or anything else stand in her way of becoming a nurse.

\textbf{Figure 19: Edith Anderson, Private Collection, John Moses, Ottawa.}

\textsuperscript{115} Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, \textit{Twice as Good}. See also Grace Poulin’s discussion of discrimination felt by Aboriginal women in World War II. Poulin, "Invisible Women: W.W.I.I. Aboriginal Servicewomen in Canada's Military”.

\textsuperscript{116} Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, \textit{Twice as Good}, 19.
Upon her return from France, Edith moved back to the reserve at Six Nations, and married Claybran Monture. She had four children and continued to work as a nurse at the new Lady Willingdon Hospital in Brantford until she was in her 70s. She also worked as a midwife in the community. In 1939, she was elected Honorary President of the Ohsweken Red Cross, and was involved in patriotic work on the homefront. Monture may have been a role model for other young women on the reserve who wanted to go into nursing, as it became an increasingly popular career for women at Six Nations after the Great War.

Because nurses were given the franchise under the 1917 Military Service Act, for several decades Monture was the only woman on the reserve who could vote. Other Native women were not enfranchised federally until 1960. Her son remembers other veterans encouraging her to go vote in federal elections with them. After her death in 1996 at the age of 106, her granddaughter Terri Monture stated that “Ours is a history of warriors, and Edith’s story proves that our women, too, could have followed this path throughout the ages.” Monture’s wartime service suggests that being a warrior was not a specifically masculine role: women also could be warriors. Monture’s war experience is part of the Six Nations cultural memory of the Great War, and she is still remembered by the community. In 2008, Monture was honoured at a commemoration of Six Nations women veterans held at Veterans Park on the Grand River Reserve. There is a street named Edith Monture Avenue in one of Brantford’s new subdivisions, and there will soon be a park named

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119 The wives and other female family members of Native soldiers were not given the right to vote.

120 Wicks, ed., Diary of a War Nurse, 4.

after her in the same area. While her name is not on any official plaque on the reserve, owing to the collective memory of her large family and her work for several decades as a nurse and midwife she remains well-known within the community. As historian John Moses states, “she was well-known to pretty much everyone.”

There is also a display featuring Edith Anderson Monture in the First Peoples Hall at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa.

“We, the mothers, sisters, wives etc., want to knit for our boys.”

While Edith Anderson’s war story was extraordinary, a far more typical role for Six Nations women was patriotic work on the homefront including raising funds, knitting socks, and preparing care packages for “their boys” overseas. Evelyn Johnson contributed her sister Pauline’s poem to be printed on brochures and sold to raise funds in the fall of 1914. Johnson’s poem “And He Said, ‘Fight On,’” was about her fight with cancer, but after her death in 1913, Evelyn authorized its use to raise money for the war. She explained: “I would do anything for the boys who were fighting for the Empire, so I… agreed to the idea. These were sent in quantity to lots of different cities and sold by associations and societies for war relief.”

Evelyn also used some of the money willed to her by Pauline for “as the nucleus of a subscription towards a machine gun… the money was sent to England and the gun purchased there. I requested… to have the Johnson family name – Tekahionwake – inscribed on the gun. It was called The Pauline by Six Vancouver men who had charge of it.” While few Six Nations women had the option

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123 A. M. Garlow to Hon. Dr. Roche, Minister of the Interior, Indian Dept., September 11, 1916. “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-1918.”

124 Johnson, Memoirs, 35.

125 Ibid. All six men who worked the gun were killed. After the war, it was returned to the city of Vancouver and was placed in the Armouries.
of participating in this type of fundraising, many women were able to contribute to the war through volunteer work within a league.

In early November, 1914, the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League (SNWPL) was the first Native women’s war relief organization to be formed. As the Six Nations reserve possessed the largest population of any reserve in Canada, and its people were considered by the Department of Indian Affairs to be the most “progressive” or “assimilated” Native people in the country, the League was a “showpiece” for the Department. That Six Nations women formed a patriotic league to support their men in the Great War suggests that they were comfortable using the methods of Anglo-Canadian women who, upon the outbreak of war, volunteered for local branches of organizations whose goals were often to aid overseas soldiers. Organizations such as the Canadian Red Cross, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE), and Women’s Institutes gave Canadian women a way to do their bit for the war.

The SNWPL had its counterpart in Brantford. Charlotte Livingston, who was involved in several organizations in Brantford, headed the Brantford Women’s Patriotic League. Fundraising, knitting, collecting goods to send overseas and writing letters were common enterprises of these groups, and the SNWPL did the same sorts of things for their own soldiers overseas. A non-Native Brantford woman, the author and historian Margaret A. Brown, founded the SNWPL. Brown canvassed the homes of Six Nations women on the reserve on November 5,

127 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1847-1875," 182.
129 Miss Ethel Raymond, "Women’s Part in the War," The Expositor, December 1916, 6.
1914; it is likely that she was volunteering for the Red Cross in Brantford.\textsuperscript{130} She and Augusta Gilkison, daughter of a previous Indian Agent and also a local historian, went door to door and found that the women of Six Nations had been knitting socks for their enlisted men.\textsuperscript{131} While Brown and Gilkison did not initiate the knitting, they did help the women to organize their war work into the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League (SNWPL) which continued its efforts throughout the war, and maintained a tradition of loyalty to the British Crown.

Once the SNWPL was founded in November 1914, Margaret Brown and Augusta Gilkison lent their support and experience to organizing the efforts of the women on the reserve. Soon after the founding of the League, non-Native Evelyn Davis, wife of reserve doctor Walter Davis, also worked with the League, and was part of the recruiting league. On behalf of the women of Six Nations, Brown wrote to Duncan Campbell Scott, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, asking for support for their work, telling Scott that “We are doing this because we have taken a great interest for some time in the Six Nations and this is an opportune time for the women to uphold the tradition of their Nation.”\textsuperscript{132} These three non-Native women were part of a small but growing number of non-Native allies of the Six Nations, part of a larger group of non-Natives with a history of assisting First Nations people in their dealings with the

\textsuperscript{130} Brown to Scott, 5 November 1914, RG-10, Vol. 6762 File 452-5 Pt 1, “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-1918,” LAC. Brown was Secretary of the Brant Historical Society from 1912-1914. According to the 1911 Census, she lived at the Brantford Jail during this period, as her husband was governor of the County Jail. Brant Historical Society, \textit{Manual of the Brant Historical Society: Organization and History, Constitution and Rules, Aims and Purposes, Activities of the Society} (Brantford, Ont.: 1920), 2.

\textsuperscript{131} Gilkison, (1862-1891), had been adopted by the Cayuga into the Bear Clan in 1913, and was a prominent member of the Brant Historical Society. See Morgan, "History, Nation, and Empire: Gender and Southern Ontario Historical Societies, 1890-1920s." Brown and Gilkison also both presented papers on “Voices of the War,” and “Voices of the land”, and “addresses in the interest of historical work” to the Brant Co. Women’s Institutes. Aryan Society and League, \textit{Report of the Aryan Society}.

\textsuperscript{132} Brown to Scott, 5 November 1914, RG-10, Vol. 6762 File 452-5 Pt 1, “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-1918,” LAC.
Canadian and British governments. To be sure, white women historically had played an important role in British colonialism, often working to “help” indigenous women by spreading Christianity and inculcating western concepts of proper womanhood. However, Brown, Gilkison and Davis were less interested in changing Six Nations women then in helping them negotiate with the bureaucracy of the Department of Indian Affairs, as well as their own Council.

Figure 20: The Executive of the Six Nations Women's Patriotic League, Ohsweken Council House, 1916.

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Margaret Brown and Augusta Gilkison met with both Christian and Longhouse women on the reserve and quickly named officers of the League, all Six Nations women. Helen Hill was named President and Amelia Garlow was Secretary Treasurer. Hill was a widow and an active member of the Ohsweken Baptist Church. Garlow was the only child of Chief Josiah Hill, one of the few pro-enlistment hereditary chiefs. The executive seems to have generally stayed the same throughout the war, except that in 1915 Sarah Jane Lottridge Johnson (Mrs. Fred Johnson) became the Secretary, and Amelia Garlow remained Treasurer. Johnson was the daughter of Pathmaster Alex Lottridge and Charlotte Martin, and her brother Welby Lottridge enlisted in 1915. He was later killed at Vimy Ridge. The non-Native resident missionaries’ wives from a number of the churches also participated. Like other non-Native women’s patriotic organizations, the SNWPL used existing social networks: each of the thirteen churches and one of the longhouses on the reserve nominated two Vice-Presidents to the executive, including the Methodists, Anglicans, Baptists, and the traditional longhouses. The women in the churches were often already involved in a Ladies’ Aid group, a Women’s Institute, or other women’s organizations dedicated to bettering the community. Despite the fact that very few Longhouse men enlisted, Longhouse women also were involved in this wartime work. There were four Longhouses on the reserve at the time, and one, the Sour Springs Longhouse, participated. The two Longhouse Vice-Presidents for Sour Springs, Mrs. Tecumseh General and Mrs. Henry

136 One son was Asa Hill, Secretary of the Six Nations Council. She was also related to Frederick O. Loft.... When Queen Mary was given a name, it was Helen’s name she was given: “Her Majesty Gon-mi-rohn-kwa” meaning “Everyone loves her.”

137 According to Amelia’s letter, Hill was for enlistment and recruitment, and supported Merritt’s offer. Other pro-enlistment chiefs included A. G. Smith (whose son was a lieutenant), J. S. Johnson (whose son enlisted), J. C. Martin, and Joseph Montour. Lackenbauer and McGowan, “Competing Loyalties in a Complex Community: Enlisting the Six Nations in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1917,” 105.

138 Attestation paper for Welby Howard Lottridge, regimental no. 802373, Canadian Expeditionary Force Personnel Files, RG 150, Accession 1992-9/166, Box 5746-43, LAC.

139 Jordan Baker suggests that of the 199 Six Nations men who listed a religion on their attestation papers, only 13 were Longhouse or “Pagan.” Baker, “The Six Nations of the Grand River during the First World War.”
Monture, appear to have had relatives enlist but it is unclear who these men were.\textsuperscript{140} The SNWPL was mostly a Christian women’s organization, but not exclusively.

The organization was a decidedly elite group, made up of community leaders with male family members who had enlisted. For instance, Mrs. John Burnham, Vice-President of St. John’s Church for the SNWPL, had seen her son, Wesley, enlist.\textsuperscript{141} As well, Ellen Johnson Loft (Mrs. William Loft), the Vice-President for Christ Church for the SNWPL, was married to the Speaker for the Six Nations Council in 1917, and she was sister-in-law to Lieutenant Frederick O. Loft. Lieutenant Loft had traveled to Britain with the 256\textsuperscript{th} Railway Construction battalion before being transferred to the Canadian Forestry Corps in France because of his previous lumber industry experience. Ellen Loft may well have thought of her brother-in-law while she collected socks for the SNWPL.\textsuperscript{142} Another woman with military connections also knitted for the SNWPL. Margret Baxter, a non-Native woman and widow of Lieut.-Col. Edwy Sutherland Baxter, decided to “provide each soldier in the [114\textsuperscript{th}] Batt. a pair of socks every month.” He was well-known, and “one of the most popular men in the opinion of the Indians.”\textsuperscript{143} The women of the SNWPL wanted to help Baxter, but it is unclear whether she reached her goal.

Although the names of the executive of the SNWPL are known, the names of the numerous individual women who knitted socks and brought them to the League to be sent

\textsuperscript{140} Catherine General apparently had a husband, 4 sons and 3 sons-in-law enlist, according to DC Scott. Hubert, Joseph and Kenneth General enlisted, according to the roll of honour. Scott, “The Canadian Indians and the Great World War.” Mrs. Henry Monture was likely Catharine Miller, the second wife of Henry Monture. Several Montures enlisted, as did several Millers.

\textsuperscript{141} Attestation paper for Wesley Burnham, regimental number 739187, Canadian Expeditionary Force personnel files, RG150, accession 1992-93/166, box 9406-39, LAC.

\textsuperscript{142} Donald B. Smith, “Onondeyoh, or Fred Loft,” in Dictionary of Canadian Biography University of Toronto, 2009. See also Vance, Death So Noble, 249.

\textsuperscript{143} “Recruited 35 Men on the Reserve, Recruiting Meeting at Ohsweken for Haldimand Successful,” Brantford Weekly Expositor, 10 December 1915. When Baxter passed away in February 1916, Andrew Thompson took over the leadership of the 114\textsuperscript{th} battalion.
overseas are unknown. However, we can assume that women whose family members were fighting knitted socks. Additionally, it is clear that the women believed they were knitting for “our boys,” whether they were direct family members or not. It is unclear how many Six Nations women were members of the League or participated, as no records are extant. However, there were twenty-seven members of the executive from the fourteen churches and the Longhouse, so it is likely that at least a hundred, if not more, women participated by knitting socks and raising money. While it is clear that Six Nations women were knitting before the visit of Brown and Gilkison in early November, it is unclear what form the Six Nations women’s organization would have taken if not for the involvement of the non-Native women. The organization formed before many Six Nations enlisted; thus women were not elected to the SNWPL executive simply because their husband or son had enlisted. Their motives for joining the League were likely a mixture of patriotism, support for their men, a desire to work with a respectable women’s group, and a history of voluntarism in the community.

The main intention of the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League was to provide their own enlisted men with comforts, including clothing and food. In December of 1914, the SNWPL sent a shipment of goods to England consisting of socks, wristlets, mitts, caps, helmets, silk handkerchiefs, chocolate, gum, nuts, candies, individual fruitcakes, Christmas puddings, tobacco, and writing paper. A similar shipment was sent to Six Nations soldiers training in Toronto at Exhibition camp. After the first large shipment was sent overseas, knitting socks seems to have been the main preoccupation of the SNWPL. Socks were extremely important

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144 Jordan Baker suggests that out of 197 returns that he looked at, only 7 enlisted in 1914. Likely there were more, but the majority enlisted in 1915 and early 1916. Baker, “The Six Nations of the Grand River During the First World War.”

145 These were the same goals of the Brantford Women’s Patriotic League, and others across the country. See Raymond, “Women’s Part in the War,” “Women War Workers,” The Expositor, December 1917.

during the Great War, since trench foot was a serious concern for soldiers who spent days and
weeks in the trenches. If their feet remained damp and cold, they could develop sores and blisters
which, if infected, could lead to gangrene and amputation. Clean, dry socks were an important
way to combat the condition and women in patriotic organizations across the country were
involved in this effort.147

Getting enough wool to knit the socks was a problem for the SNWPL. Margaret Brown
initially donated a large amount of wool, and when Amelia Garlow approached the Council
directly, they were finally given $50.00 with which to buy more wool.148 The women requested
funding from the Six Nations Council to buy wool to knit socks, as they could not afford to buy
much wool themselves. Dr. Walter Davis and Rev. Edmunds (a Methodist missionary)
approached Council with the request, but they were turned down. At first, they refused: “The
Council, after careful consideration refused to entertain the proposition on the grounds that the
propositions are made from outside sources, but will entertain the question and give careful
consideration if the women of the Six Nations would ask for the grant, and show that they are
desirous to do something for the soldiers who are gone to the front.”149 It is unclear why Davis
and Edmunds were first appointed to approach the Council, but as it was made up of men,
perhaps the women of the SNWPL believed it would be better to send two non-Native men with
some status and respect in the community to request the funding. However, Amelia Garlow then

147 Sarah Glassford discusses how various women’s groups, including the Toronto Women’s Patriotic League and
local branches of the Canadian Red Cross knit socks, especially in 1915 and 1916. Glassford, "Marching as to War:
The Canadian Red Cross Society, 1885-1939", 139-41.


149 Minutes of the Meeting, Ohsweken Council House, November 3, 1914. “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence
regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-
1918.” RG-10, Vol. 6763, File 452-5 Part 1, LAC. Interestingly, Chief Josiah Hill was Secretary of the Six Nations
Council at the time, and was the father of SNWPL President Amelia Garlow. He was also one of the “pro-war”
chiefs. “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League
for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-1918.”
approached the Council directly, and the SNWPL was finally granted $50.00 with which to buy more wool. After that difficulty, Brown attempted to compel the Council to grant them funding by bringing the Department of Indian Affairs into the picture, as the SNWPL felt that “there is prejudice [in the Council] against working through the white people.” Despite the fact that Duncan Campbell Scott supported the idea, and said that he was “glad to know that your work among the Six Nations Indian women...is so successful,” he could not force the Council to give the SNWPL funding. The Council continued to sporadically assist their work, although not without some reluctance. The Council did not actively support the war, and was therefore hesitant to provide financial aid to the SNWPL, a group that existed specifically because of the war. Although these women’s wartime work may seem unremarkable – an extension of women’s customary support of men’s military participation – in this particular context the women’s efforts to obtain funding from both the Council and Department were politically charged acts.

The League also sewed and knitted for Belgian Relief, sending knitted articles, handmade quilts, and home-made jelly. In March 1915, for example, Evelyn Davis collected four quilts made by the ladies of St. Peter’s Church. Neutral Belgium had been invaded and occupied by the German army in the fall of 1914, and, as the British were blockading the small import-dependent country, mass civilian starvation was a serious concern. Efforts were underway to provide relief for Belgian refugees, as well as the small enclave that managed to withstand the German invasion. Many in Canada were collecting goods to send, so the Six Nations women

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150 Mrs. M. A. Brown to Duncan Campbell Scott, 23 November, 1914. “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-1918.”

151 Duncan Campbell Scott to M. A. Brown, 27 November 1914. “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-1918.”

152 Hill, "Patriotic Work of the Six Nations in World Wars I and II."

153 Evelyn Davis to Margaret Brown, 29 March 1915. “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-1918.”
were taking part in a wider, international relief effort. That they were aware of the suffering of others in a country across the ocean and were interested in helping them suggests that they were not an isolated community. Their participation in Belgian Relief made them a part of an international network of female benevolence, and they may have seen their participation as such.

Raising money in order to continue their knitting and other handiwork, and to make donations to other groups was also a key component of the SNWPL’s work. They held a large rally and garden party in September 1915 on the Council House grounds in Ohsweken. Local talent entertained the crowd and the Six Nations band played. F. D. Reville of the Brantford Courier wrote “It may be said that no better program has been presented in Brant County.”\textsuperscript{154} $100 of the proceeds was sent to “Her Majesty Queen Mary for a Hospital bed for Red Cross purposes. They received a response from the Queen’s Private Secretary, E. W. Wallington, who stated: “I am commanded to ask you to convey to the donors an expression of Her Majesty’s warm appreciation of their generous gift, and to assure them that the Queen will gladly undertake to carry out their wishes.”\textsuperscript{155} In 1916, the SNWPL joined forces with the Aryan Society of Brant County to produce several small booklets for sale in order to raise both money and awareness of the work being done by the SNWPL.\textsuperscript{156} Margaret Brown was once again involved in these efforts as she authored a biography of Joseph Brant and history of the Six Nations that were sold

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\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, Aryan Society and Women’s Institutes, \textit{The Voice of the Knight and His Lady}.
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to raise funds. The Women’s Institutes of Brant County were also involved in these efforts, although it is unclear how many books were published or sold.

The work of the Women’s Patriotic League was reported positively in the Canadian media. In November 1914, the Brantford *Expositor* reported:

What the Indian women do, they do well, and it may be said to their credit that no finer knitted socks could be sent to the soldiers than those sent by the Six Nations women. A century ago the grandparents of those women who are now working were refugees in the wilds of Canada, driven from their home in the Mohawk Valley, as the Belgians are in England today, and their children will show in a practical way their sympathy for the Belgians. The women will continue their work during the war.

The national paper, *The Globe*, also reported on their efforts. In an article titled “Canadian Indians are doing their share,” the author reported that “down on the reserve of the Six Nations, at Brantford, the women are knitting for the soldiers who are going to the front – knitting assiduously under the direction of a local committee appointed among themselves – and there can be no doubt that their good wishes for the prospective wearers of articles go with them.”

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158 The Aryan Society seems to have been an organization which was interested in researching and learning about the ways in which “certain communities shared cultural features as a result of their sharing a common ‘Aryan stock’.” The group saw historic connections between the Mohawk and the “Saxons,” and was interested in both Six Nations history, language and artefacts, as well as their Great War efforts. There is a poem on the first page of the booklet beneath an image of the Mohawk Chapel which reads: “Mohawk and Saxon! Lords where the green earth reigns!/ If Valor be God, one blood flows in thy veins./ Red Kings of the Forest! Knights since the world began!/ Mohawk and Saxon! The Voice of God in his Image Man!” Aryan Society and League, *Report of the Aryan Society*. The Brant County Aryan Society’s interest in the Six Nations is a perfect example of the “profoundly mobile character” of ideas about race in the “web of empire.” The Six Nations were outward looking and had numerous connections not only with non-Natives in Brant County but with other members of the British Empire. The Six Nations were also of interest to these people, as is evidenced by the Aryan Society, and the interest of Milne-Home and Sarah Matheson. For a discussion of the global dissemination of ideas of Aryanism, see Tony Ballantyne, “Race and the Webs of Empire: Aryanism from India to the Pacific,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 2, no. 3 (2001); ———, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire*, Cambridge Colonial and Postcolonial Studies (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

159 Undated newspaper article, (November 1914) “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-1918.”

Not only was their work widely reported, it was applauded by the non-Native community in a time of national crisis. Historian Robert Rutherford suggests that “journalism often enhanced stereotypes of war relief campaign enthusiasm and ethnic difference,” and that fundraising drives “valorized this consensus-based, multicultural image of inclusive contributing.” Any “imagined kaleidoscope of social cohesion” around patriotic work reported in the papers aside, it is likely that the reportage of the SNWPL’s work was encouraging for members. They also received letters of thanks from Six Nations soldiers in France and Flanders.

While the Grand River Reserve community was divided during the war, it is clear that a number of its members took great pride in the Six Nations’ patriotic response to the war. SNWPL President Helen Hill apparently knit 225 pairs of socks herself, a feat so impressive that it was reported in her obituary when she died in 1921. Helen’s son, Asa R. Hill, Secretary of the Six Nations Council during the war, wrote “in the awful scenes on Flanders fields, the Six Nations showed their interest. They gave themselves as they had done before for the cause, they gave their money, they contributed to Patriotic Funds.” In an article published during World War II, the sister of Mary Sophia Smith Styres (Mrs. George D. Styres), one of the founding members of the Brock’s Rangers Benefit Society, praised all of the women’s work: “The women of the Six Nations... have shown outstanding loyalty, courage and devotion to Canada by faithfully supporting the Patriotic League of the last Great War and the Red Cross Work of the

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162 Ibid.
163 This is indicated in the records, but no letters are currently in the archives.
164 Brantford Weekly Expositor, October 10, 1921, 13.
165 Hill, "The Historical Position of the Six Nations."
present war." This type of rhetoric was similar to what the non-Native journalists had written earlier. The Department of Indian Affairs noted the work of the SNWPL in their Annual Reports during the war years, but whether the League was an inspiration to women in other Native communities is unknown.

Women in several other Native communities also formed patriotic leagues or branches of the Red Cross. As Sarah Glassford points out, Native women in the Canadian west formed branches of the Red Cross, and they prepared boxes full of “comforts” for Native soldiers overseas, including knitted socks and sweaters. Native women raised money from box socials, garden parties, rummage sales, concerts and euchre parties. Some also made and sold baskets and beadwork to raise money for patriotic purposes. Groups from reserves in Ontario and the Prairies were particularly active in undertaking patriotic work. The Christian Munsee people on the nearby reserve, Moravians of the Thames, also began knitting socks for their men who were overseas in England in 1916. The majority of the Native men who enlisted in the war came from these regions, so it is logical that female family members back home were involved in patriotic work.

166 ———, "Patriotic Work of the Six Nations in World Wars I and II." Mary Sophia Smith (Mrs. George D. Styres) and Florence Smith (Mrs. Joseph C. Hill) were sisters, both daughters of William Smith Jr. and Sarah Cecilia Russell.

167 Glassford, "Marching as to War: The Canadian Red Cross Society, 1885-1939", 239-40. Their work was also highlighted in the Red Cross publication "Patriotic Indians," Bulletin no. 6 (1915).

168 Scott, "The Canadian Indians and the Great World War," 324-6. The women of the Oneida of the Thames, the Chippewa of Saugeen, Wikwemikong and Sucker Creek of Manitoulin Island, the Rolling River band of Manitoba, the File Hills Colony, and from Qu’Appelle and Pelly all contributed.


170 Ibid, Dempsey and Center, Warriors of the King : Prairie Indians in World War I.
As previously mentioned, knitting, sewing, quilt-making and embroidery were skills that Six Nations women had been doing for some time. More recently, these types of skills had been taught at the Mohawk Institute. Western skills were certainly different from traditional Iroquois women’s handiwork but by 1914 they were not new to these women. Six Nations women had been knitting, sewing, and doing “fancy-work” for many decades. Although little historical research has been done on the evolution of Iroquois women’s crafts, it is clear that colonialism also resulted in Iroquois women’s adapting new skills which they added to their traditional crafts.

Aside from knitting and fundraising, the League made and embroidered a large flag for the 114th Battalion. According to Duncan Campbell Scott, they “worked a unique and singularly beautiful regimental flag for the [Brock’s] Rangers that elicited not a little comment and admiration.” Embroidered on a red woollen cloth background are four Iroquois clan symbols, a wolf, an eagle, a heron, and bear, as well as a turtle at the bottom which symbolizes Turtle Island, the earth. At the top of the flag is a lion and a dragon representing the British Crown, and at the bottom, the word “Canada.” There are six arrows in the centre to symbolize the Six Nations, as well as a white hare for the Ojibwa men who also served in the 114th. The flag represents the multiple identities of the men in the battalion, and also the multiple loyalties of the Six Nations. The references to both Canada and Britain suggest that while the Crown denied the Council’s demand for a request for help and men were enlisting in the CEF, the women of the

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SNWPL understood that the 114th battalion was evidence of both historic and ongoing relationships with Canada and the Crown.

On September 7, 1916, Amelia Garlow wrote to Prime Minster Robert Borden requesting a representative of the federal government, from either the War Office or the DIA to be in attendance at the presentation of the colours at Camp Borden on September 18. She wrote that “special permission has been given the Indian women of the Six Nations Patriotic League to present the “Iroquois Colors” to our warriors who will soon leave for overseas service.”174 General Lessard agreed to represent the Militia Department, but for some unknown reason the presentation was postponed.175 However, the Battalion received permission to carry the flag in addition to the King’s colours and the regular regimental colours, which suggests an important recognition by both sides of the multiple identities. The flag was a clear, self-conscious expression of their Native identity flown for all to see. It was specially cared for and returned to the community, where it is now on display at the Woodland Cultural Centre Museum.

174 A.M. Garlow to Robert Borden, 7 September 1916. “Presentation of Colours to Iroquois Indian Unit, CEF.” RG24, Vol. 1703, File HQ-683-431-1, LAC.

175 A.M. Garlow to Gen. Lessard, 16 September 1916. “Presentation of Colours to Iroquois Indian Unit, CEF.” RG24, Vol. 1703, File HQ-683-431-1, LAC. The file does not suggest why it was postponed, or when the presentation occurred.
After the Brock’s Rangers (114th Battalion) were organized, some Six Nations women formed another patriotic league on the reserve. In February 1916, the Brock’s Rangers Benefit Society (BRBS), was organized to minister to the needs of the Rangers by providing them with food and clothing. Mary Sophia Smith Styres (Mrs. George D. Styres) was president and

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Henrietta Porter Hill (Mrs. Enos Hill) the Secretary-Treasurer.\textsuperscript{177} Both women were also involved in the Ohsweken Women’s Institute and the Indian Moral Association; their patriotic work was an extension of their service the community, and also helped bolster their prominent status in the community. The BRBS raised about $350 with garden parties and tag sales.\textsuperscript{178} When the war was over they had $200 on hand which they used as the beginnings of a fund to build a memorial to Six Nations soldiers who died in France.\textsuperscript{179} Since no organization records exist, it is unclear if the BRBS’s funds were used to build the temporary war memorial in Victoria Park, Brantford in 1919. A permanent memorial was built at Veterans Park in Ohsweken in 1933, including a large granite monument.\textsuperscript{180} However, it is probable that they contributed to these monuments. Like Six Nations’ women’s other war work, their efforts to fund the memorial resembled non-Native women’s activities in commemoration of the War.

“The Socks are Safe”

During an outbreak of smallpox on the reserve in February and March of 1915, the military refused to transport overseas the socks knit by the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League. Officials claimed that the socks were infected, but still accepted socks from the city of Brantford, when in fact there were more cases of smallpox in the city than on the reserve. This was not the first time either the Six Nations or other First Nations communities has experienced such treatment. Irrational fear of disease in connection to racialized minorities in Canada and

\textsuperscript{177} Reville, \textit{History of the County of Brant}, 616. Mrs. Styres’ daughter Mabel married Hilton Hill, brother of Enos Hill, so they were related by marriage. Several Porters and numerous Hills enlisted.

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{179} Of the 292 Six Nations men who enlisted, twenty-seven were killed in action, six died from sickness, one was missing, one was taken prisoner, and fifty-five wounded. Ibid., 620.

\textsuperscript{180} Moses, ”The Return of the Native (Veteran)”, 87.
other colonies has been a common racist response from white colonial societies. During a previous outbreak of smallpox on the reserve in 1901, the Council, the local Board of Health, and area doctors all acted to protect the community and the surrounding areas by closing off a small section of the reserve and using mounted patrolmen to enforce the limited quarantine. The cities of Brantford and Hamilton responded in fear and overreacted, banning any Native people from entering their cities and trying to quarantine the entire reserve. A Methodist minister from Brantford went so far as to suggest that “the deplorable condition of the reserve, both morally and sanitarily,” had led to the outbreak. A few weeks later, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs replied in the local paper that, since the epidemic now included the city of Brantford, the minister would have reason to level the same charges against the non-Native inhabitants of Brantford. Given this history, when smallpox broke out on the reserve in 1915 it was not surprising that the women of the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League felt they were being discriminated against. Evelyn Davis who, as we have seen, was a member of the SNWPL and married to the reserve doctor, told Margaret Brown in March 1915 that “nearly a hundred pairs of socks have been on hand for some time and the Indians feel that they are being unfairly discriminated against since supplies for the soldiers are being accepted from other small-pox infected districts – Brantford, for instance – and not from the reserve, where there are now only six cases.” Brown then wrote to Duncan Campbell Scott, insisting that “the socks are safe,”

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182 Weaver, “Smallpox or Chickenpox: An Iroquoian Community’s Reaction to Crisis, 1901-1902.”

183 Ibid.

but Scott told her to make sure the Brantford Medical Officer of Health approved sending on the socks. By May, the SNWPL still did not have permission to send them. Amelia Garlow wrote to Scott, “as now that it is all passed away and no outbreak has developed in our homes where the knitted goods are stored away I write to ask if we could now send them to our boys of the Six Nations where still on the battlefield providing we take the necessary precautions of having all the goods fumigated.”  

She continued, making reference to previous battles in which the Six Nations were allied with Britain: “It gives me some degree of pride and satisfaction to know that there are some Six Nations blood being shed again.” Scott again replied that the women needed to take the advice of the doctor. He added: “I am proud to know that the Six Nations are well-represented at the front, and I am sure that the boys will uphold the tradition of their race, and give a good account of themselves in defence of the Empire. I hope that the comforts your League has thoughtfully provided will reach them safely.” Finally, the socks were indeed sent, but not without the women feeling anger at the government’s actions. No amount of patriotic work by the Six Nations women could remove the stigma of race from their efforts, regardless of how much praise and lip service they otherwise earned from white Canadians.

In the fall of 1916, the Women’s Patriotic League faced even more problems. The Council refused to continue to support the efforts of the League by providing funding for wool, in part because there had been crop failures and they were concerned about having to provide relief to members of the community in the winter. They also refused support on the grounds of

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186 Ibid.

sovereignty: “the Six Nations were a sovereign nation and had not declared war on Germany therefore, their boys were wearing foreign uniforms and were not representatives of the Six Nations.”

Amelia Garlow appealed to the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Roche, asking for money out of the Land Management Fund and explaining that “we the mothers, sisters, wives, etc, want to knit for our boys, but unless funds are provided for, we shall be obliged to discontinue our work.” Roche forwarded the letter to Scott, and while Scott approved of their work, he was unable to release any of the Six Nations money to the Women’s Patriotic League. He explained that “Parliament only provides us with money for certain definite purposes and the very worthy object you have in view is not included in any of these appropriations.” After the League submitted a report on their work to the Council in November 1916, the latter agreed to provide funds for yarn, but wanted to make sure that the socks were going to Six Nations men in the 114th Battalion who were overseas. The women continued to apply for, and receive, sporadic funding throughout 1917 and 1918.

It is important to note that not all Six Nations women supported the war. Several women wrote to Chief Thunderwater in Cleveland, Ohio, the head of the American Council of Indian Tribes, to request his help in getting their husbands and sons either discharged or transferred.

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190 Also, the Land Management Fund had closed in 1911. Duncan Campbell Scott to Amelia Garlow, September 16, 1916. “War 1914-1918 – Correspondence regarding funds awarded to the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for knitting done for Indians overseas, 1914-1918.” RG-10, Vol. 6763, File 452-5 Part 1, LAC.

191 Thunderwater was organizing the Council of Tribes in the early war years, and had made visits to several Iroquois reserves, including Grand River in October 1916. He purported to want to help the Six Nations fight the government, and the Department of Indian Affairs carefully watched his activities. In 1918, Thunderwater’s attempt to incorporate the Council of Tribes was halted by Duncan Campbell Scott who had managed to convince the Minister of the Interior and the Prime Minister that he was a serious threat, and the bill for incorporation was withdrawn from consideration by Parliament. See Gerald F. Reid, “Must We Resign Ourselves to Such Injustice?”:
Annie Jamieson John of Sixty Nine Corners wrote to Thunderwater in March, 1917 requesting his assistance in getting her husband Chauncey discharged, explaining that “I’m unable to do all the work there is to do here as we are alone and my father is getting old.”  Chauncey John had not passed his medical inspection and was listed for home service after he enlisted in October 1916. While John was not discharged, he was transferred from the #2 Construction Battalion at Windsor to the #256 Railway Construction Battalion at Toronto, along with several other Six Nations men. Thunderwater also responded to a letter from Mrs. Joseph Maracle of Grimsby who wrote requesting that her underage son, James Webster, be discharged. Maracle’s husband had also enlisted, so she was home alone with four small children. She requested forms so that she and two other women, Mrs. J. E. Lickers and Mrs. D. A. Lickers could “sign up” for Thunderwater’s band. In response, Thunderwater wrote that the “boy” had the natural protection of his father, and that:

It is very much to the good of all the Indians of Canada to give as much service to bring victory to the arms of Britain as possible. I therefore advise that you leave the situation as it is, and make the best of a bad job as thousands of the white people of Canada and all of the European world are now doing at the present time. There is no one on earth more in sympathy with you than myself, but this is my advice.

While Thunderwater wrote encouraging replies to John and Maracle, he also reported their requests to the Secretary Military Council, and included their letters. He suggested that “A little investigation at Ohsweken will reveal to you the identity of a woman that publicly is in great

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192 Johns’ letter was written on stationary with the Red Ensign and the St. George’s Cross flags printed on the top of the page and the envelope. Annie John to Chief Thunderwater, 9 March 1917. RG-24-C-1-a, Vol. 1221, File HQ-593-1-7, Part 2, “Enlistment of Indians for Overseas Service European War,1914-1921,” LAC.

193 These men requested changes in large part due to the “dislike of our people for the negro,” Chief Thunderwater to Mrs. Annie John, 14 March 1917. RG-24-C-1-a, Vol. 1221, File HQ-593-1-7, Part 2, “Enlistment of Indians for Overseas Service European War,1914-1921,” LAC.

sympathy with the Government and Privately goes among the Indians and dissuades them from knitting socks, contributions, or enlisting in this war.” Thunderwater was likely referring to Annie John, who lived in the reserve and had several family members enlisted, and not Mrs. Joseph Maracle, who lived in nearby Grimsby. These cases suggest that while women may have publicly supported the war, some may have believed that their husbands’ and families’ needs were more pressing. The community of Christian women also may have exerted pressure to support the war effort. The same year, some Longhouse women and at least one man protested the enlistment of their underage sons, and requested that they be sent home. In a letter to King George V, Joseph Sky, Lucinda Bomberry, Maggie Williams and Elizabeth Fish demanded the return of their sons who “enlisted in Your Majesty’s army by the persuasion of other men.” It is unclear, however, whether they came home early. Six Nations women probably were not alone; some non-Native families likely felt the same way.

Politics and Problems

Not only was the Six Nations Women's Patriotic League possibly undermined by some of its members and only given grudging support by the Council during the war, but the Council’s lack of support for the soldiers and their families back home was also a serious breaking point.

196 Paul, Will, Thomas and William John all enlisted, and Paul John was killed. He was likely a relative of Annie, as Thunderwater noted that she had relatives killed in the war. Mrs. David John, the wife of a Chief, was Vice President of the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for the Johnsfield Baptists. Hill, "Patriotic Work of the Six Nations in World Wars I and II," 52.
between supporters of the Hereditary Council and those who favoured a new elected council.  

The soldiers were so angered by the lack of support that they circulated a petition in 1917 that they sent to the Canadian government. Written by Lieutenant O. M. Martin, Lieutenant James D. Moses, Major C. Smith, and Sergeant William F. Powless, the petition stated that

> circumstances have made it so that we can no longer look on our present council with respect or confidence, and we therefore sign this as an agreement, to do all in our power to rid our nation of the said council, and in its place to establish a government representative of the people, whereby we as Six Nations Indians in general, may be intelligently represented, and that our public affairs and national spirit may be properly looked after.

They received no response but, when they arrived home, the veterans wrote another petition which specifically commented on the lack of support their family members received during the War: “During the whole of the time that we were overseas the council did not do one single thing for us or our dependants. Instead of helping to make the lot of our families and ourselves easy to bear, they tried to make us suffer.” The petition then explains that the Haldimand County Patriotic Society provided financial support for the dependants, but in 1917, when the Society’s funds ran low, they asked the Council for support, since the Patriotic Society was supporting Six Nations people. The Council emphatically refused and the Society threatened to cut off all support unless the Council pitched in; however, they held their position. A missionary on the reserve intervened and the Society continued to support the people but had difficulty doing so without the Council’s support. As historians have argued, this battle between the veterans and

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198 Moses, "The Return of the Native (Veteran)".

199 “Copy of Original Petition, France, August 8, 1917” “Petitions 1862-1919 from Six Nations to the federal government – political reports” File 1, Box 468, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.

200 “1919 Petition” Source – Six Nations Agency Archives, LAC, No 32-32, Vol. 2.” “Petitions 1862-1919 from Six Nations to the federal government – political reports” File 1, Box 468, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.

201 Ibid.
the hereditary council later evolved into a much larger argument and resulted in the creation of a new elected council in 1924.  

The patriotic work of the Six Nations women, alongside the enlistment of Six Nations men (and one woman), counteracted the Council’s failure to support the war. Their work and service maintained the tradition of loyalty to the Crown in spite of their leaders’ failure to do so. In terms of those left in the community during the War, it was the SNWPL who worked with the Department of Indian Affairs in supporting their enlisted men, and not the Six Nations Council. The SNWPL upheld the tradition of loyalty and alliance with the British Crown during a time of war. They preserved the community’s historic ties to the British Empire despite the Council’s decision neither to support the war, nor to consistently fund the League’s war work at home.

**Post-War Politics**

The position of the Six Nations soldiers was complicated by the politics of the reserve, themselves shaped by the tensions between the Council and the Dominion government, and also by the limited recognition given to them by the state and settler society. Despite the fact that Six Nations soldiers felt that their participation was a display of masculinity and bravery, their efforts were rarely recognized. Angela Woollacott suggests that the military service of colonized men in the Great War notwithstanding, for most of them “claims to masculinity were not such a recognized prize of war.” For Six Nations soldiers, the fact that their work as “warriors” often

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203 Woollacott, *Gender and Empire*, 77. In another example, Richard Smith suggests that for Jamaican soldiers, “the war threw up unique relationships through which race and masculine identities were redefined.” Smith, *Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War: Race, Masculinity and the Development of National Consciousness*, 8. See also
entailed manual labour and being used as a spectacle might have compromised their masculine self-identity as a soldier. However, unlike other colonial soldiers, it does seem that upon arriving home, they had earned some respect. Barbara Bush suggests that “the only colonized men to retain white respect were those admired for their military prowess and rugged independence, evoking white male nostalgia for frontier masculinities.” The only Six Nations men that gained respect from the DIA were those whose feats were extraordinary, like the few who became airmen, and those that earned medals for feats of bravery, as evident when Scott repeated stories describing these particular acts of heroism in the 1919 publication "The Canadian Indians and the Great World War.” While it is not always clear what the DIA thought about Six Nations men’s masculinity, it respected the demands of the veterans for a new elected government in 1924, something that suited the Department’s goals for the community.

After the war, a large group of veterans worked for changes on the reserve with the support of at least part of the community and the federal government. John Moses suggests that “the Six Nations veterans of the Great War constituted, in sociological terms, an elite,” in part because of the status of veterans in postwar Canada. He adds: “In the hyper-nationalist and patriotic environment of postwar Canada, these newly returned Six Nations veterans capitalized upon their status as Dominion Great War veterans and the ideal of the warrior tradition within orthodox Iroquois culture, something neither the Confederacy Chiefs nor their non-combatant


204 Despite the fact that this sort of spectacle was not new, and that the Iroquois often capitalized on these occasions to gain support or to strike fear into white opponents, there is no doubt that the military intended to use the group of men who toured Scotland for recruiting and patriotic purposes.


206 Scott, ”The Canadian Indians and the Great World War.”

supporters of military age could claim legitimately.‖ While many in this faction of the community had been demanding an elective government since at least the 1890s, it was the veterans who finally were able to help bring about the change. This is a contentious issue, as many from the community argue that the elective council was imposed upon them by the government; however, at least a faction of the community made up of veterans, their families, and the Christian elite on the reserve wanted the change. Out of the first twelve councillors elected in 1924, two were veterans, Lieutenant Frank Montour and Sapper Joseph Hill. 209 Veterans Percy Cayuga, William Smith and Kenneth General became councillors in 1925. Wesley Burnham became a councillor in 1931. 210 Carl Benn suggests that when men came home from challenging, difficult and dangerous work abroad, such as the Mohawk voyageurs in Sudan in 1885 or those who had been foremen in New York city’s high steel industry, they attracted a following that “in some ways, emulated the old customs associated with war chiefs, by which individuals gained status based on their ability to draw others to their leadership and to deliver rewards to those who joined them.” 211 This was certainly also the case with Great War veterans.

The Soldier Settlement Act was another issue that was very contested on the reserve in the post-war period. It gave the DIA expanded powers to allot reserve land to veterans, and the Confederacy Chiefs were against the idea. 212 However, land was allotted to veterans, and problems ensued in the 1920s as a result. The Six Nations found allies in the two British women

208 Ibid.
209 Ibid., 125. Joseph Hill’s wife was the SNWPL Vice-President for Christ Church.
211 Benn, Mohawks on the Nile, 102.
212 See also Brownlie, “Work Hard and Be Grateful: Native Soldier Settlers in Ontario after the First World War.”
that the soldiers had met in Scotland in 1916, Mary Milne-Home and Sarah Matheson. They stayed in touch with the veterans during the early 1920s and discussed the Soldier’s Settlement loans and the problems that Great War veterans were having repaying them, as well as problems with grants of land given to soldiers within their reserves. Milne-Home and Robertson wrote numerous letters to the Prime Minister, the Governor General, and the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs among others, in which they demanded that the veterans be treated fairly because of their wartime service. In particular, they were angered by the Soldier Settlement Act which granted lands to veterans but with mortgages that put them at financial risk. Mathieson wrote to J. D. McLean, Assistant Secretary and Deputy of the DIA, “Their Loyalty deserves – indeed demands – that they should be dealt with not only in the most scrupulously just manner, but even with generosity.” The letters refer to the cases of specific Six Nations men that they had met in 1916 in Edinburgh, and also to distant cousins of Mary Milne-Home. Perhaps the tour and spectacle of the soldiers in 1916 was effective at gaining the Six Nations supporters and allies, which may have been one of their goals.

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213 Sarah Robertson Matheson was born in 1863 in Dunfermline, Scotland. She married Kenneth Mathieson in 1885, director of the local iron foundry company. They had no children and her husband died in 1924. She published patriotic, historic, and romantic poetry in the 1890s and was a prominent member of the Clan Donnachaidh (Robertson) Society. Her family was an “Empire family,” as many of Matheson’s cousins and family members traveled to outposts of the British Empire. It is unclear what Matheson knew of the Six Nations prior to World War I but it was likely that through her work with these soldiers, she became interested in helping them. Personal communication with relative Sarah Robertson Innes, November 6, 2008. For instance, Sarah’s brother traveled to Australia where he worked as a gold miner, but he seems to have also been involved in colonial affairs there. In a 1922 letter, Sarah mentioned that her brother was collecting information in West Australia about how Natives were being swindled there. Sarah Robertson Matheson to Travers Buxton, 27 September 1922, in the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society Fonds, LAC.

214 For example, Sarah Robertson Mathieson to the Governor General, February 25 1922; Sarah Robertson Mathieson to the Prime Minister of Canada, January 31, 1923; Mary Pamela Milne-Home to the Governor General, February 6 1923, RG-10, Vol. 2285, File 57,169-1A, Part 2. Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, Reports, Memoranda, Publications and Newspaper Clippings regarding the Political Status of the Six Nations, 1921-23, LAC.


216 The activist work of Milne-Home and Mathieson will be investigated further in a future project.
Conclusion

Gender relations shaped the Six Nations peoples’ patriotic responses to the war. The women’s patriotic work combined aspects of traditional Iroquois women’s work during times of war with characteristics of white women’s home-front work. However, it was the first time that Six Nations women worked with the Canadian government to give their men military support. The military shipped their goods to soldiers at the front, and they worked through established military systems that were not their own traditional ones. They also circumnavigated their hereditary Council and communicated with the DIA to try to get funding for their efforts. As well, it was the first time that Six Nations women worked with non-Native women such as Margaret Brown, Augusta Gilkison and Evelyn Davis, as well as through non-Native women’s organizations, including the Red Cross and the Women’s Patriotic League. Previously they had not worked through their churches, petitioned the Council and the Department of Indian Affairs for money, or even formally named their efforts, such as they did with the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League. After the War, women’s organizations at Grand River were revitalized and women’s participation in voluntary work increased. It is likely also the first time that Six Nations women knit socks on such a large scale. While they still provided their men with clothing and food, the specific items were different and drew upon different types of skills. They no longer stitched moccasins, or made corn bread for their warriors. And possibly most importantly, the experiences that they gained in organizing, campaigning, letter-writing, and fundraising were put to further use throughout the next few decades when women became increasingly involved in social reform, voluntary associations, and community improvement.
Chapter 5

“We decided that something must be done:”¹ Social Reform, Voluntary Associations, and Community Work on the Reserve

As in other rural Ontario communities in the period, Grand River society had its reformers bent on improving the local population in varying ways. Their motives and efforts were similar to those of Anglo-Canadian missionaries and social reformers in other communities, including other reserves. In this case, however, the Six Nations themselves tried to mould the community into a place that the reformers believed would be more economically productive and morally upright. Centuries of missionizing and colonialism meant that the Department of Indian Affairs and the churches had little work to do. As Elizabeth Graham has suggested, they became “the agents of civilization in their own communities.”² The Christian Native elite used voluntary organizations and societies to effect change on the reserve, either through written protests or action on their own part. Initiatives for improvements on the reserve came from the Christian Six Nations: bolstering the morality of schoolchildren; building sidewalks in Ohsweken; purchasing

¹ Johnson, Memoirs, 33.
wood and food for poor families; putting water fountains in the schools; improving agricultural methods to maximize production; and providing Sunday schools. All these were local initiatives that aligned perfectly with DIA policy and the Department’s hopes for Canada’s First Nations. However, by the early twentieth century the Six Nations had taken the ball and were running with it.

As has been apparent in previous chapters, the Six Nations differed from other First Nations communities in Canada, probably because of their early acculturation, high Christian conversion rates, and leadership within their community. In many ways, they were similar to non-Native rural communities in Ontario at the time, and many members took part in both Social Gospel and social reform movements. According to Richard Allen, “the spirit of reform was abroad in the land,” where “reformers were attempting the awesome task of reshaping Canadian society.” Some Christians on the reserve who were concerned with the social problems of the reserve, especially Mary Sophia Smith Styres (Mrs. George D. Styres), believed that “Christianity was a social religion, concerned... with the quality of human relations on this earth.” As a result, issues such as temperance and moral reform were on the minds of reformers, and they generally worked through voluntary association and societies.

Native women have generally been left out of the historiography of women’s organizations in Canada, possibly because of their more general absence from Canadian

3 Little has been written about similar developments in other communities. However, see Sarah Carter’s important work on First Nations’ efforts to improve agricultural production on prairie reserves Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*; also Susan Neylan’s work on Tsimshian zeal for Christianity, Susan Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).


women’s historiography. Additionally, even if Native women had been included in their inquiries, feminist historians’ frameworks and arguments about social reform—which have often pointed to the class-based and ethnocentric attitudes and practices of female moral reformers—might have had difficulties incorporating Native women as active agents in the movement. Nonetheless, Six Nations’ women sometimes formed their own branches, or joined non-Native branches; even if their numbers were small, they took part in the social reform movement and were not just the recipients of non-Native women’s attempts to “help” their Native sisters. In the United States, Native American women created branches and joined women’s clubs and associations earlier than women in Canada, developments which have received attention from American historians.

Sally Weaver suggests that “voluntary associations played an important role in the [Six Nations] community,” as they “offered individuals educational and leadership opportunities, and for the community they provided entertainment and public service.” Six Nations women who drew “on indigenous traditions as well as sharing in evolving Canadian middle-class practice...

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7 Canadian Native women’s post-World War II work in such organizations has received some attention. See, for instance, Chapter Eight, “Modernizing the north: women, internal colonization and indigenous peoples.” Pickles, Female Imperialism and National Identity.


9 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 218.
played active community roles in the post-Confederations decades." They reinvented traditional Iroquois women’s power. While traditionally clan mothers held a degree of political power within the community, Christian women had no formal political power at all. With increasing conversion to Christianity, women lost their traditional roles but, during this period, they found new ways to manage the community. Moreover, John Moses suggests that the returned Six Nations Great War veterans became a political and social elite in the community, as several went on to careers as elected councillors or other community leaders. Such was the case with their wives, many of whom became involved in the executives of women’s organizations on the reserve and were able to influence community affairs that way. While women did not gain the right to vote or run in the new elective council of 1924 and clan mothers lost their political power with the new system, many Christian women exerted influence over their community through their work with the Women’s Institutes, the Indian Moral Association, and other organizations. When Longhouse women lost the right to nominate hereditary chiefs in 1924, elite Christian women’s power may have increased, as their husbands and male family members gained control through the elected council.

The Women’s Patriotic League, the Women’s Institutes and the elected council were linked, a network which created a “ruling class” on the reserve. In general, it was the more prosperous rural women who participated in these groups, although some women came from the village of Ohsweken. Most of the women involved were Anglican or Baptist, and the Ladies’ Aid groups from those churches also participated in the improvement of the community. Teachers were often involved in these organizations, and at times they helped to focus the group’s attention on the needs of Six Nations schools. In particular, the Women’s Institutes, Indian Moral

10 Strong-Boag and Gerson, Paddling Her Own Canoe, 44-5.
11 Moses, "The Return of the Native (Veteran)", 3-4.
Association, and branches of the IODE all took an interest in the schools. Members were concerned with the future generations and put time, money and effort into improving education at the days schools on the reserve and at the Mohawk Institute. As we have seen, the education received by Six Nations men and women focused on training them to be moral, industrious farmers and farm wives. These organizations were perfect outlets after this sort of training.

It is important to note that, for the most part, Christians and not Longhouse adherents were involved in these types of organizations. With the exception of their participation in the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League during the Great War, Longhouse women did not partake in these societies. At times, Longhouse people, or “pagans” or “deists” were the object of Christian reformers on the reserve, but more often they seem to have been ignored. While a lack of sources makes it difficult to determine the extent of Longhouse women’s involvement in shaping their community, it is likely that they used their own traditional values and practices for its betterment.

There were also several men’s groups on the reserve, in particular the Six Nations Agricultural Society, the Farmers’ Institutes, and the Plowmen’s Association, organizations that often worked in conjunction with the women’s groups to raise money and hold competitions and social events. Most were single sex groups, although the SNAS, for example, had Lady Directors. In this way, community work was gendered; while men were involved in several agricultural organizations, women worked more directly on improving the community through social reform.

In many ways, there are similarities between these organizations and those of Anglo-Canadian women’s groups in Brant County and the rest of country. The social reform efforts on the reserve were both similar to traditional Iroquois women’s efforts to improve the community and also similar to Anglo-Canadian women’s efforts around the same time. Finally, World War I was a watershed for women’s organizations on Six Nations, as was the case with white women’s
organizations in Canada. While many groups formed prior to the war, most women redirected their efforts towards the war in 1914. After the war, women’s associations emerged with more experience in organization, fundraising, and campaigning. This experience was increasingly put to greater use in the 1920s, and can be seen in the expansion of groups such as the three branches of the Women’s Institutes that were founded on the reserve. By 1939, women were practised and efficient in their organizing skills, and the Red Cross took advantage of this in using the established organizations during the home-front efforts of World War II.

**Christian Churches**

As Chapter 1 has shown, the Grand River reserve saw the establishment of a number of Christian churches in the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Six Nations were a predominantly Christian community, and the churches were the central organizing factor for many families. Community life often revolved around the church. Although the numbers are contested, Sally Weaver suggests that in 1890, there were 2167 Christians on the reserve, and 684 Longhouse members.  

12 By 1924, those numbers had grown to 3445 Christians and 975 Longhouse members.  

13 The largest Christian church on the reserve was the Anglican Church, funded in part by the New England Company. The Baptists were the second largest group, and the Methodists the third.  

14 There were virtually no Catholics on the reserve, and no Catholic Church.  

15 The activities of these churches were very similar to church-based work in

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12 Table 10.1, Christian Affiliation among the Six Nations. Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 219. For contestations of Weaver's work, see Hill, "Through a Haudenosaunee Lens: An Examination of Sally Weaver's Six Nations Historical Publications".


14 Ibid.

15 In 1890 there were apparently 23 Roman Catholics at Grand River, and none since. Ibid.
non-Native rural communities and small towns at the same time.\textsuperscript{16} Members of the community worked with the missionaries on the administration and maintenance of the church by teaching Sunday school, acting as deacons and elders, and participating in the construction and maintenance of the churches. Weaver explains that “various fund-raising activities – teas, suppers, strawberry socials, garden parties, and picnics – provided the necessary funds for new furnishings, organs, and books. The women prepared the food and brought it to the church hall or, occasionally, to the council house, where larger crowds could be fed.”\textsuperscript{17} Many of the women involved in the Ladies Aid groups at the churches were also involved in other organizations, such as the Women’s Institutes. For instance, Sophia Smith Styres (Mrs. George D. Styres) attended St. Paul’s Anglican Church, or Kanyengeh all of her life. She was baptized there, played the church organ for twenty-two years and also was involved in the IMA, the SNAS, and the Ohsweken WI.\textsuperscript{18} Teacher Julia Jamieson acted as the clerk and treasurer of the Ohsweken Baptist Church, sat on the music committee and was president of the local branch of the Baptist Young People’s Union.\textsuperscript{19} She was also involved in the Six Nations Agricultural Society, the Six Nations Teacher’s Organization, and occasionally spoke at Women’s Institute (WI) meetings.

Another Six Nations woman, Hazel Miller, was involved in the Baptist Church. Her previous history demonstrates that these women’s relationships to settler society’s institutions might be complex and at times ambivalent. As was discussed in Chapter 2, Miller attended the Mohawk Institute as a child after the death of her mother Francis but, following several runaway

\textsuperscript{16} See Marks, \textit{Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario}.

\textsuperscript{17} Weaver, “The Iroquois, 1875-1945,” 218.

\textsuperscript{18} Interview with Mrs. Mabel Styres Hill, about her parents, Sophia Smith and George D. Styres. File 15, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.

\textsuperscript{19} “Ohsweken Baptist Church.” File 5, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
attempts and a 1913 court-case launched by her father Chief George Miller, she attended the day school near her home.\textsuperscript{20} With the help of the Reverend Glen Wardell, pastor of the Ohsweken Baptist Church, Hazel moved to Toronto to attend the Toronto Bible College. She graduated in 1932 at age twenty-one. Upon her return home, she “devoted her short life to mission work among her own people.”\textsuperscript{21} In 1932, she began teaching Sunday school out of her father's home, just south of Ohsweken. A year later, she moved her mission to her own cottage nearby, where, “in spite of ill health she faithfully carried on the work of the mission. She conducted prayer meetings, [and] open-air evangelic services, with the help of neighbouring ministers.”\textsuperscript{22} Miller’s efforts were focused on the children of “Deist” parents (likely Longhouse adherents). In 1938 at the age of thirty-six she died of bronchial pneumonia, and her siblings established the Bethany Baptist Mission in her memory.\textsuperscript{23} Her sister Ruth, who had also attended the Mohawk Institute and was the ringleader in running away from it, supervised the building of the mission.\textsuperscript{24} The Bethany Mission Church still stands. Such women were leaders within the church and affected change in this way.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{20} See Chapter 3 for further details.
\textsuperscript{21} Jamieson, \textit{The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Ohsweken Baptist Church}, 11.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Province of Ontario Certificate of Registration of Death. March 15, 1938. Hazel Miller, Tuscarora, Brant County.
\textsuperscript{24} Ruth “accumulating enough money from her savings to pay for all the labour. The mission was built at a cost of $500 and has a seating capacity of eighty-five.” Jamieson, \textit{The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Ohsweken Baptist Church}, 12.
Early Organizations: Temperance and Benevolent Societies

Weaver argues that the first voluntary association on the reserve was the Union Temperance Society. This group was attended predominantly by Christians, but in the mid-nineteenth century it also attracted Longhouse members, both men and women, who followed the Code of Handsome Lake’s stance against alcohol.26 There were also temperance societies in Brantford and the County as early as the 1830s, and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union was established in Brantford in 1876.27 However, despite the fact that the temperance of Native Canadians concerned the WCTU, they do not seem to have been interested in the Reserve.28 At Six Nations, temperance unions made up of the people themselves worked within their own community to decrease the amount of drinking on the reserve. The Six Nations Council sponsored five branches of the Union Temperance Society on the reserve by the end of the century. Monthly meetings were held in members homes or in one of the small halls built by the societies.29 Six Nations Superintendent E. D. Cameron noted in 1898 that “The Indians generally are moral and temperate, in their habits. There are several temperance societies on the reserve doing good work. Intemperance is certainly greatly on the decrease among the Six Nation Indians.”30 Later reports suggested that the temperance societies “claim that they are increasing in membership,” and that they “assist any effort to prevent the use of intoxicants on the

26 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 218.
28 Cook, 'Through Sunshine and Shadow', 103-04.
reserve."\(^{31}\) The executive of the Temperance Society brought in speakers and, after the meetings, the women served a meal. In the summer, larger picnics were held at 69 Corners (an area just south of Ohsweken at Chiefswood Road and Second Line) and speakers “preached in a fire-and-brimstone fashion against the evils of intoxicating beverages, and older men gave testimonials on how they had reformed or how they had avoided temptation.”\(^{32}\) Annual meetings were held in conjunction with the Oneida at Muncey or at the Tuscarora Reserve in Lewiston, New York. \(^{33}\) In 1912, the local branch (#4) of the Union Temperance Society began to build a meeting hall in the village of Ohsweken. \(^{34}\) During construction, a factional dispute split the organization, and the Tuscarora Lodge #1 was founded. \(^{35}\) The building was sold to the new Lodge in January 1913, and they used it for meetings thereafter.

The temperance movement reached its peak with the onset of the First World War. After the war’s end, and with prohibition now in place, the societies on the reserve changed their focus and became a Benevolent Lodge with several branches that “raised funds to cover funeral costs and support families in times of hardship.”\(^{36}\) Members of the lodges paid dues at the meetings to raise money, and ten-cent lunches and teas were also hosted with the same purpose. \(^{37}\)

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\(^{32}\) Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 220.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) The UTS held a quit claim deed from Josiah Hill for the site. Members of the Society donated the materials and labour to build the hall. Noon, Law and Government of the Grand River Iroquois, 141-2.

\(^{35}\) The society split over the contention of whether people living in adulterous relationships should be allowed membership. Additionally, the UTS lodge was weakened as the headquarters was at Oneida on the Thames, and it was inconvenient to pay dues there. Mrs. Winnie Kick, a clan mother, was Treasurer of the new Tuscarora Lodge #1. Ibid.

\(^{36}\) Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 250.

\(^{37}\) "Sally Weaver’s notes, from old records of Mrs. Birdie Hill of Benevolent Lodge No. 6", File 11 “Benevolent Lodge”, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
seems to have been some connections between the Ohsweken Baptist Church and the lodge, since President Augustus Hill was also a local preacher for the Church. 38

The Six Nations Agricultural Society

The Six Nations Agricultural Society (SNAS) was the first Native Agricultural Society in Canada, although others were established on reserves in Southern Ontario. 39 David Mizener’s recent work suggest that “By improving farm methods among reserve farmers, [DIA] officials anticipated advancing their broader policy objectives of achieving the assimilation of the native population and increasing the economic self-sufficiency of reserve communities.” 40 In 1868, several wealthy Mohawk farmers founded the society, including Chief William Smith and Joseph Powless. 41 After the consolidation of the reserve in 1847, farms were quite similar to non-Native farms in Brant County, and they continued to grow and improve throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. While farming skills had been brought with the community from upstate New York, many members of the community had also learned farming techniques while attending the Mohawk Institute, and connections between the SNAS and the Institute continued throughout its existence. The activities of the SNAS were similar to other agricultural societies in

38 “Sally Weaver’s notes, from old records of Mrs. Birdie Hill of Benevolent Lodge No. 6”, File 11 “Benevolent Lodge”, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC. Jamieson, The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Ohsweken Baptist Church.


40 David Mizener, "Furrows and Fairgrounds," 291.

rural communities on Ontario, and the nearby fairs of Burford and Paris, Ontario.⁴² The purpose
of agricultural societies was to help farmers improve their methods by “illustrating real farming
and providing a form of self-education.”⁴³ They were concerned with sharing agricultural
knowledge for greater progress and development of the community.

The competitions at the annual agricultural fall fair were only open to people from Six
Nations, but non-Natives were invited to come as spectators, and they were sometimes asked to
judge the events.⁴⁴ From its formation, the Society had Lady Directors who were responsible for
the competitions in cooking, baking, and handiwork. The first Lady Directors were Mrs. Debbie
Smith, the mother of Chief William Smith, and Mrs. Jake Davis and Mrs. Joseph Powless, both
wives of Directors.⁴⁵ Jake or Jacob Davis was a Mohawk Anglican farmer with 200 acres under
cultivation in the late 1880s.⁴⁶ Joseph Powless was an Oneida hereditary chief.

In the 1870s, the women competed in categories that were both traditional Iroquois skills,
such as making cornbread, maple sugar, and beadwork, as well as newer practices, such as
making white bread, woollen socks and machine sewing.⁴⁷ Pauline Johnson commented on
women’s abilities, as evidenced at the SNAS exhibitions:

The Iroquois woman... has already acquired the arts of cookery, of needlework, of house-
wifeliness, and one has but to attend the annual Industrial exhibition on the Indian
reserve, an institution that is open to all Indians in Canada, who desire to compete for
prizes, to convince themselves by very material arguments that the Iroquois woman is

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⁴³ Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society During the Nineteenth Century*, 287.
behind her white sister in nothing pertaining to the larder, the dairy or the linen press. She bakes the loveliest, lightest wheaten bread, of which, by the way, her men folk complain loudly, declaring that she forces them to eat this new-fangled food to the absolute exclusion of their time-honored corn bread, to which the national palate ever clings; her rolls of yellow butter are faultlessly sweet and firm, her sealed fruits are a pleasure to see as well as taste, in fact, in this latter industry she excels herself, outdoing frequently her white competitors at the neighboring city of Brantford, where the “southern fair” of Ontario is held annually.48

Clearly, Six Nations farmwomen were experts at the skills on display at the exhibition.

Of course men competed as well. Aside from prizes for the best horses, cattle, fruits and vegetables, men also won awards for the best axe handle, and the best-dressed deer skin.49 Thus it was not just western farming skills that were being displayed at the annual Fair: traditional Iroquois skills also were demonstrated, encouraged, and preserved. According to Sally Weaver, “farming reached its peak in the 1890s,” as more land was held in farms than at any other time in history.50 No doubt, this was in part the result of the SNAS. In 1900, the DIA Annual Report noted: “The agricultural society of the reserve, wholly under the management of the Indians, held its three days' annual fair in October. Only Indians can compete. The exhibits were equal in numbers to those of any township fair. The attendance was very large, particularly the last day, when many whites from a distance were present.”51 Importantly, the SNAS was initially founded and controlled by men who were either hereditary chiefs, or were supporters of the hereditary system. By the 1920s, a new organization, the Ohsweken Agricultural Society, emerged. The Society was composed of several men who had been involved in the SNAS but who wanted more control. They had the support of the new elected council, as many members were also


50 Weaver, “The Iroquois, 1875-1945,” 223. The changes that occurred in the SNAS throughout the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century have been well documented by Julia Jamieson and later, by Sally Weaver. See ———, “The Iroquois, 1875-1945,” 220-22, Jamieson, “The History of the Six Nations Agricultural Society.”

The changes that occurred echoed the political upheavals that occurred in the 1920s, with the ousting of the hereditary council and the arrival of the DIA-supported elected council in 1924. Eventually the OAS took over the running of the SNAS, and one unified society existed.

By the 1920s, the number of Lady Directors had expanded, and they were often related to the male executive of the Society, either as their spouses, mothers or daughters. There was also significant overlap between the Lady Directors and the members of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute. In 1927, eleven women served as Lady Directors. Teacher Wilma Smith (daughter of Chief William Smith and sister of Mary Sophia Smith Styres), Mabel Styres Hill (daughter of M.S. Styres, and Mrs. Hilton Hill), Mrs. Archie Lickers, Ethel Brant Monture (Mrs. Wilbur Monture) and Melinda Burnham Powless (Mrs. William F. Powless) were all Lady Directors whose husbands were elected councillors and also sat on the Agricultural Society executive. These men and women were part of the social elite of the community.

The Agricultural Society was a tradition that many families participated in for decades. For example, Ada Mae (Curley) Martin, was involved with the Society for 54 years. Her husband, James H. Martin was also involved, but for Ada, “this fair has been her whole life as director and exhibitor.” Upon her retirement from the Fair Board in 1976, Ada remembered “dressing with the times in long dresses and large hats” when she exhibited her “baking, sewing, vegetables, flowers, cattle, chickens and horses.” She won over a thousand 1st, 2nd, and 3rd

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54 “Tribute to Fair Board Member Mrs. Ada Martin, 1976” Six Nations Fair Board file, Woodland Cultural Centre Library, Brantford.
55 Ibid.
place prizes in her 54 years showing at the Fair. She traveled to the fair every year by horse and buggy with the help of her nine children. As a Lady Director:

she helped prepare for exhibitors day and they also did all of their own cooking and baking throughout the whole fair to supply the public. One year a tent was used. Cooking and baking were done in cast iron wood burning stoves. Wood was brought in by the load with horses. Water was drawn from a pump at the Six Nations Council house. The rest was all hard work and dedicated people.\textsuperscript{56}

In 1935, Ada’s husband James Martin explained that “the Six Nations Band being an agricultural people, the furtherance of agricultural interests on this reserve is a matter of the greatest importance to the entire community.”\textsuperscript{57} The organization continued to thrive throughout the twentieth century, and still holds the annual fair every year in early September.\textsuperscript{58}

The Plowmen’s Association and the Farmers’ Institutes

At the same time that the Six Nations Agricultural Society was founded, Six Nations men began holding plowing competitions in the 1860s, using prizes donated by the Governor General throughout the 1870s and 80s.\textsuperscript{59} The Six Nations Plowmen’s Association did not separate and become self-sustaining until 1886, and membership was restricted to band members. It held annual ploughing matches in several categories with the intention of encouraging expert ploughing. In 1913, a provincial plowmen’s association was organized by the Department of Agriculture, and the Six Nations became an affiliated branch, which enabled them to receive

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{58} Elsbeth Heaman looks at non-Native women’s involvement in Agricultural Fairs. See Elsbeth Heaman, "Taking the World by Show: Canadian Women as Exhibitors to 1900," \textit{The Canadian Historical Review} 78, no. 4 (1998) 599-631.

government grants. Six Nations farmer and School Board Trustee Elliott Moses was President of the Ontario Plowmen’s Association in 1933, and his wife was heavily involved with the Women’s Institute during the 1920s and 30s. The Plowmen continued to be a popular organization throughout much of the twentieth century. As previously noted in Chapter 2, boys from the Mohawk Institute were taken to the competitions in the early twentieth century, and also began to hold their own versions. When graduates grew up, many joined the Plowmen. The Women’s Institutes worked in conjunction with the Plowmen; they generally provided the meals and sold tickets to the annual competitions. Many of the Plowmen were also members of the Six Nations Agricultural Society, and some were elected councillors. Like many others on the reserve, the group held its gatherings in the Council House in Ohsweken, where the elected council held its monthly meetings. The Six Nations Council and the provincial government funded the Association. While the purpose of the organization was to encourage improved ploughing methods, it was also a social organization for the elite men of the community.

The Farmers’ Institutes were another men’s agricultural organization active on the reserve. The South Brant Farmers’ Institute was established in 1895 by the Six Nations and immediately began publishing the weekly Indian Magazine which featured suggestions on how

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60 Moses, “Brief Historical Sketch of the Six Nations Plowmen’s Association.”
62 In 1963, approaching the one hundredth anniversary of the organization, Elliot Moses, past president and secretary noted that the association was attempting to bring back old time plows to compete, as well as showing museum pieces. They also planned “a demonstration of corn pounding and preparing the corn for corn bread as well as demonstrations of Indian craft which is fast disappearing among our people.” The organization is still in operation. Moses, "Brief Historical Sketch of the Six Nations Plowmen's Association," 3.
63 “Elliott Moses, Secretary. Plowmen’s Association Minutes, 1933-37.” Plowmen’s Association, File 23, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
64 Ibid.
farmers could improve their crops and livestock. Meetings were held at the same time as the Women’s Institutes, sometimes in the same building, so couples could go out together, but attend their separate meetings. The Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs recounted the activities of the Farmers’ Institute in 1900, noting that “the Farmers’ Institute of the south riding of the county of Brant held an afternoon and evening public meeting on the reserve on January 3. Both meetings were largely attended. Several papers were read by members of the various institutes of the province and discussed, many Indians taking part in the discussions.” While the history is unclear, it seems that the Farmers’ Institute disbanded with World War I, as did the Women’s Institute. In fact, at that time, the Farmers’ Institutes were declining in Ontario, and ceased to exist in the 1920s. After the war, men joined the SNAS, the Plowmen, or Veteran’s groups, while the Women’s Institute started up again in the 1920s.

The Indian Moral Association

One of the most intriguing associations on the reserve in this period was the Indian Moral Association (IMA), sometimes called the Six Nations Moral Reform Association. After several failed attempts in 1903 and 1907, the IMA came into being in October, 1908 with the lofty goals of improving the reserve’s morality. It was part of the larger moral and social reform movement in Canada at the time and saw itself as an agent of moral regulation on the Reserve. However, whereas the state was the agent of reform for many other first nations, in this particular

65 Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 223.
case it was several Six Nations women themselves who instigated the reform. Its objectives were similar to other non-Native groups: “the moral advancement and uplifting of the social conditions on the reserve, and especially the safeguarding and directing the rising generation in the way of social morality and purity of life.” Weaver argues that the Association was made up of the “housewives of upper tribesmen, the missionaries, the school teachers, and the superintendent, as well as whites off the reserve.” When the IMA was first initiated in 1903, Evelyn Johnson, sister of poet and performer Pauline Johnson, was the co-founder of the organization along with Mary Sophia Smith Styres (Mrs. George D. Styres). In her memoir, Johnson remembered that:

Mrs. Styres and I were on another occasion talking over the downfall of some girl and looked at each other aghast as we realized that disgrace had come to some of our best families. We decided that something must be done and we thought of organizing the Indian Moral Association. I had shortly to return to Troy, New York, where I was then matron of the Resident Home of the Y. W. C. A. On my way through Brantford I purchased blank books, paper, and envelopes, and sent them to Mrs. Styres, and she provided the necessary stamps.

Styres was Mohawk, the daughter of Chief William Smith, the founder of the Six Nations Agricultural Society, and sister to Chief William Smith Jr. She later became involved in multiple organizations throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, including the Moral Association, the Ohsweken Women’s Institute, and she was president of the Brock’s Rangers

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71 Ibid.

Benefit Society during the war. Her husband George D. Styres was Cayuga, a merchant and storekeeper, and member of the Farmers’ Institute and the SNAS. He was also a dehorner, and his daughter remembered him as a Conservative. Styres was from a prosperous and respected family, and was the principal organizer for the IMA. Unsurprisingly, the trigger for the founding of the IMA were concerns over the downfall of Six Nations girls, concerns that were echoed in Toronto and elsewhere as the supposed “girl problem” came to light in the late nineteenth century. While it was often girls or women in cities that were of great concern to moralisers, rural girls and women were also “at risk” of moral debasement.

When they founded the IMA, Styres and Johnson elected Major Gordon Smith, the Superintendent of the Six Nations for the DIA, honourary president. Thus, while the impetus came from the women themselves, the state was involved in the Association. As Johnson was living in New York at the time, she wrote letters that were read aloud at the meetings. When Johnson was at Grand River, she spoke at the meetings held in the Council House in Ohsweken. The IMA hosted Canada’s first female doctor, Dr. Helen MacMurchy, at one of the early meetings. She traveled from Toronto and stayed overnight at the home of the resident physician and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Holmes, as he and Dr. MacMurchy had both gone to

73 Her husband George Styres was Cayuga, the leader of the “Progressive Warriors prior to 1924, a Conservative, and Orangeman, Anglican, and a merchant/storekeeper. “Chiefs” File 2, Box 468, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
74 Interview with Mrs. Mabel Styres Hill, about her parents, Sophia Smith and George D. Styres. File 15, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
76 Johnson, Memoirs, 33.
77 Interview with Mrs. Mabel Styres Hill, about her parents, Sophia Smith and George D. Styres. File 15, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
medical school at the University of Toronto. MacMurchy was also a “militant purity advocate,” and for many years was involved in a battle against “vice and degeneracy” through various organizations. She would later become an advocate of eugenics. Gordon Smith noted in the Annual Report to the DIA that IMA held “meetings throughout the reserve, addressed by local speakers as well as by men from outside. The work of this association is steadily advancing and good results are manifest in various ways.”

Despite its auspicious start, the IMA dwindled in its first decade. Johnson lived mainly in New York State at the time, and worked in various places, such as the Y.W.C.A in Troy, the Presbyterian Convalescent Home in White Plains, as a nurse in private homes, at a Branch House of the Ladies’ Christian Union in Manhattan, and finally as a companion to Mrs. Ackerman, the mother of New Jersey Senator Ernest A. Ackerman. Styres was widowed in 1907, and as a result of her changed circumstances moved to New York to work as a housekeeper. However, she returned to Grand River prior to the war, and revived the IMA. Although “several of the most loyal supporters [had] passed away,” the society had not been disbanded and Styres was clearly the prime mover when their activities started up again after the war.

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82 Johnson, Memoirs, 34.
83 Interview with Mrs. Mabel Styres Hill, about her parents, Sophia Smith and George D. Styres. File 15, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC. While I could not find a death record for George D. Styres, his daughter Mabel said that George died at 54 years old, and he was born in April 1853, so it was likely in 1907. Sophia was back in Canada during the 1911 Census.
84 Johnson, Memoirs, 34.
While the regular work of the Association is unclear due to the lack of records, their main concerns were promoting morality in the schools, protesting the employment or appointment of immoral or reprehensible people on the reserve, particularly as teachers and School Board members, and upholding the institution of marriage. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 1, in 1919 they requested that the Six Nations School Board fire the mixed-race Alexander teachers because they did not think it was proper to have “negroes” teaching Indian children. In order to better the education of Six Nations children, the organization held a contest in 1915 (which was probably repeated in other years) to encourage morality in day school students. That year they approached the Six Nations School Board with an offer of $25.00 to be divided among the schools for an essay competition. The subject of the essay was to be “the objects of the Six Nations Moral Reform Association,” and the School Board accepted the offer.  

President Styres explained:

A girl should be taught that her honor is the most sacred thing entrusted to her and that if she does not safeguard her honor as she would her life, she loses the most precious gift that God has bestowed upon her, and in her fall becomes unfit to associate with pure right-living girls. She should therefore be instructed to scorn all insults that might be offered her. Girls should be warned and explanations made to them regarding the evils of the White Slave Traffic. Boys should be instructed to be respectful to girls and protect and guard them from all those whom they know would be evil associates.

Fears over the “white slave trade” or prostitution were prevalent amongst moral reformers, and yet it is intriguing that Styres believed that Six Nations girls needed to be taught about it.

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Clearly she believed that it was not just “white” girls who were at risk. Mariana Valverde suggests that Native women prostitutes in the West were the target of churches, missionaries, and white settler women, but that it is unclear whether Native women were voluntary prostitutes or were coerced. The Association was likely the first Native women’s organization concerned with similar sorts of moral issues as non-Native women at the time. While Native women were often seen as immoral by white society, in this case, it was white society that was seen as a threat to the Six Nations community.

The IMA was focused on the institution of marriage, and was concerned both with those people at Six Nations who did not respect the institution and committed adultery and those who lived as common law couples. Weaver suggests that with the philosophy behind the organization came “Christian intolerance of the Longhouse faith, and its less formally celebrated marriage ritual.” As anthropologist Annemarie Shimony suggests, “marriage was not an emphasized rite de passage, nor is the Longhouse marriage ceremony today a complicated or important ritual (much in contrast to Christian Indian marriages).” Shimony and anthropologist Merlin Myers both observed the marriage customs of the Longhouse community in the 1950s, and commented that they were much more relaxed. This caused much consternation among the Christian population, especially reformers like the members of IMA. Shimony explains that

Once a choice has been made, the partners very often merely ‘get together,’ and forthwith consider themselves married. This was definitely the pattern among the older generation living today, and they furthermore maintained that according to the Code

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90 Weaver, "Social Activities - Turn of the Century."

91 Shimony, Conservatism among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve, 23. See also 225-228.

92 Myers, Households and Families of the Longhouse Iroquois at Six Nations Reserve, 181-98.
Lake], ‘God (Shõngwaya?di’hs?õh) marries one when a child is born. Such common-law marriages are frequent and are considered absolutely valid by the community, even though no public pronouncement or ceremony commemorates the occasion.  

While there were clearly competing versions of proper behaviour at work here, the IMA was particularly concerned with Longhouse or “pagan” people who married in this way.

As a result, Styres attempted to get help from the Social Service Council of Canada (SSCC), an association of churches across the country that was part of the Social Gospel movement. Founded in Toronto in 1908 by J.G. Shearer under the name The Moral and Social Reform Council, the Council reorganized under its new name in 1914. It was generally concerned with urban issues, especially those that involved children, health, housing, and morality. Styres sent her history of the IMA to the SSCC, and while the connections between the two organizations are not clear, she certainly believed that the SSCC would help her. The Council had pushed for the criminalization of cohabitation out of wedlock in 1909. In the statement, she explained “we know from bitter experience that adultery should be made a criminal offence and therefore desire to co-ordinate with the Social Service Council of Canada in their efforts to have the criminal code amended for that purpose.” She continued:

In order to carry on the work of social uplift we feel the crying need of influential help which we seem unable to gain and I therefore make a personal appeal to you to extend this reserve your personal interest in the welfare of our youth and children and to ask you to endeavour to interest outside influential persons on our behalf. Conditions here are different than else where in that many do not live a hidden life of adultery but they live an

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93 Shimony, Conservatism among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve, 226.
96 In Styres’ history of the IMA, she noted at the bottom, “copies of this have been sent to the different religious bodies representing the Social Service Council of Canada.”
open life of cohabitation which is known to every one even to the several missionaries in whose churches they are allowed to take a prominent and leading positions...  

While adultery was not permitted in the Longhouse faith either, it seems that according to the IMA some Longhouse people were “living in sin.”  

Perhaps as a result of Styres' letter writing campaign, an Indian Affairs Committee was formed in 1918 under J.W.L. Forster of Toronto, which looked into “the conditions of Indians.” The final report of the Committee included a lengthy section on the “Preservation of the Race,” which was concerned with what they called “trial marriages.” Forster wrote that “this custom is the cause of much looseness and profligacy among Indians on reserves. There are few reserves in Canada which are free from the menace to the Indian race which such looseness constitutes.”  

The committee then presented the following resolution:

Be it hereby resolved that we respectfully suggest to the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs that a letter be sent out to all Indian Agents, setting forth the facts and asking them to use their influence to persuade the people under their care to forsake their old practices in this regard and to adhere more closely to Canadian laws and Christian teaching concerning marriage, for the purpose of preserving and improving the race.  

Duncan Campbell Scott “decided to take no action,” as “to [his] mind the suggestion made in Mr. Forster’s letter is not reasonable.”  

After writing to the SSCC for help, President Styres sent a letter of complaint to D. C. Scott in February 1919 regarding the appointment of “men who are morally unfit” to the Six

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98 Ibid.
Nations School Board. In particular, she was unhappy with the appointment of Peter Isaac “on account of his reputation of immorality.” Assistant Deputy and Secretary of the DIA J. D. McLean wrote to Styres that they would investigate, and he added “I am glad to note the interest which you are taking in the Indian Moral Association of the Six Nations. The teaching of this Association will no doubt assist materially in improving the morals especially of the rising generation.” Thus, the IMA had the support of the DIA. Schools Clerk of the DIA, Martin Benson, wrote to Scott:

The President of the Indian Moral Association of the Six Nations Indians protested against the appointment as members of the School Board of men who were morally unfit for the office... A formal protest has just been received from a number of members of the band, the Anglican and Baptist missionaries and the medical superintendent against the appointment of Peter Isaac as a school trustee. Isaac’s notorious immorality is vouched for by thirty-two members of the band and the missionaries... It is unclear what made Isaac “morally unfit.” Isaac lived in Brantford, was a veteran of the war, and was married to Annie Jones. He was likely either Methodist or Presbyterian. His father, also named Peter Isaac, was the head Chief of the Seneca, and a member of the Longhouse.

106 Martin Benson to Duncan Campbell Scott, 5 February 1919. RG-10, Volume 2011, File 7825-4A, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1918-1930, LAC.
107 Attestation paper for Peter Isaac, regimental no. 270138, Canadian Expeditionary Force Personnel Files, RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 4723-46, LAC. While census records, his attestation paper and the family history says Isaac was married, perhaps not legally.
108 Peter’s attestation paper says he was Methodist, while an interview with his son says he was Presbyterian. Attestation paper for Peter Isaac, regimental no. 270138, Canadian Expeditionary Force Personnel Files, RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 4723-46, LAC. Interview with Peter Cameron Isaac and Ruth Hill, File 17, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
109 Interview with Peter Cameron Isaac and Ruth Hill, File 17, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
After investigating, Scott refused to approve the appointment of Isaac as School Board Trustee, but due to the DIA’s inability to control who was elected Isaac remained a Trustee.

The Indian Moral Association did not last long, as it seems to have alienated people with its “extreme piety and social censure.” Although it apparently had “a membership of one hundred and sixty two exclusive of officers” in the late 1910s, much of the work seems to have been initiated and carried out by Mary Sophia Smith Styres. Styres later became involved in patriotic work and then the Women’s Institutes and the Lady Willingdon Hospital Aid, and so she continued to work in other venues towards the improvement of the community. Few if any of the IMA’s complaints or efforts to have people fired were successful. Nevertheless, the Association deserves attention because it is an unusual example of Native women participating in the moral reform movement on their own initiative, and not simply at the instigation of missionaries or non-Native women. Moreover, it marked the beginning of a substantial growth of women’s voluntary work on the reserve.

The SNWPL and the IODE

While there were several associations on the reserve prior to the 1914, when the Great War began many folded their activities into patriotic work. As we have seen, the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League carried out much of the fundraising and support work on the homefront. As Alison Prentice et al have suggested about non-Native women’s organizations, “[t]hrough their organized reform activities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women had developed and refined the skills of organizing and fundraising. In the war years, the government needed civilian assistance in drives to recruit men and to raise war funds, and found

110 Weaver, ”Social Activities - Turn of the Century.”
ready-made support in existing women’s organizations.‖ 

The Ohsweken Women’s Institute temporarily disbanded, as did the Moral Reform Association when the Women’s Patriotic League was founded at Ohsweken in November 1914. The organization was arranged around a central executive made up of representatives from different churches on the reserve, churches that already had women who were active as Sunday school teachers, clerks, deaconesses, music committee members, and youth organization leaders. These women, as well as several Longhouse women, and some minister’s wives, served as representatives, and coordinated efforts within their own church communities. After the war, these women participated in the Welcome Home Association and planned commemorations with remaining funds. As was the case with non-Native women’s groups in Canada, “[w]artime patriotism directly benefited many of the established women’s organizations by attracting new members.” Groups such as the Women’s Institutes and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) “all experienced spectacular increases in membership.”

Although several branches of the IODE showed an interest in the Six Nations, no branch was established on the reserve. Katie Pickles suggests that Native and ethnic women formed their own branches of the IODE, but this was not the case at Six Nations. As discussed in Chapter 1, teacher Susan Hardy was a member of the Remembrance Chapter of the IODE, a branch

112 Hill, "Patriotic Work of the Six Nations in World Wars I and II."
113 Ibid.
115 Prentice et al., Canadian Women, 205.
116 Ibid.
117 Pickles, Female Imperialism and National Identity, 32.
formed in 1921 with the motto “Lest We Forget.” Since Hardy was a teacher at the Mohawk Institute that saw almost a hundred boys enlist in the Great War, this name seems appropriate. However, no branch of the IODE was founded on the Six Nations reserve itself, possibly because the IODE tended to be a middle or upper-class women’s organization. Bernice Loft’s experiences with IODE women in nearby Galt suggest that relations between Six Nations women and non-Native women in southern Ontario were often fraught with discomfort, ignorance, rudeness, and even racism, especially with upper class IODE women. Perhaps due to its appeal to lower-middle class and middle class farm women, the most popular women’s group after the War was by far the Women’s Institutes.

“A discussion then followed as to what the Institute could do to better the conditions of the community.” The Women’s Institutes

As Linda Ambrose has documented, the Women’s Institutes (WI) were first founded in Canada in 1897 as a parallel organization to the men’s Farmers’ Institutes. In 1900, the Women’s Institutes received substantial funding from the provincial Department of Agriculture, and very

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119 Despite this, there were branches of the IODE located in Brantford (eight chapters in 1927) which took an interested in the affairs of the Six Nations. For instance, the Dufferin Rifles Chapter (whose focus was the welfare of the regiment, including Six Nations men) passed a resolution in April 1921 against compulsory enfranchisement, urging that “all steps be stopped in the matter of giving the Indians full citizenship because of the rebellious feeling which it is arousing.” Quoted in “Rapacity of the Whites Feared by Six Nations, Sister of Pauline Johnson Explains Reasons Why Indians Claim Treatment as Allies and Oppose the Franchise Proposed to Be Thrust Upon Them,” The Globe, April 23 1921. Scott replied with a “strong letter to the head of the association in Toronto.” D. C. Scott to Mr. Harold, 6 May 1921. RG10, Vol. 2285, File 57,169-1A, Part 2. Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, Reports, Memoranda, Publications and Newspaper Clippings regarding the Political Status of the Six Nations, 1921-23, LAC. Several branches also expressed an interest in the Mohawk Institute and especially their troupe of Girl Guides, including the Remembrance Chapter and the Sarah Jeanette Duncan Chapter (see Chapter 3). But the IODE was not an organization embraced by Six Nations women.

120 Morgan, “Performing for ‘Imperial Eyes’: Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture, Ontario, 1930s-1960s,” 82.

121 Minutes of the Meeting, 21 December 1921. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.
quickly spread across the country and beyond. They were meant to meet the needs of rural women and to be a social organization. Institutes brought in lecturers and members gave lectures on topics such as nutrition, cooking, hygiene, home nursing, and sewing. While much has been written about the Women’s Institutes in Ontario and across Canada, very little has been written about branches on First Nations reserves. In fact, Women’s Institutes historian Margaret Kechnie suggests “it is not surprising to find in the course of the research for this book that black and aboriginal women had nothing to do with the organization... Nor are there suggestions that separate WI organizations for black or aboriginal women existed.” It seems, though, that Kechnie has overlooked the three WI branches on the Grand River reserve.

To be sure, it is difficult to know which of them were the Six Nations WIs, a difficulty compounded by a lack of local records. Kechnie observes that “the WI appears to have been a predominantly Anglo-Saxon organization.” In many ways the women who were involved in the WIs on the reserve identified with aspects of Anglo-Canadian Protestantism. The bulk of their activities, including fund-raising, support of schools, funding and initiating municipal

122 Ambrose, "What Good Are Those Meetings Anyway?": 1.
124 Kechnie, Organizing Rural Women, 11.
125 A quick search of the records of the Department of Indian Affairs at Library and Archives Canada reveals files on several Native Women’s Institutes at Saugeen Cape Croker, and Six Nations. RG 10, Vol. 3236, File 660,313 – Saugeen Agency, Correspondence Regarding Grants to the Women’s Institute, 1930-38, File 600,316 – Cape Croker Agency – Correspondence Regarding Grants given to the Women’s Institute 1930-1938, File 600,333 – Six Nations Agency – Correspondence Regarding grants to the Women’s institute 1928-1941, LA C.
126 While the Brantford Expositor occasionally noted the events of the Women’s Institutes in the County of Brant, from my research, it does not seem that they reported on the activities of the Reserve WIs, nor other Reserve associations.
127 Kechnie, Organizing Rural Women.
infrastructure, helping the poor, sick and needy, and providing a rural education for women, were similar, if not identical, to the activities on non-Native WIs in Ontario. Weaver explains that “the Women’s Institutes were increasingly popular among Christian women of all ages. Women became more active in community affairs and as teachers and nurses they exerted pressure in the home and the community to enhance educational and health standards on the reserve.”  

The Women’s Institutes met the needs of Six Nations women in ways that other organizations, such as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, did not. This may have been in part due to the more inclusionary practices and approaches of the organizations. There seems to have been a lack of overt racial prejudice against Six Nations women by Brant County and southern Ontario WI women.

The first Women’s Institute on the reserve was founded at Sour Springs on 19 June 1905. Although it only lasted until the beginning of the Great War, it was the first WI at Grand River, and very possibly the first Native WI in the country. A longstanding WI member attended (and often ran) the first meeting of every new branch. Sometimes the woman was from a neighbouring branch; sometimes she was from the Women’s Institutes of Ontario. The women of Six Nations were attended by Laura Rose Stephens, the first female instructor at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph, and a woman “who was heavily involved in organizing new branches.” Stephens organized Institutes in five provinces, designed the WI crest, and suggested its motto “For Home and Country.” Thus, when Stephens visited the reserve, she

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128 Sally M. Weaver, "Grand River Reserve, 1847-1940," (Waterloo University, 1984), 103.
129 Hill and Weaver, "History of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute."
130 Very few if any other Native WIs have been written about, and it seems likely that this is the first, considering it was founded so soon after the first one was founded.
131 Ambrose, "What Good Are Those Meetings Anyway?: 7.
brought knowledge and experience with her. How and why the first branch was founded is unknown, as the early records of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute are missing, but it is likely that it was the initiative of the first President, Lucy Miller Martin (Mrs. Robert Martin). Lucy was the daughter of Anthony Miller Jr. and Sarah Doxstater, and was the cousin of Mary Sophia Smith (Mrs. G.D. Styres), president of the Indian Moral Association. That year, her husband Robert Martin was president of the Six Nations Agricultural Society. Martin was also an early Dehorner, and was politically progressive. It is likely that Lucy Miller Martin was interested in bringing the WI to the reserve to better the community by improving the households of prosperous farming families in particular. She may also have known about the first non-Native Women’s Institutes founded in Brant County such as the Burford WI in 1899, and the St. George WI in 1903. In any event, after the founding of the Sour Springs WI, Martin remained President until 1912. Lucinda Jamieson (later Mrs. Alfred Fraser) acted as the first Secretary, and was replaced in 1907 by Henrietta Porter Hill (Mrs. Enos Hill) who held the position until 1912. The local Indian Agent reported on the Ohsweken Women’s Institute during the pre-war period, and noted every year that “Great interest has been taken by the women of the reserve.” Unfortunately his report gave no further details.

While some WIs used the organization to arrange patriotic work, it seems that the Ohsweken WI disbanded, as no presidents were listed for the years 1915 through 1921.

133 File 13 “Dehorners”, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC
134 Waldie, Brant County: The Story of Its People, 118,37. Laura Rose Stephens was also at the founding of the Burford WI.
135 Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario, “List of Members by District: Ohsweken Branch Presidents and Secretaries,” XR1 M5 A564 Box 2, Guelph McLaughlin Library.
137 Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario, "List of Members by District: Ohsweken Branch Presidents and Secretaries."
However, the women whom we know were involved in the WI certainly carried on their work through the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League and the Brock’s Rangers Benefit Society. Thus, it is likely that the members of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute put their efforts into war work through the two women’s patriotic societies on the reserve. After the war, they had gained some experience in meeting and organizing for a cause, and this energy was transferred to the three Women’s Institutes on the reserve in the post-war years.

The first post-war Institute on the reserve was founded at Sour Springs on November 26, 1920, the second at Ohsweken on February 23, 1921, and the third several years later at New Credit, May 3, 1927. According to Brantford historian Jean Waldie, the organization of the Sour Springs branch took place at the home of Mrs. George Smith. Flossie Styres Smith was the daughter of James Styres (who owned the Styres store and Styres Hall) and Mary Jamieson. Her husband George Smith was another child of Chief William Smith, founder of the Six Nations Agricultural Society. Roy Schuyler, the district representative of the Ontario Department of Agriculture, “drove a team of horses and a two-seater buggy” to the meeting. Also in attendance were Mrs. Hudson Jennings, and Miss Birdie Roleofson. Mary Jennings was an Anglo-Canadian farmer’s wife living in Brant Township, and was likely South Brant County

138 Ibid, _______ “List of Members by District: Sour Springs Branch Presidents and Secretaries,” (XR1 M5 A564 Box 2, Guelph McLaughlin Library). _______ “List of Members by District: New Credit Branch Presidents and Secretaries,” (XR1 M5 A564 Box 2, Guelph McLaughlin Library). The only records that exist (as far as I can tell) are of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute. The Woodland Cultural Centre holds the minute books for that group, but several are missing.


140 Reville, The History of the County of Brant, Ontario, 689. Flossie would have been sister in law to William Smith Jr. and Sarah Cecilia Russell Smith, as well as George D. Styres and Mary Sophia Smith Styres.

141 Waldie also states that Mrs. J. C. Hill was in attendance at the founding of the branch, but this is unlikely, given that Florence Smith Hill was born in 1915. She is the daughter of William Smith Jr. And Sarah Cecilia Russell. Waldie states that Mr. And Mrs. J. C. Hill attended the 25th anniversary banquet and concert in 1945, and this is more likely.
District President. Birdie Roleofson was the daughter of German-Canadian Baptist parents. These women likely were members of a non-Native Brant County Branch who attended to help run the first meeting.

While no minute books of the Sour Springs WI exist, it is possible to determine its President and Secretary for each year. The first President, who held the position for four years, was Sarah Cecilia Russell Smith (Mrs. William Smith), sister-in-law to Flossie Styres Smith. A former student of the Mohawk Institute, Sarah Russell became a teacher on the reserve before marrying William Smith Jr., a dehorner who became an elected councillor after 1924. Her father-in-law, Chief William Smith, had founded the SNAS. Prior to the founding of the Sour Springs WI, she had been Vice President of the SNWPL (St. Paul’s or Kanyengeh Church) during the war, and was involved in the Ladies Guild at St. Paul’s. The Secretary for the first four years was Evangeline (Effie) Lewis Van Every (Mrs. Peter Van Every). She was the daughter of Jacob Lewis, the previously mentioned prominent farmer, member of the SNAS and the Odd Fellows. Effie Van Every was a member of the same Anglican church as President Smith, and her husband was also a farmer who became an elected councillor after 1924. Effie remained involved in the Sour Springs WI for several decades. Therefore, the women who

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142 In 1911, she had three children in the home, along with her husband, five lodgers, and one domestic. 1911 Census of Canada, Ontario, Brantford, Sub-district 5 Brantford, Page 1, family 8. A 1922 meeting discusses the attendance of “district president Mrs. Jennings.” She was also the daughter of Col. Hiram Dickie, a man with a distinguished military career in late nineteenth century Brantford, including leading the Dufferin Rifles in the 1870s. Minutes of the Meeting, 7 September 1922. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.

143 1911 Census of Canada, Ontario, Brantford, Sub-district 4 Brantford, Page 12, family 152.

144 Interview with Florence Hill, about her parents William Smith Jr. and Sarah Cecilia Russell, File 17, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.

145 Hill and Weaver, "History of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute.”, Hill, "Patriotic Work of the Six Nations in World Wars I and II.”

146 Obituary, Peter Edward Vanevery. Interview with Mrs. Peter Vanevery, Evangeline (Effie). File 14, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
started the Sour Springs WI after the war were Anglican, the wives of farmers and Dehorners, and were quite active and involved in their community.\footnote{Sally Weaver explains that “in principle, the Dehorners opposed hereditary rule, believing that local government should be progressive in its politics and accountable to the people through elections. They actively campaigned for public support by holding annual picnics and supper meetings, and by using the press in Brantford and Caledonia.” Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945," 243.}

When the Ohsweken Women’s Institute was founded on February 23, 1921, virtually all of the members of the executive had either sat on the executive of wartime patriotic organizations, were involved in the Six Nations Agricultural Society, and were married or related to a veteran of the Great War. Henrietta Porter Hill (Mrs. Enos Hill) had served as Secretary of the original WI between 1907 and 1912, and therefore had experience with the organization. She also was heavily involved in the Baptist Church, volunteering as a clerk, a deaconess, and a member of the music committee.\footnote{“Ohsweken Baptist” File 5, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC} The Vice-President was Sarah Jane Lottridge Johnson (Mrs. Fred Johnson). She had served as the Secretary of the SNWPL, and her husband Fred became an elected councillor in 1924, and President of the SNAS in 1929.\footnote{Frederick Loftus Johnson was the son of Jacob S. Johnson, hereditary Chief, School Board trustee, member of the Orange Order, a major in the Haldimand Rifles, and a member of St. Peter’s Anglican Church.} Sarah’s mother, Charlotte Martin Lottridge (Mrs. Alex Lottridge) was also a member of the WI throughout the 1920s. Former president Lucy Miller Martin was a member when the branch started up again, but her daughters were at the forefront. Helen Martin Hill (Mrs. Roderick Hill) was elected organist at the first meeting, and soon became president, a post she held for several years.\footnote{Roderick Hill was the son of Robert Hill and Mary Jamieson Styres, by her second marriage. Roderick would have been a half brother of Flossie Styres Smith (Mrs. George Smith) who hosted the first meeting of the Sour Springs branch of the WI.} Mina Martin Burnham (Mrs. Edward Burnham) was secretary and the representative to the district meeting. Lucy’s daughter-in-law Lillian, whose husband was Brigadier General Oliver Milton Martin, was
also a member. While she had no immediate relatives as WI members, Evelyn H. C. Johnson, also a member on and off throughout the 1920s.

It is apparent, then, that not only were there interconnections and overlaps between voluntary associations and war service, but there were familial patterns with mothers and daughters in the WI. While traditionally Iroquois women would have worked together in the fields and during the preparation of food and clothing for their community, the Western farming structure isolated women who usually lived among their own nuclear family, and not an extended family. Ambrose suggests that the WIs were an antidote to “the isolation of onerous work and the emotional vacuum of rural life.”

Along with the Ohsweken Branch of the WI, there was also a Junior Branch formed briefly in the 1930s, likely made up of the daughters of the members, but it folded quickly. Mabel Styres Hill, a long-time member of the Ohsweken WI, suggested that membership in these sorts of societies was often a “family tradition.” Her two daughters were members of the Junior Branch, and her mother was a member of the Ohsweken branch as well. Ambrose calls families like the Hills “WI families,” and Monda Halpern suggests “the united effort by farm wives and daughters to sustain these family and friendship networks created ‘intimate ties among women.’”

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151 Ambrose, "What Good Are Those Meetings Anyway?": 8.
152 Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, "List of Members by District: Ohsweken Junior Branch Presidents and Secretaries." (XR1 M5 A564 Box 2, Guelph McLaughlin Library). The Junior branch was founded in 1934 with Miss Mary Hill as President and Miss Ella Monture at Secretary. Mary remained secretary until the group folded in 1937, and the other secretaries were Miss Ernestine Styres and Miss Ruth Hill. Mary and Ruth Hill were the daughters of Mabel Styres Hill and Hilton Hill. In 1937, both their mother (Mrs. Hilton Hill) and their grandmother (Mrs. M. S. Styres) were members of the Ohsweken WI.
153 Interview with Mrs. Mabel Styres Hill. File 15, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
154 Halpern, And on That Farm He Had a Wife: Ontario Farm Women and Feminism, 1900-1970, 61.
As the minute books of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute are extant, a record of what occurred at the first meeting in 1921 is available. According to the minutes of the meeting, the organization of the branch in Ohsweken began as such:

On Wednesday, Feb 23rd, 1921 at 3:30 pm, Miss Sutherland of Toronto addressed a meeting in the Parish Hall on the advisability of forming a branch of the Women’s Institute. All present signified their willingness to join the Institute, and with Mrs. Wm. Smith President of the Sour Springs branch of the Institute presiding and Mrs. Van Every as secretary. After the new executive was elected, “Miss Sutherland then closed the meeting by giving an instructive talk on what could be done by the Institute and what other branches of the Institute were doing.” Although Miss Sutherland’s identity is unknown, it was the beginning of a relationship between the local branches on the reserve and the provincial body which sometimes sent members to attend meetings, and especially to give a talk. Local members also corresponded with Department of Agriculture officials and took courses. The membership of the Ohsweken WI corresponds with Linda Ambrose’s assertion that a local branch could unite “the women of the community who would otherwise not mingle.” While she adds that the “claim to inclusiveness” evident in the 1907 WI handbook “seems very idealistic, it was at least partly realized.” The book suggested “all women of the community [met] with a common object in view, no class, no church, or national distinction being drawn.” The thirty women who joined the Ohsweken WI at its founding in 1921 included the non-Native wife of the Baptist missionary, the Reverend Glen Wardell, the African-Canadian teaching sisters, Ethel and Mae Alexander,

156 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
and Six Nations women from different churches on the reserve. It seems that no Longhouse women joined the Six Nations Women’s Institutes, although it is impossible to say because no membership lists have survived for the Sour Springs or New Credit branches, and religion was not noted on membership lists in the Ohsweken WI minute books.

The third Grand River Women’s Institute to be founded in the 1920s was established at New Credit on 3 May, 1927. The first President was Ethel Brant Monture (Mrs. Wilbur Montour), and the first Secretary was her sister, Effie Brant Montour (Mrs. Robert J. Montour). Ethel and Effie were the children of Robert D. Brant and Lydia Lewis; Robert was a farmer and a descendant of Joseph Brant. Their mother Lydia had attended the Mohawk Institute, and then worked as a teacher at the No. 3 School, before having children. The family also had connections to the Great War as discussed in Chapter 4; their brother, Cameron D. Brant, had been the first Brant County man to be killed in action. Effie’s husband Robert had also served overseas. Ethel’s husband Wilbur Monture was a Methodist lay preacher, an elected councillor in the 1920s, and the Director of the Plowmen’s Association during the mid-1930s. While we cannot be sure of the New Credit Women’s Institute’s activities due to the lack of branch records, it is likely that under Ethel Brant Monture’s leadership the organization

159 Membership List 1921-22, Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.
160 Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario, “List of Members by District: New Credit Branch Presidents and Secretaries.”
161 Ethel Alberta Brant-Wilbur Henry Monture, Ontario Marriage registration 087762, 30 December 1914; Effie Lillian Brant-Robert John Montour, Ontario Marriage registration 011498, 10 April 1922.
163 Attestation paper for Robert J. Montour, regimental no. 739070, Canadian Expeditionary Force Personnel Files, RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 6307-13, LAC
164 “Plowman’s Association”, File 23, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC, Hill, “Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation: Elected Council from 1924 to Present.”
both worked to improve the lives of farmer’s wives and quite possibly to educate women about Six Nation’s history, as this was one of Ethel’s passions. Monture remained President for ten years, and when she left the executive she became the first President of the Women’s Section of the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies in 1937. She held this post for three years before moving to Toronto to begin her career as a lecturer and historian. The New Credit WI was then presided over by Lydia Davis Laforme (Mrs. Sylvester Laforme) who was the daughter of John and Margaret Davis of Hagersville.

While only a record of the activities of the Ohsweken WI has survived, it is likely that their activities were similar to the Sour Springs and New Credit branches, since the former sometimes co-hosted events and shared speakers with the latter. Like all other WIs, the Ohsweken Institute held monthly meetings at the home of a member, occasionally at the Council House or at a community hall. Every meeting opened with the Women’s Institute Ode, the Lord’s prayer, and the reading and adoption of the minutes from the previous meeting. After business was conducted, meetings were closed with the singing of the national anthem (God Save the King), The Maple Leaf Forever, or occasionally the singing of other songs, including “Indian songs.” Generally “a dainty lunch” followed each meeting. The minutes of the

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166 Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies and Dodds, The Story of Ontario Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions, 1792-1967, and Their Contribution to the Advancement of Agriculture and Betterment of Community Life, 206-09.


168 1911 Census of Canada, Ontario, Brantford, Sub-district 28 Tuscarora, Page 3, family 34.

meetings from the 1920s and 30s are filled with discussion of fund-raising activities and efforts to improve the community and help members within it.

The titles of lectures and talks given are also listed in the minutes and suggest that members were interested in improving rural home life. In the early years, talks were given by members of the WI provincial organization or from non-reserve WIs to “teach” the Ohsweken women about the WI. A “Mrs. Guest of Toronto gave an instructive talk on ‘Homemaking’ and the work of the Institute which was followed by short discussion” in May 1921; in 1922 “Mrs. McDonough of Copetown gave us a very instructive talk on ‘What it means to be a member of the Women’s Institute,’ it’s privileges and responsibilities;” and in 1923 members listened to “a splendid address by Mrs. M. Macoun of Campbellford, Provincial Secretary Treasurer of the Women’s Institute, on ‘Women’s Responsibilities to her home’ which was thoroughly enjoyed by those present.” In 1926, McDonough returned to a meeting hosted by the Ohsweken branch, and members of the Sour Springs WI were also in attendance. According to the minutes, Mrs. McDonough touched upon many thoughts relating to home life, school like, and community life. She also gave hints as to the literature which might be gotten from the Department and used to good advantage by the Institute. Also she suggested in getting a public library. She closed with these words – What would my Institute be, if every member were just like me?”

Talks were also given on subjects such as “poultry raising,” “the many uses of old stockings,” “child training,” “motherhood and home,” and “Making Life Count, Keeping out of Ruts.” These sorts of topics, Ambrose suggests, “were chosen to serve the women’s needs.” In addition, history and culture interested the members, although to a lesser extent than the more practical

170 Minutes of the Meeting, 5 May 1921, 17 February 1922, 6 February 1923. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.


172 Ambrose, "What Good Are Those Meetings Anyway?": 5.
topics. Lectures include Mrs. Eccleston’s “The Home Life of Queen Mary,” Mary Anderson Longboat spoke on “The life of Pauline Johnson,” and anthropologist J. N. B. Hewitt spoke to a joint meeting of the Sour Springs and Ohsweken WIs on “Old Time Habits of the Iroquois.”

While some of these talks were specific to the history of the community and their particular interests, many were very similar to talks given in neighbouring rural communities. For instance, at the meetings of the non-Native Onondaga WI nearby, talks were given on “poultry raising, “Women – her place is in the home,” Pauline Johnson, “Apples and their uses,” “Cheerfulness,” and “Village improvements.”

The Ohsweken WI occasionally hosted the Sour Springs and New Credit WIs, and sometimes the non-Native WIs from Brant County. Ambrose suggests “for many women, involvement in the WI also provided their first opportunity to work with women from outside their own community.” However, at Six Nations, these gatherings provided a cross-cultural experience for both Native and non-Native women in Brant County. In 1929, the (non-Native) Onondaga and Middleport WIs attended the Ohsweken meeting hosted by Mabel Styres Hill (Mrs. Hilton Hill), and as was their customary practice they provided the program. According to the minutes, “after expressing appreciation and pleasure at the opportunity given them of visiting our Institute, the following program was given”:


175 On 17 July 1930, a combined meeting and picnic was hosted by Ohsweken in which members from all three WIs attended: “about sixty present including several councilors and a few members from New Credit and Sour Springs.” Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1928-1930. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.

Mrs. R. J. McMillan, Dist. Pres. of North Brant, the origin of the Inst. and its growth since that time. She also briefly touched on some of the things the Institute stressed, namely buying clothing, shoes, silks etc. that were made in Canada, and were equal or better to those made in other countries. She also strongly urged the reading of the rules and regulations of the Inst. at least once a year, and to see that these rules and regulations were carried out.  

It is interesting to note that, upon given the chance to speak to their neighbouring Native women’s institute, the Anglo-Canadian women lectured on the history and rules of the organization. Clearly, Mrs. McMillan believe it was important for the Six Nations women to be reminded of the Anglo-Canadian origins of the WI and the importance of running the WI properly. Perhaps she feared the Reserve WIs might stray from convention.

The hosting of each other’s branches continued on and off the reserve. For example, in an April 1937 meeting, the Ohsweken Branch hosted the nearby Maple Grove branch at the Parish Hall. They were then invited to attend the meeting of the Maple Grove WI in September, which they did, and then they were invited to the Pleasant Ridge for November. Ethel Styres Moses (Mrs. Elliott Moses) was heavily involved in the Ohsweken WI through the 1920s and 30s and also presented papers to the Onondaga WI. In 1934 she was a guest speaker, and in 1942 she spoke on the topic of the “Day Nursery.” The WIs also sent delegates to district meetings and conventions. Mabel Styres Hill held the position of President of the South

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177 Minutes of the Meeting, 12 September 1929. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1928-1930. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.
178 Minutes of the Meeting, 1 April 1937. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1936-40. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.
179 Minutes of the Meeting, 10 June 1937, 9 September 1937. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1936-40. Woodland Cultural Centre Library. The invitations were noted in the meetings, but as they were not hosting the meeting, no minutes were taken of the meetings they attended off-reserve.
180 VanSickle, "The Story of the Onondaga Women's Institute," 10, 12. Moses also spoke on “Child Training” to the Ohsweken WI, and likely on other subjects. Hill and Weaver, "History of the Ohsweken Women's Institute." Ethel Moses was the wife of Elliott Moses who was involved in the Plowmen’s Association in the 1930s. Her sister Mabel Styres Hill was married to Hilton Hill who worked for the DIA and was an elected councillor. Ethel and Mabel were the daughters of George D. Styres and Mary Sophia Smith Styres (who founded and ran the IMA).
Brant district for a time, which suggests a respect for the Six Nations WIs. Thus, the WIs fostered interaction with non-Native women. However, it is difficult to assess the degree of equality in these relationships, an issue which will be considered later in this chapter.

Fundraising

In order to spend money on helping the poor, hosting community events, and investing in municipal infrastructure, the WIs needed to first raise money. The Ohsweken WI seems to have been relatively successful at doing so. They raised money through social events such as box socials, banquets, masquerades, concerts and fairs. They generally catered the Farmers’ Institutes and Plowmen’s events, to which they sold tickets and provided all of the food.\(^{181}\) In the summer of 1928, the women held multiple events which brought in much money, including a Garden Party June 21, a Minstrel Concert\(^ {182}\) August 15, and a Field Day with a box social and dance on August 18.\(^ {183}\) They were able to keep costs down by buying farm produce from their own members, and getting donations for the events. For instance, for the 1928 Fall Fair, Mrs. Elliott Moses was paid $35.70 for forty-two chickens, Mrs. Tom Patterson was paid $1.20 for ten quarts of milk, and Mrs. Martin was paid $2.00 for watermelons. They also received donations from members of the community, including $5.00 from Colonel and Mrs. Morgan, the DIA

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\(^{181}\) Providing food for events such as these was keeping in tradition with how women provided food at ceremonies, festivals, and general assemblies of the public prior to their removal to Grand River. Hewitt, "Status of Women in Iroquois Polity before 1784," 59.

\(^{182}\) Unfortunately, nothing is known about the Minstrel Concert, as no details were noted in the WI records. It is likely that the singers wore blackface, but we do not know what they sang. The complex racial history of the Reserve, including the immigration of African Americans to Grand River, has been briefly discussed in this thesis, but needs further in depth attention.

\(^{183}\) The events raised $68.55, $37.10, and $126.67, respectively. Expenses for 1928. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1928-30. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.
Superintendent at Six Nations. Where at all possible, members or their families contributed to the events, volunteering, and occasionally being paid for the use of a truck, wood, or fuel. It is hard to tell but likely that these services were charged to the WI at a lower rate.

“Education is of vital importance:” the WIs and Schools

Education and schools on the reserve were an important concern of the WI from the beginning. Partly their interest sprang from the involvement of a number of teachers in the Institute: Ethel and Mae Alexander, and Julia and Nora Jamieson. The fourth meeting of the Ohsweken WI was held at the No. 2 School where the Alexanders taught, and the children provided some of the entertainment, including “recitations, a duet, and a violin solo.” Later that year, “the need to have better sanitary conditions by which the pupils in the schools would be able to get a drink, was very forcibly put before the meeting by the teachers of No. 2 School and it was decided to take up this question in co-operation with the school board.” The Institute was willing to pay “one-half the expense” of a “sanitary drinking fountain” if it could.

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184 Ibid.
185 When the Alexander teachers resigned, the WI took note: “The president called attention to the fact that the two teachers were leaving at the holidays and suggested that the Inst should give them a send off as they were both energetic and helpful members. Moved by Mrs. Moses and sec. by Mrs. Burnham that we have a social evening on June 19th, for the teachers and that we spend $10.00 in getting each a suitable gift.” Minutes of the Meeting, 1 June 1922. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library
187 Minutes of the Meeting, 5 May 1921. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.
188 Minutes of the Meeting, 1 December 1921. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.
get the Six Nations School Board committed to pay the second half. 189 While the Institute wrote to the School Board, the outcome of this initiative is unclear, as the fountain is not mentioned again in the minutes of the WI or the School Board. However, the conditions of the No. 2 School continued to remain of interest: “The dirty condition of schools No. 2 and 4 was brought to the attention of the meeting. It was found that both schools were only being swept once a week during all the muddy weather and that the school rooms were in a very disgraceful state.” 190 They decided to write another letter to the School Board about “the deplorable condition of the schools and ask that something be done at once.” 191 Again, the response from the School Board is unclear. The Alexanders left the school and community in June 1922; it is possible that without their complaints, the water fountains and sanitation problems were forgotten. 192 They also tried to improve the schools in smaller ways by providing cocoa and sugar to all of the day schools. Mrs. Hilton Hill and Mrs. Elliott Moses proposed the idea, and the Secretary contacted the teachers of the schools to let them know where they could get the supplies. 193

The WI also supported building a continuation school on the reserve, an idea that was discussed more than once by the Six Nations School Board and Six Nations Council. At a May 1923 meeting, the women passed a resolution to send to Ottawa:

189 “The Women’s Institute wrote asking that drinking fountains be placed into the schools and that they would pay half the cost at No. 2 School. This matter was not decided upon as there were no details available as to the cost.” Gordon J. Smith to The Secretary, DIA, 13 February 1922. RG-10, Volume 2011, File 7825-4A, Six Nations Reserve – Minutes of the School Board, 1918-1930, LAC.
190 Minutes of the Meeting, 6 April 1922. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.
191 Ibid. There is no letter in the records of the Six Nations School Board from the Women’s Institute.
Resolved that we, the members of the Ohsweken Branch of the federated Women’s Institutes of Canada, are interested in the education of Indian children, and we would therefore urge the Indian Dept. to provide a suitable building on the reserve, for advanced studies, as we feel that education is of vital importance to the rising generation on the Six Nations Reserve.\(^\text{194}\)

This resolution was copied into a letter sent to Duncan Campbell Scott on 7 May 1923. Scott replied, saying that “the Department hopes before long to establish a Continuation Class on the reserve which will meet the needs referred to.”\(^\text{195}\) Despite the apparent support from Scott, no school was built and no classes were started. It is likely that the upheavals on the reserve in 1924 had some effect on this, as did the arrival of the new Superintendent of Six Nations for the DIA, Col. Cecil Morgan. In the late 1920s, there was again some discussion on the part of the School Board of at least starting classes in a room in the No. 2 School in Ohsweken, but again, it did not happen because of concerns about costs.\(^\text{196}\) Despite the efforts of the Women’s Institute and many others, no high school was ever built on the reserve.

Although the children of the Mohawk Institute were less frequently on the minds of the members of the Ohsweken WI, in 1929 they made two quilts that they donated to the school.\(^\text{197}\) The children of the members of the Ohsweken WI likely attended day schools on the reserve, and most probably attended the No. 2 School in the village. However, some non-Native branches of WIs in Brant County took more of an interest in the Mohawk Institute. On 2 February 1928 the Tutela Women’s Institute visited the residential school: “they toured the whole of the building

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\(^\text{194}\) Minutes of the Meeting, 3 May 1923. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.


and then had their monthly meeting here.” It seems, then, that the WIs on the reserve were more concerned with their local day schools, controlled by the Six Nations School Board, whereas the neighbouring non-Native WIs were more interested in the off-reserve residential school controlled by the DIA. The women most likely took an interest in the school where they thought they might be able to have some impact.

Another common preoccupation of the Ohsweken WI was charity work for the poor, sick or needy in the community. It often had a Hospital Committee whose job it was to visit sick community members in the hospital, as well as to bring plants or other gifts to them. Members also purchased food, milk and firewood for families they deemed needy. In 1925, a teacher contacted the WI regarding a student who needed glasses, but whose parents were unable to buy them. A member of the WI was to consult with Dr. Davis regarding the child’s case, and money was loaned to the parents so that glasses could be purchased for the child. In 1930, following the doctor’s recommendation, they decided to buy a sick man oranges every week. In 1936, “someone reported an appeal for help for a mother with a new baby. Mrs. E. Moses was

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199 Rogers Quarterly Report, 31 October 1928. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 2, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1926-1936, LAC. Newport is located just southeast of Brantford, close to the northwest edge of the reserve. It is only a few kilometers away from the Mohawk Institute.


appointed to speak to Mrs. Jacques and find out more particulars about the case.” These are just a few examples of the type of charity that was given to community members by the Ohsweken WI. Caring for the poor and sick was part of traditional Iroquois women’s work, and also part of the Christian women’s role in Anglo-Canadian society.

“The laying of proper sidewalks in the village was also suggested.”

In the mid-1920s, the Ohsweken WI made their most tangible contribution to the community by initiating, organizing and funding the construction of concrete sidewalks in the village of Ohsweken. In a December 1921 meeting, within the first year of the branch’s founding, the women discussed what they might focus on: “The laying of proper sidewalks in the village was also suggested and it was decided to seek the cooperation of the council on this question.” The first plank sidewalk had been built in the village in the 1890s by the Six Nations Council with the help of local residents. Sidewalks were needed in the village to help pedestrians avoid mud, especially from Spring rains. The women of the Ohsweken WI were familiar with the roads and sidewalks in the village, as it was the centre of the community. Women shopped, attended church, visited the doctor’s office and friends’ homes in the village, and some of their children would have attended the No. 2 School in town. The sidewalks were important for these women’s ability to get around the village; they were less likely to have easy access to horses, horse and buggy, or automobile. In 1920, the Council began the construction of a cement sidewalk westward from the village intersection of Fourth Line and Chiefswood Road.

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203 Minutes of the Meeting, 1 December 1921. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.

204 Ibid.

205 Weaver, “The Iroquois, 1875-1945,” 231.
The sidewalk would be in front of the Council House and Veteran’s Park. This sidewalk was to be paid for seventy per cent by the Council, and thirty per cent by the owners or properties along the street.\(^{206}\) In 1921, Chief Johnson applied to the Council to continue the laying of sidewalks, but the Council wanted an inspection first and thus did not grant the money. After this had occurred, the following year Pathmaster Alex H. Lottridge was hired to secure the cement, although it took several months for him to receive written authority to do so. Other problems occurred, such as cheques that were lost in the mail, and the death of the local Superintendent, Gordon J. Smith. Although it is not clear from the records, it seems that the Ohsweken WI agreed to raise money to pay for the sand and gravel for the sidewalks, that it would have a bee to haul gravel, and that it would host dinners for the workmen.\(^{207}\)

By June 1923 the Ohsweken Women’s Institute wrote a letter of complaint to Duncan Campbell Scott regarding problems that were holding up the construction, and insisted upon the support of the Department. Charlotte Martin Lottridge (Mrs. Alex Lottridge) was a member of the WI all throughout the 1920s, and was likely updating the WI with her husband’s difficulties in getting permission and funds from the Department. Additionally, the WI frequently met at St. Peter’s Parish Hall that year, located just south of the main intersection in Ohsweken, on Chiefswood Road, so if sidewalks continued to be built outwards from the main intersection more people would benefit. President Helen Martin Hill (Mrs. R. R. Hill) wrote: “The Ohsweken Branch of the Women’s Institute has been agitating for some time to have decent

\(^{206}\) Minutes of the Meeting, 2 June 1920. “Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, labour returns and accounts concerning work done on sidewalks of the Six Nations Reserve, 1913-1941.” RG-10, Vol. 7717, File 23032-3-3, LAC.

\(^{207}\) Minutes of the meeting, 7 September 1922, and 1 March 1923. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1921-24. Woodland Cultural Centre Library.
sidewalks laid in the village.”  She went on to describe how the initial grant for the purchase of cement had been spent, told the Department that the money had run out and the WI had asked the Council for funds to buy cement, but they had received nothing for the labour. Hill wrote “the Women’s Inst. have enough sand and gravel ready to go ahead, but sand, gravel, and cement are useless without money to pay the workmen... We would therefore ask the Dept. to take this into consideration and see if anything further can be done to assist us.” Hill also included a list of the particulars of the cement sidewalk construction such as 10 sacks of cement to do 40 feet of walk with $40/day for labour, suggesting that she and the Ohsweken WI were intimately involved with the construction. Scott granted the women $500 as requested, but there continued to be bureaucratic problems between the local and federal DIA offices, the Six Nations Council, the WI and the labourers.

While the Councillors shared similar progressive views and backgrounds with the WI women, the male members of the Council seemed to resent the responsibility and power given to the Women’s Institute. They attempted to appoint two men, David S. Hill, Secretary of the Six Nations Council, and Chief Simon Douglas “to co-operate with the Women’s Institute in the completion of the walks, as representatives of the Council.” However, the Department replied “it is not deemed necessary as the Women’s Institute has undertaken to complete the work and it is felt that they will have the sidewalks constructed properly.” In January 1924, the Ohsweken

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208 Mrs. R. R. Hill to Duncan Campbell Scott, 10 June 1023. “Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, labour returns and accounts concerning work done on sidewalks of the Six Nations Reserve, 1913-1941.” RG-10, Vol. 7717, File 23032-3-3, LAC.
209 Ibid.
211 Minutes of the Council Meeting, 7 August 1923, and A. F. McKenzie, Acting Asst. Deputy and Secretary of the DIA, to the Acting Indian Superintendent, Brantford, 6 September 1923. “Six Nations Agency – Correspondence,
WI were invited to report on the sidewalks to the Six Nations Council, suggesting that they were somewhat out of the loop. Efforts were made by WI women to have a sidewalk built from St. Peter’s Church to the No. 2 School, just south of the Church on Chiefwood Road, as well as to the Doctor’s House. With the implementation of the new elected council in 1924, things started to move along more easily. In April 1925, the Council moved “that the Council assume the expense of finishing sidewalks in village undertaken by Ohsweken Branch of the Women’s Institute.”

Construction continued on and off throughout 1928. Some family members of the WI were involved in the construction, including Robert Martin whose wife, Lucy Miller Martin, had founded the original Ohsweken WI and continued to be a member through the 1920s. Robert and Lucy Martin were the parents of Helen Martin Hill, President of the Ohsweken WI. Robert was responsible for overseeing the construction work, and he had recently been an elected councillor in 1926. After Robert died in July 1927, Lucy Miller Martin continued to be involved in the construction, as she was paid $10 a month for the use of her engine, which was likely used to run the gasoline cement mixer.

Sarah Jane Lottridge Johnson (Mrs. Fred Johnson) was also involved in the WI all throughout the 1920s. She was the daughter of Charlotte Martin and Alex Lottridge who initiated the sidewalks in 1920. Sarah’s husband, Fred L. Johnson, was an elected councillor.

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212 Ten months later, the hereditary Council would be removed from the Council House.
213 The Doctor’s Residence was built in 1885 and was later renovated in the 1960s and turned into the Six Nations Public Library. Weaver, Medicine and Politics, 74.
215 List of cheques for “Sidewalks, 1928” “Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, labour returns and accounts concerning work done on sidewalks of the Six Nations Reserve, 1913-1941.” RG-10, Vol. 7717, File 23032-3-3, LAC.
councillor, and president of the SNAS in 1929. In 1928, the Council purchased tools and equipment from Johnson’s dry goods, groceries and hardware store. Amelia Garlow, a WI member, owned a gravel pit on the reserve and sold her gravel for the project. Charles E. Styres worked as a labourer and his wife was a member of the WI. Other male family members may also have been employed as labourers. By 1928, the sidewalks were complete.

Municipal infrastructure such as sidewalks was a common activity undertaken by WI women in the 1920s. Ambrose suggests that branches “undertook many of the activities usually associated with community organization, including not only culture and recreation, but important components of municipal infrastructure,” such as financing street lights, landscaping cemeteries and parks, building libraries, and constructing or renovating community spaces. Although, the nearby Onondaga WI had donated $5.00 to sidewalk construction in 1913, this was a minor effort in comparison to the endeavours of the Ohsweken WI. Their efforts to build the sidewalk may well have strengthened their own self-esteem and it also made the village of Ohsweken a more welcoming public space.

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216 Receipt from F. L. Johnson billed to the Sidewalk Account, 1 October 1928. “Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, labour returns and accounts concerning work done on sidewalks of the Six Nations Reserve, 1913-1941.” RG-10, Vol. 7717, File 23032-3-3, LAC.
217 Ibid. Garlow had been involved in the Six Nations Patriotic League (as discussed in Chapter 5) and wrote several passionate letters to Duncan Campbell Scott, Prime Minister Borden, and federal ministers requesting funding for wool during World War I.
219 The men had many of the same last names of the women members of the WI, including Davis, Martin, Johnson and Porter, and some were likely brothers, sons, cousins, or uncles.
The three Women’s Institutes at Grand River continued their work after World War II. In 1951, anthropologist Martha Randle noted that “adult women enter into many cooperative enterprises and group activities; Women’s Institutes flourish, mutual aid societies still carry on; associations of women tangential to churches thrive.”222 The WIs lasted into the 1960s and 70s. As Ambrose suggests, “The Women’s Institutes of Ontario grew and prospered because they met the needs of rural women. Moreover, rural women reshaped the Institutes to meet their own needs by moulding the organization and using it to overcome the obstacles they faced in rural life.”223 It also seems that in at least one case women used the Women’s Institute as a springboard to perform charity work elsewhere on the reserve.

“This coterie of busybodies is not permitted to interfere:” The Lady Willingdon Hospital Aid

In November 1930, Mary Sophia Smith Styres, the past president of the IMA, founded the Lady Willingdon Hospital Aid. Although the organization lasted less than a year, it is evidence of how Six Nations women used an organization to try to exert greater control over affairs on the reserve. The Lady Willingdon Hospital opened in 1927, and was named after the wife of the newly sworn in Governor General who had traveled across Canada that year.224 It was the first hospital to be built on the reserve, as prior to that, only a tent hospital had existed

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223 Ambrose, "What Good Are Those Meetings Anyway?": 2.

224 Governor General Major Freeman-Thomas, the 1st Marquess of Willingdon, held the position from 1926-1931 when he became the Governor General to India. His wife was Lady Marie Adelaide Brassey. Weaver, Medicine and Politics, 70-71.
from 1908 to 1913. Dr. Walter Davis was the Medical Superintendent at the hospital, and had been working as a reserve doctor on and off since 1914. He was generally well liked among the community. His wife, Evelyn Miller, was a non-Native woman who had also grown up on the reserve and as we have seen had been active in the Ohsweken Women’s Institute.

In 1930 a number of WI members, particularly Styres, and Dr. Davis had a disagreement. The archival evidence suggests two sides of the story. In a letter to D. C. Scott, Styres explained that the Lady Willingdon Hospital Aid was established in 1930, with the approval of Miss Mary Shore, the head matron of the hospital, and a member of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute. The records of the Ohsweken WI suggest that Mary Jennings of Brantford attended the October 1930 meeting and “gave a short talk on Hospital Aid work and encouraged the ladies to organize.” The women had already been visiting the sick, making gift baskets and quilts, and providing “cheer” around the holidays since the opening of the hospital, and they intended to continuing doing this in a more directed manner through the new organization. Styres disbanded the Aid in the summer of 1931 after complaints made by Dr. Davis and Colonel Cecil

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226 Davis was white, but had been raised by a Six Nations family on the reserve since infancy. Because of this, he was generally regarded as a member of the community. Sally Weaver quotes one person saying “People didn’t consider him a white man. He was one of us.” Ibid., 75.

227 Ibid., 77-78.

228 The dispute was predated by a long-time argument and litigation between Mary Styres Miller, the sister of George D. Styres (and sister-in-law of Mary Sophia Smith Styres), and Squire Davis, the adoptive father of Dr. Walter Davis over a piece of land. See “Six Nations Reserve - Claim by Mary Miller to Lot 44, River Road, Onondaga Township Now in the Possession of Squire Davis.” RG10, Vol. 2099, File 17,281, LAC.


230 Minutes of the Meeting, 18 October 1930. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1928-30. Woodland Cultural Centre Library. Jennings was involved in a Brant County WI, and was also likely involved in the Women’s Hospital Aid of Brantford. The WHA was founded in 1903, and by 1927, had over one thousand women members who provided linens and reading materials, and furnished a new hospital wing, among their other achievements. Raymond, "Women's Activities in Brantford,” 111.
Morgan, the local DIA Superintendent at Six Nations, about the interference of the Aid, and Styres in particular, in the running of the Hospital.

Davis argued that the Aid was “a hindrance instead of a help” and that they “have been trying to force themselves into the affairs of the hospital under the guise of pretending to do sewing for the hospital.”

Colonel Morgan provided Scott with further details about his conversation with Dr. Davis about the Aid:

He says that should this Styres agitation not be nipped in the bud that he fears they will gain control for which they have been working ever since the Hospital was opened and he recommends, and asks me to recommend, that the Department discountenance all these Hospital Auxiliary clubs altogether as they have outworn their usefulness and have become a source of jealousy and will be used as a means to an end for which this faction is working.

Davis had a genuine fear of what would happen “should the Indians gain control,” and control was what this dispute was largely over. The two issues were dances held by hospital staff and using the hospital for care of the elderly. Morgan believed that Styres had a hidden agenda of using the Hospital “as an old peoples’ home, which Dr. Davis will not allow,” although she does not mention this in her letters. His charge remains unsubstantiated, although it is quite possible that care of the elderly was a problem on the reserve by this time. He explained that the hospital staff had been using the Recreation Room of the Hospital to hold “small dances or other functions,” and this was particularly offensive to Styres, whom Morgan called an “anti-

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231 W. Davis to Dr. E. L. Stone, Director of Medical Services, DIA, 22 June 1931. “Six Nations Agency – Correspondence Regarding grants to the Women’s institute 1928-1941.” RG 10, Vol. 3236, File 600,333, LAC.


233 Cecil Morgan to Dr. Scott, 25 June 1931. “Six Nations Agency – Correspondence Regarding grants to the Women’s institute 1928-1941.” RG 10, Vol. 3236, File 600,333, LAC.

234 Neither Weaver, Myers or Shimony talk about this.
dance fanatic.”  He explained that “Styres is the mother-in-law of Hilton Hill and Elliott Moses and the complaint is the outcome of the unexplained dislike and persistent vendetta against Dr. Davis by what might be called ‘The Hilton Hill faction on the reserve.’”  It is likely that Styres was especially conservative in her views of what was acceptable behaviour, and she was probably affronted by the thought of dances occurring at the hospital.

In a second letter that Morgan wrote to Scott two days later, he reiterated his position: “I am very strongly of the opinion that the Medical Superintendent and the matron should have an entirely free hand on these matters and that it will be to the benefit of the Hospital and to the Reserve generally if this coterie of busybodies is not permitted to interfere.” Morgan called Styres a “mischief maker” more than once, and implied that “under cover of charity, [they] seek only to stir up discord and obtain influence.” For her part, Styres explained how when she last spoke to Shore, the matron (and certainly an acquaintance of Styres through the Ohsweken WI) explained that the DIA did not wish to support any organizations, and ended the conversation with “I suppose you know what to do,” to which Styres responded “I certainly do.” She then wrote “I therefore wish to convey to you the Aid will be notified at the next meeting be disbanded, as the Indian Department do not wish our assistance. Once again, the code – sit down, you are wards of the government and you have nothing to say.” Despite the fact that Scott initially wrote to Morgan “you will understand that the Department does not wish to

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235 Cecil Morgan to Dr. Scott, 23 June 1931. “Six Nations Agency – “Correspondence Regarding grants to the Women’s institute 1928-1941.” RG 10, Vol. 3236, File 600,333, LAC.
236 Ibid.
238 Ibid.
discourage any activities which might be of benefit on the reserve,” he did decide that “all future necessary work for the Lady Willingdon Hospital is to be carried out by the staff provided by the Department.” While Styres and the Aid group did not acquire “Indian control of Indian healthcare,” they did continue to take care of hospitalized members of the community, through the Ohsweken WI Sick Committee which carried out its work of providing comforts to the ill through the 1930s.241

Conclusion

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the Ohsweken branch of the Red Cross was organized in affiliation with the Brantford branch. This was the first time that the Red Cross organized a branch on the reserve, and it took advantage of the existing networks for women’s organizations. The main women’s groups on the reserve – the Women’s Institutes at Ohsweken, Sour Springs and New Credit, the Anglican Ladies Guild, the Baptist Ladies Aid, and the Six Nations Teachers’ Organization – became organizational units for volunteer work. The executive consisted of President Melinda Burnham Powless, whose husband William was a Councillor and Director of the Plowmen’s Association, Vice-President Mabel Styres Hill, Secretary-Treasurer Evelyn Miller Davis, and the Honourary President was nurse and veteran Edith Anderson Monture.242 An “Overseas” Committee was formed to “supply a steady flow of comforts to Indian soldiers overseas,” and Florence Smith Hill (Mrs. J. C. Hill) was named President, and


241 For instance Minutes of the Meeting, 14 May 1936. Ohsweken Women’s Institute Minute Book, 1936-1940. Woodland Cultural Centre Library. See also Kelm, Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50, Lux, Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940.

teacher Sylvia Jamieson Secretary-Treasurer. All of these women had previous organizational experience that was put to good use during the war years, and numerous other family connections to other groups. Unlike the situation in 1914, they no longer needed to be motivated or helped by non-Native women from Brantford. Instead they were affiliated with them as partners in homefront war work.

The Women’s Institutes in particular were very successful institutions at Grand River, in large part because they were practical and women were able to affect change through them. As Ethel Brant Monture wrote, “the scope of this [WI] program is understood and adjusted to fit the need.” They used the organization to suit their own needs, as did other rural women in Ontario. While it is difficult to say very much about the racial dynamics of Six Nations WI’s work with other Brant County branches, it seems that there were some equitable relations. For instance, the Six Nations Women’s Institutes invited and were invited to other Brant County WI meetings; they give programs and were also lectured to. But did non-Native women look upon Six Nations women as a spectacle? Did they invite them out of curiosity and judge them on their programs or appearance? It is impossible to know. However, in an interview conducted in the 1960s, Mabel Styres Hill (Mrs. Hilton Hill), who acted as President of the South Brant District, replied that she was “treated no differently” when asked if she was ever treated differently due to her race.

Mabel’s mother, Mary Sophia Smith Styres (Mrs. George D. Styres) however, and women like her, may appear to have accepted particular versions of morality that saw Native

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243 Ibid.
244 Ethel Brant, “Ontario Indian Reservations Have Fine Institutes,” from the Ethel Brant Monture File, Woodland Cultural Centre.
245 Interview with Mrs. Mabel Styres Hill. File 15, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
people as somewhat degraded, but they also may have thought that inculcating morality, such as through the Indian Moral Association, was the best defence against racist and misogynist perspectives. Evelyn Johnson may have felt the same way; knowing that her sister Pauline had to negotiate derogatory stereotypes may have affected her personal views. The Johnson sisters and Styres, as well as countless other Six Nations women, may have encountered attitudes directly in their experiences off the Reserve. These more extreme manifestations of the "reforming spirit" led to a zealousness to improve the morality of the community, in particular by attempting to protect and educate Six Nations girls, to divest the community of immoral Councillors and School Board members, and African-Canadian teachers. However, Styres and others would have perceived her actions as protecting and improving the community. While at times she ran afoul of white authority, such as with the Lady Willingdon Hospital Aid, she was never alone in her attempts to improve the community.

Six Nations women had always been leaders within their communities, but in the first few decades of the twentieth century, they adopted and adapted the organizational infrastructure of their non-Native neighbours and formed new women's associations to improve their community. Christianity was an important part of this movement, and it meshed with the social gospel and reform movements that were a part of Anglo-Canadian society in Ontario at the time. Unlike their experiences in the schools, overt compulsion and coercion is not a part of the story with these organizations; women were organizing and working through these associations to accomplish their goals. As Ethel Brant Monture wrote in 1940, "From being a group of women who kept to themselves, because there was no point of contact with other women of the
Province, the Indian women are discovering in themselves the same qualities they have admired in others. And that they have their place in the national life which they can capably fill.”  

246 Ethel Brant, “Ontario Indian Reservations Have Fine Institutes,” from the Ethel Brant Monture File, Woodland Cultural Centre.
Conclusion

In the first few decades of the twentieth century, Six Nations women were vocal and energetic activists in the Grand River community. Women worked through churches and voluntary associations to improve life for men, women and children living on the reserve. Many of their activities were similar to what was taking place in the rest of rural Ontario. Moral reform associations, Women’s Institutes, agricultural societies and patriotic leagues were used by the Six Nations just as they were used by non-Native rural Ontarians, and especially women. Six Nations women wanted the same or similar things for their community: successful farms, well-attended churches, tidy villages, well-educated and healthy children and a community that takes care of each other. In various ways, their cultural identity came to incorporate Anglo-Protestant Canadian morals and values. But of course, this did not make them any less "Iroquois," as traditions are always in flux. The community maintained many of the important core social structures that had been central to the Iroquois for centuries. While no longer a matrilocal or matrilineal society, women maintained authority in the community. They no longer lived with extended families in longhouses, but family relationships were still crucial to how people worked within the community. Women used family networks in their social reform and community work, with mothers passing on their roles in organizations to their daughters. And while women no longer taught children in the home, they re-established their role as teachers by working in the day schools and Mohawk Institute. So while in many ways, the community might have looked like any non-Native rural village in Ontario in many respects, to be sure, they had succeeded at maintaining Iroquois social structures central to their culture.

Six Nations women continued to be social and political activists during and after World War II. With the onset of World War II, women responded with gendered patriotism, again
working through voluntary associations. More women from the reserve were involved and some enlisted in the Canadian Forces; however, almost nothing has been written about them. The sources that discuss the involvement of Native men in the Second World War generally leave out women’s involvement, and the sources that discuss women’s wartime work; conversely, the sources leave out Native women.\(^1\) Recently, the Six Nations community attempted to rectify the situation. In September 2008 retired Justice of the Peace Norma General-Lickers organized the first Six Nations/New Credit Women’s Veterans Honouring Ceremony. World War II veterans Private Marion Miller Hill and LAW Betty Jo Doctor Bryson laid a wreath as part of the ceremony. The pamphlet noted that “We will remember the great sacrifices these brave ladies made. We honour the forgotten Warrior.”\(^2\) Since little is known about their service, this is an area that needs further research. At least ten women from Six Nations enlisted; there may well have been more.\(^3\)

Nursing became an increasingly popular career for women at Six Nations, possibly as a result of the prominence of nurse and midwife Edith Anderson Monture in the community. However, the little work that has been done on Native women as nurses does not focus on either their work during the war, or women from Six Nations.\(^4\) But it is clear that the Lady Willingdon


Hospital was increasingly staffed with women from the reserve. This is another topic that needs to be investigated.

After the war, women continued to work to improve the community through organizations and voluntary associations. The Women’s Institutes continued their work, with many of the same families predominating the executives of the local branches. For instance, Florence Smith Hill (Mrs. J. C. Hill) and Martha Moses Anderson (Mrs. Arthur Anderson Jr.) were both President of the Ohsweken WI during the 1950s. Hill is the daughter of Chief William Smith and teacher Sarah Cecilia Russell Smith who was the first President of the Sour Springs branch in the 1920s. Anderson had numerous familial connections to the WI: she was the granddaughter of Mary Sophia Smith Styres (Mrs. George D. Styres), founder of the Indian Moral Association and member of the Ohsweken WI, the daughter of Ethel Styres Moses (Mrs. Elliott Moses) who was president in the 1930s, and the niece of Mabel Styres Hill (Mrs. Hilton Hill), president in the mid 1920s. Throughout the 1950s and 60s Anderson was also involved in the Six Nations Agricultural Society, and the St. John’s Ladies Guild, as well as Six Nations Young Peoples, a youth organization. The women of the King family dominated the executive of the New Credit branch in the 1950s and 60s, while Osborne King and later his son Fred W. G. King were Chiefs of New Credit. The Ohsweken and Sour Spring branches survived into the 1970s, while it seems the New Credit ceased its work in the mid 1960s. Other organizations

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6. Hill and Weaver, "History of the Ohsweken Women’s Institute."
7. Interview with Mrs. Martha Anderson. Box 471, File 15, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
9. Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario, "List of Members by District: Ohsweken Branch Presidents and Secretaries.", ———, "List of Members by District: Sour Springs Branch Presidents and Secretaries.", ———,
grew in popularity after the war, and women continued to be involved in the Six Nations Agricultural Society as well as the Six Nations Pageant Committee.

Women teachers also remained important to the community in the post war period. Although several prominent Six Nations men also taught in the post-war period, the teaching staff at Six Nations continued to be increasingly female, and to come from within the community. While lists of teachers do not exist for this period, it is clear that many of the same women continued to teach, including Emily General, Julia Jamieson, Nora Jamieson, Mary Jamieson, Sylvia Jamieson, and Vera Davis. New teachers joined the staff at Six Nations schools such as Maude Hill, Gladys Hill, Agnes Hill, Olive Hill, Dorothy Moses, Wilma Smith Jamieson, Mildred Hunter, and Garnette Miller. Teachers from Six Nations continued to organize through the Six Nations Teacher’s Organization, and sent delegates to meetings of the Ontario Education Association. Through the SNTO, teachers stated their grievances to the Special Joint Committee investigating Indian Affairs in 1949. Supervising Principal J. C. Hill (and President of the SNTO) asked for better salaries and more teachers, improved manual training and home economics for students, better opportunities for students to attend high school, scholarships for normal school, better health education for students, and better history books as the ones they have “grossly exaggerate the violence of our forefathers and present Indians in a bad light.” Teachers continued to push for better education and for more information about Six

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*List of Members by District: New Credit Branch Presidents and Secretaries.* The minute books of the Ohsweken WI at the Woodland Cultural Centre end in 1976.

10 The Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports listed teachers at Six Nations up until 1939, and not after.


12 Ibid., 68.

13 Testimony of Mr. J. C. Hill, "Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons, Appointed to Complete the Examination and Consideration of the Indian Act, Minutes and Proceedings and Evidence.," (Ottawa: 1949), 1278-9. There is currently a school named for J. C. Hill on the reserve, as well as the Jamiesons and Emily General.
Nations culture and history in their schools. Some also participated in other presentations of Six Nations history. Nora and Julia Jamieson were involved with Emily General’s Six Nations Reserve Forest Theatre through the 1960s.  

While women tended to be more concerned with social activism, a number were political activists as well. Emily General, for instance, led a delegation of petitioners to London in the summer of 1930 to ask for the Crown’s help in dealing with the Canadian government, especially concerning control over their funds. She explained: “I was bad one time. I went with a delegation of chiefs to England. I left my school and put a girl in my place.” The trip caused a great stir both at home and in England, where Native people in feathers continued to draw audiences. A committee of six members, two from each party, was appointed by the British House of Commons, including the Labour candidate A. Fenner Brockway. Brockway asked the Right Honourable J. H. Thomas, the Secretary of State for the Dominions, to meet with the “Red Indian Chiefs,” but they were denied a visit, as the matters “lie within the exclusive competence of His Majesty’s Government in Canada,” and so he “cannot see his way to receive the deputation or to take any action in regard to these matters.”

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15 “Red Indian Chiefs in the Commons,” *The Times*, 3 July 1930. The petitioners included her brother Sylvanus General.
16 White, “School Named for Six Nations Teacher Emily General.”
18 A. Fenner Brockway to J. H. Thomas, 8 July 1930; H.N. Tait to John R. O. Johnson, Esq. 8 July 1930. RG-10, Vol. 2287, File 57,169, Part 6, Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, Reports, Memoranda, Publications & Photographs Dealing with the Political Status of the Six Nations, 1924-1936, LAC. Thomas further explained to Brockway that “I am sure that you and your colleagues will appreciate that it would be most inappropriate for me, by receiving a deputation, or otherwise, to give any appearance of intervening in what has always been regarded, both by the Canadian Government and ourselves, to be purely and solely a domestic concern of Canada, and thus to depart from attitudes consistently maintained by successive Secretaries of State.” J. H. Thomas to A. Fenner Brockway, 15 July 1930. RG-10, Vol. 2287, File 57,169, Part 6, Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, Reports, Memoranda, Publications & Photographs Dealing with the Political Status of the Six Nations, 1924-1936, LAC.
embarrassment to the Department of Indian Affairs and the federal government, the British politicians who met with the delegation, and the committee that was formed to look into the matter, followed a longstanding practice of the Crown, and referred the matter back to Canada. They justified their actions by stating that an “attitude of non-interference with what is a purely Dominion matter has been maintained with regard to all other appeals by or on behalf of the Six Nations Indians.”

This trip was not the end of General’s political actions on behalf of her community. While she was suspended for teaching for three years upon her return from Grand River, she continued to teach throughout the mid to late 1930s and into the 1940s. On June 16, 1948, she was fired for refusing to take the required oath of allegiance to the Crown. Her sister-in-law remembered that “she came back crying, and said they didn’t need her anymore… When you swear allegiance that means you’re looking after the government’s affairs, not your people’s. She didn’t want to be gagged.” General wrote a letter to the Department of Indian Affairs asking that they reconsider her situation:

The Six Nations are living on this Grand River lands under special treaty as allies of the British Crown. So it is out of order to expect a Six Nations to subjugate himself in order to teach his own people, in his own land… I do not think that the Canadian government, the people of Canada, or the Crown, would respect me otherwise than be true to my own noble race who have done so much for the English on this continent.

She received no reply. However, as a result of her removal from the formalized school system, she found other ways to educate her people about what she believed was important.

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20 The 1947 Civil Service Act required all civil servants to make an oath of allegiance to the Crown.

21 White, “School Named for Six Nations Teacher Emily General.”

22 Ibid.
Her most lasting contribution to the community’s education was the Six Nations Reserve Forest Pageant, founded in 1949 and still runs today in the twenty-first century. She approached the Confederacy chiefs for their support and took them to see a pageant in Ticonderoga, New York in order to persuade them that something similar could be done at Grand River.\textsuperscript{23} They were impressed with the play, and agreed to help her with the history of the founding of the Confederacy. At the time, she was a member of the Indian Defense League and she also approached them for funding and help with the construction of the theatre itself:\textsuperscript{24} “So I was a member of the Indian Defense League and there was a lot of history discussed there and I finally thought it would be a good thing to start something like this because they honoured the men of the past, the historians and the great orators and the men that had done very great work for the Six Nations.”\textsuperscript{25} The first play was written by William Smith, also a member of the Indian Defense League, called \textit{The League of Peace}, and was presented in August 1949.\textsuperscript{26} General wanted the pageant to present the history of the Six Nations from “an Indian point of view.”\textsuperscript{27} According to an interview done in the 1970s, General did “not approve of fanciful accounts of history, that is, history that has been dressed up like a Hollywood production so that it will appear more interesting. Rather, she prefers that the plays adhere to the facts because she

\textsuperscript{23} Krieg, "Forest Theatre", 5-6. Emily’s sister Laura General had attended the Ticonderoga pageant in 1946 with Chief Clinton Rickard, founder of the Indian Defense League, and several other chiefs from the Grand River and Tuscarora Reserves. Krieg suggests that Emily and Laura together thought of the idea of the pageant.


\textsuperscript{25} "Savage or Chieftain? Six Nations Reclaims Its History.,” The CBC Digital Archives Website, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation., http://archives.cbc.ca/society/religion_spirituality/clips/15942/.

\textsuperscript{26} Krieg, "Forest Theatre", 6. Smith was also a member of the Six Nations Council, the Ohsweken Fair Board, the Plowmen, and other organizations. His wife Josephine Anthony Smith also worked on the Pageant Committee, as well as being a member of the Sour Springs Women’s Institute and Sour Springs Women’s Committee. "William Smith,” \textit{The Expositor}, 4 October 1994.

\textsuperscript{27} Krieg, "Forest Theatre", 7.
believes that they are interesting enough in themselves.‖ Her wishes are still being honoured as today’s pageant is very similar to the 1949 version. Her sister-in-law remembers that “In her time, when she tried to tell people of these things [Six Nations history], there were some who could understand her and some who couldn’t. But today, it’s just like they’re speaking her words. She’s changed the attitude of people, to be proud of who they are. Children and teaching was her life.”

Thus, throughout the postwar period, General continued to be involved in education and activism in for her community; she also was the president of the Indian Defense League. In March 1959 when the Warriors and other Longhouse political activists attempted to retake the Council House in what Andrea Catapano suggests is the second phase of the assertion of sovereignty and status of Six Nations, General was involved in attempting to “hold the fort.” She was a spokesperson for the Confederacy Council of the Six Nations of the Grand River throughout much of this period. As well as these activities, General also worked a large farm with her brother Sylvanus and his wife Josephine, raising ducks, pigs and corn, and also delivering newspapers. However, she is best remembered for her work as a teacher: in the public schools, at St. Luke’s Anglican Church Sunday School, and through the pageant. As the

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28 Ibid.
29 White, “School Named for Six Nations Teacher Emily General.”
30 Little to no research has been done on the IDL, and what has been done tends to focus on the men, especially Clinton Rickard. See “The Indian Defense League of America.” Emily General’s obituary states that she was Past President. “General, Emily C. - “Gaw Hen Dena”.”
32 “General, Emily C. - “Gaw Hen Dena”. “
33 White, “School Named for Six Nations Teacher Emily General.”, Wilson, Apologies to the Iroquois, 256.
Brantford Expositor noted in 1991, “she installed in [her students] knowledge of native culture and traditions, and pride in that heritage.”

While General certainly was not an elected politician, she was very politically active. As the number of clan mothers decreased throughout the twentieth century since the proportion of Longhouse people decreased relative to the growing numbers of Christians, women lacked what had been their traditional political power. As they were not given the right to vote for the elected council after 1924, and could not run as councillors until 1960, they voiced their opinions in other ways. However, after First Nations people were given the right to vote in federal elections, women began to run and win positions as councillors at Six Nations. In 1962, three women were elected for the first time, Rena Hill, Mina Martin Burnham (Mrs. Edward Burnham), and Minnie Davis Maracle Jamieson (Mrs. George Jamieson). All three of these women had political and organizational experience and connections, some of which were discussed in Chapter 4. Rena Hill was the daughter of prominent farmer and Mohawk Worker Jacob Lewis and Elen Jamieson. Jacob had been to Geneva in the 1920s to argue for Six Nations sovereignty, traveled with General to London in 1930, and was also a long-time member of the SNAS and the Odd Fellows. Rena’s sister, Effie Lewis Van Every, was very involved in the Sour Springs Women’s Institute, and her husband Peter was an elected councillor. Rena’s husband, Joseph Fred Hill, was an elected councillor at Grand River in the early years of the elected council, and again from 1952-1959. After her husband died in 1960. Rena took over his


35 Jacob Lewis and Elen Jamieson (parents of Rena Hill) File 17, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC. Reville, The History of the County of Brant, Ontario, 686.

36 Obituary, Peter Edward Vanevery. Interview with Mrs. Peter Vanevery, Evangeline (Effie). File 14, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.
position as one of the two elected councillors for District 1, and was elected for a total of seven terms or fourteen years. When she retired from the Council she was seventy-three years old.  

Another of the first women councillors was Mina Martin Burnham, the daughter of Robert Martin and Lucy Miller. Robert was a member of the SNAS, and was an early dehorner and politically progressive. Lucy was the founder of the original Ohsweken Women’s Institute in 1905, and when it restarted in the 1920s, her daughters Mina and Helen were involved, as was Mina’s sister-in-law, Lillian, whose husband was Brigadier General Oliver Milton Martin. Mina’s husband, Edward Burnham, was an active member of the Plowmen’s Association, the SNAS and the Brass Band. Mina herself was involved in numerous organizations and causes leading up to her election. She worked as a councillor for District #3 from 1962 through the end of 1967 when her daughter Nina was elected in her place. Today, Nina Burnham is a prominent Six Nations activist and Anglican Elder.

Minnie Davis Maracle Jamieson, the third of the women who were elected in 1962 was the daughter of Mary Hill and Matthew Davis, and the wife of George Jamieson. George was a President of the Ohsweken Agricultural Society and a member of the Six Nations Pageant Committee. Minnie only served for two years as a

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37 "Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation: Elected Council from 1924 to Present." Rena

38 File 13 “Dehorners”, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC


40 “Mrs. Burnham was lifeline member of St. Peter’s Anglican Church and A.C.W., an active choir member for 84 years, also a member of Six Nations Benevolent Association, a past member of the Six Nations Agricultural Society, Six Nations Harness Horsemen’s Association, Canadian Trotting Association. Mrs. Burnham, a Silver Star Mother, was recently honored at the Warrior Symposium at the Woodland Cultural Centre. She was also one of the first ladies to be elected to the Six Nations Council in 1962.” "Mina E. (Martin) Burnham," The Expositor, 13 January 1987.


42 Her mother Mary remarried Alexander “Sandy” Maracle, and so she often went by Maracle.

councillor, and later ran a craft store called Min’s Indian Crafts. Women have continued to serve as elected councillors; in 2009 half of the councillors were women.

This thesis has emphasized both change and continuity. Despite the challenges of colonialism, women have been able to maintain their leadership roles in the community. Women with different interests and different visions attempted to make changes and improvements in their community with different methods. It may well be that Grand River women have not been alone in their ability to negotiate with colonial power structures for their own benefit. Laurence Hauptman’s recent study *Seven Generations of Iroquois Leadership: the Six Nations Since 1800* depicts several women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who were activists and leaders in their communities in New York State. While he does not consider any women from Grand River, many of the women in this thesis would fit with the stories he tells. He argues that “while the major role of clan mothers has definitely declined and the economic control of horticulture by women has disappeared, Iroquois women continue to play essential roles – economically, culturally, and politically – in each of their communities.”

Women adapted to the assimilation attempts by the church and state in Canada throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many women no longer have a “pure” or “traditional” Iroquois or Haudenosaunee women’s identity, and instead have a culturally complex Anglo-Protestant Six Nations identity. While the voices of Longhouse women have generally been

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44 Heather Howard has written about how George and Minnie moved to Toronto in 1921 and their home on Bleeker Street became the site of a burgeoning Native Canadian community in the city. They later established what they called the “North American Indian Club” out of their home in 1950, through the YMCA. However, at some point they moved back to the reserve. See Heather Howard, "Dreamcatchers in the City: An Ethnohistory of Social Action, Gender and Class in Native Community Production in Toronto" (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2005), 105-6.


harder to find, as they speak through the men that they nominate as chiefs, it seems that they were less able to maintain power in the community due to changes in political structures and the increasing numbers of Christians on the reserve.

However, today both Longhouse and Christian women speak for the Six Nations and are working to protect and improve the lives of their community members. While there are only fifteen official clan mothers now at Grand River, Six Nations women have been active social and political work on and off the reserve in recent decades. 47 Perhaps one of the best-known women from Six Nations in the post-war period has been Roberta Jamieson. The first aboriginal women to become a lawyer in Canada, Jamieson went on to become Ombudsman of Ontario and the first woman to be elected Chief of the Six Nations in 2001. 48 She is focused on bringing traditional values to her work:

Iroquois people have always placed a lot of importance on diplomacy. We’ve placed a lot of influence on process, on reaching a consensus, knowing that if you spend the time to come to a genuine consensus it will be long-lasting. That’s directly opposed to what I experienced in law school, where the adversarial approach produced zero sum, win/lose results. The gladiator in the courtroom is a male image but in my culture, women have always played the role of facilitating agreement, whether it was at the dinner table or elsewhere. In our culture, women are the conscience of the council, of the chiefs. 49

Jamieson is currently the President and CEO of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.

Like Jamieson, Beverly Jacobs also earned a law degree and has used this knowledge “as a tool of healing.” She explains: “It really opened up for me how European and Canadian law was used as a tool of assimilation. I felt shock waves, to see what had been done to my people.”

Jacobs recently served two terms as the President of the Native Women’s Association of Canada, and is working on the Sisters in Spirit Initiative to stop violence against Native women. She was the only woman present at the negotiations of the Kelowna Accord in 2005, and was on the floor of the House during Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s apology to former residential school students. Norma General Lickers is another Six Nations women who has used law to work to improve her community. She is a retired Federal and Provincial Justice of the Peace, and has been involved with organizations such as the Ontario Native Women’s Association, and the Niagara Chapter of ONWA. Six Nations women are also acting as leading activists in the Caledonia land claim dispute, or the Reclamation of Kanensthaton. Hazel E. Hill and Janie Jamieson both act as spokeswomen and leaders, sending out updates and speaking to the media.

While the activist work done by Six Nations women in the early twentieth century were focused on different issues, historical continuities exist between Six Nations women’s efforts to better their community. Women’s agency and Six Nations women’s sense of responsibility to their community and their ability to work within different worlds have been important features of their history.

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### Appendices

Table 1: Teachers at Six Nations Day Schools by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>% of Women Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Annual Reports, Department of Indian Affairs*
Table 2: Teachers at Six Nations Day Schools – Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non-Native</th>
<th>Native</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>% of Native Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports, Department of Indian Affairs

* The Alexanders – Arthur, Ethel and Mae.
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