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The Lynx in Time: Haudenosaunee Women's Traditions and History

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Although the work of multiculturalism has begun in ethnohistory, I believe there is still a long way to go, especially once we turn to women's stories. I find that even those scholars who intellectually reject the confines of the Christian "Eve" story continue to be conditioned, however unconsciously, by its assessment of strong women as impediments to, not instruments of, progress. Nevertheless, reevaluations of women's social roles are undeniably underway, while oral history is acquiring greater status. Thus the timing seems propitious for revisiting one of the most powerful, if one of the most neglected, stories of Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) history, that of the Jigonsasch, or Head Clan Mothers of the League. In the pages that follow, I will examine some of the better-hidden skeins that currently confuse the collections, and, I hope, will offer another approach to Haudenosaunee history, one that will allow for a mixed oral-written reconstruction. My demonstration centers on the Jigonsasch or, as I call her for reasons that will later become obvious, the Lynx in Time. In the process, I am careful to relate only stories already recorded in western sources out of sympathy for the position that no other sacred stories ought to be divulged beyond those that have been revealed to date.

I. Distortions of Tradition

A necessary prelude to my discussion of the Jigonsasch is a look at the nature of existing distortions, with suggestions on ways to spot them. There are two primary types of distortion: failures of context and uncritical inclusion of western interpolations.

Failures of Context

So much has been so nearly lost because the memory of the Jigonsasch is a woman's story and not, therefore, one well-collected or properly emphasized by the old ethnographers. Cogent recitals of women's stories are rare; in fact, I would say non-existent. The stories that do exist are uncollated, often scattered through the literature in such oblique and partial forms that only someone intimately acquainted with them can fathom the allusions. For example, had I

not already known the story of Atanasic, Otsita, Sky Woman, First Woman, Our Grandmother, so well that mental reference to it had become reflexive, J. N. B. Hewitt's story snippet, "The Woman and the Dog in the Moon," recounted by Thomas McElwain in "Seneca Iroquois Concepts of Time" (1987) would not have registered mentally for me:

A woman is sitting in the moon and she is busy embroidering with porcupine quills, near her is a bright fire, and over the fire hangs a kettle with something boiling in it, by her side sits a large dog who watches her continually. Once in a while she gets up lays aside her work and stirs whatever is boiling in the kettle, while she is doing this the dog unravels her work.

This is going on continually, as fast as she embroiders the dog unravels, or if she could finish her work, or if she ever does the end of the world will come that instant.¹

Women's traditions are typically given in this crabbed fashion, innocent of context or antecedent. This tale only pops into perspective if you know beforehand that the Woman in the Moon is Sky Woman, long since called "Grandmother," who was transported to the lunar surface upon her death by her favorite grandson, Sapling, the Sky Holder, to light the night so that her descendants might not become afraid, lost in time. And you must already know, since you surely will not glean, that the dog is the White Dog of the midwinter ceremony, bearing the thanks of humanity that continuously create reality while the Grandmother of Existence beads on, steady as rain, inexorable as night.

Clear as the linkage ought to be here, the Grandmother/Moon connection has been obscured, due in large measure to errors perpetuated in popular collections. For example, Elisabeth Tooker, in *Native North American Spirituality of the Eastern Woodlands* (1979), presents moon-making as Sapling's idea alone, even though she shows it coming about in conjunction with Grandmother's death announcement.² Apprising Sapling of her impending demise (probably in her death song). Grandmother draws the stars out of her medicine bag, and scatters them across the night sky, a preliminary deed building up to her grand finale, the creation of the Moon. The matter is further confused when, according to Tooker, Sapling "took his *mother's* face and flung it skyward and made the sun, and took his *mother's* breast and flinging it into the sky made the moon" (italics mine).³

I believe that interpreting "mother" literally here misstates a generic use of "mother" (i.e., Clan Mother), while a female Sun is simply not Haudenosaunee. Sapling's biological mother, the Lynx, had been dead and buried for many years by this point in the story, so it makes no sense for him to fling her decayed face or breast anywhere. Moreover, the evidence of other collections stands against such a reading. Daniel Brinton, a scrupulous early collector who deserves

more attention than he receives, flatly states of the Twins (Sapling and Flint), "Their grandmother was the moon."⁴ Moreover, the Haudenosaunee Sun is always referred to as masculine, such as in the well-known story of a journey to Sky World found in A. C. Parker's *Code of Handsome Lake*.⁵ Most importantly, the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address invokes *Grandmother Moon* and *Brother Sun*.⁶ Tooker herself presents a Seneca Thanksgiving address recorded in 1959, which clearly venerates "Our elder brother, the sun" and "Our grandmother, the moon."⁷

Such lack of context in the collections makes unraveling the stories a chore. Because women's stories are typically not collated, weighed, or assessed against other material, mistakes like these prevail, engendering confusion for later scholars. For example, it was clear to me that McElwain, relatively unfamiliar with the women's Sky cycle, failed to make the Grandmother/Moon connection, as indeed had his source, J. N. B. Hewitt, despite Hewitt's partially Tuscarora identity. Instead, McElwain interpreted the story superficially, as evidence of the Seneca's "strong emphasis on the precariousness of the world and its imminent end," a sentiment unknown before Handsome Lake's prophecies in the Third Epoch of contact.⁸ The Sky Epoch, to which Grandmother Moon belongs, antedates the Epoch of Handsome Lake by at least ten thousand years. (An ice age is mentioned in First Epoch stories.) Thus, failure of context misleads McElwain into an anachronistic interpretation.

Inclusion of Western Interpolations

Added to failure of context is failure to identify western interpolations. This problem is well illustrated in the 'Twins' section of Sky tradition, the portion most familiar to Euro-American scholars, not because it was the section most important to the Haudenosaunee but because, early on, it was the section most useful to missionaries. Consequently, it was the version most likely to be told by (largely assimilated) informants to male ethnographers later on. Indeed, despite his usual caution, Daniel Brinton seemed almost unaware of the women's portion of Sky, even as he was taking Schoolcraft and the missionaries to task for their distortions.⁹ C. M. Barbeau's 1914 collection overleapt the first and second women's sections of Sky to overemphasize the 'Twins' section, as told by his male informants.¹⁰ Marius Barbeau got the shape and emphasis of the stories more correct in 1960 because his informant on Sky tales was a woman, Catherine Johnson, the proper teller of the first two cycles of Sky.¹¹ Unfortunately, by 1960 the women's story had shrunk to near invisibility, an obscure tale in an arcane source. Today, the Jigonsasch lie hidden in the nooks and crannies of orthodox ethnohistory, so much so that I find even feminist historians of the Haudenosaunee like Joan Jensen quite literally unaware of the Lynx/Jigonsasch. In fact, at one point Jensen actually recounts part of the tradition of the Daughter - Sky Woman's little Fat-Faced Lynx, her Panther, the Wild Cat - without realizing what it is.¹²

Conveniently for the missionaries, the Haudenosaunees already called Sapling the "Creator," but the missionaries distorted the context by ignoring the fact that *all* of the Sky ancestors, and not just Sapling, had been creators and that, moreover, earth animals were creators, too – of Turtle Island (North America) no less.¹³ To the old Haudenosaunees, creativity abounded; it was never the hoarded province of just one entity. To the missionaries, however, God alone created. Thus, they recrafted Sapling into a lone Creator, a mirror image of their Christian God, a meaning quite foreign to authentic tales of Sapling.¹⁴

The missionaries likewise transformed the cycle of the Twins into a hellfire and damnation tale of good God versus evil Satan, a twist that flies in the face of the original, which contains no such good-evil dichotomy. Brinton deftly traced the missionary origin of this interpolation from the 1636 version of Jesuit Father Brebeuf, which lacked any such dualism, to the versions current in 1868, which were awash with it. He accurately "perceive[d] at once that Christian influence in the course of two centuries had given the tale a meaning foreign to its original intent," concluding his excellent analysis with the observation:

A little reflection will convince the most incredulous that any such dualism as has been fancied to exist in the native religions, could not have been of indigenous growth.¹⁵

This is a solid insight that, unfortunately, eludes all too many modern scholars who, like Ruth Underhill, continue uncritically citing the missionary version of Sky. To Underhill's credit, the disjointed contents that result give her pause to remark that "such dualism is unusual in Indian thought," but she never quite recognizes it as the flagrant interpolation that it is.¹⁶

Artificially inflating the Twins' story cycle into the whole Sky cycle served more than just the purpose of Christianizing Sky. A main goal of the missionaries from the moment European "explorers" first set foot in Iroquoia was to disempower Haudenosaunee women, whose socioeconomic and political clout had outraged "Old World" male authority.¹⁷ Toward this end, the important two-thirds of Sky that belonged to women and the stories of Sky Woman and her beloved daughter, the Lynx, were drastically rearranged and/or suppressed outright.

First, westerners downsized Sky Woman's beloved Lynx, removing her from the public eye and demoting her to namelessness, as befitted the sequestered daughters of the West. Indeed, her name may never have been divulged to missionaries in the first place; powerful names are not banded about lightly to outsiders, and certainly not for their curiosity value. Thus the names of some of the most notable figures in Haudenosaunee history were deliberately kept from Europeans. For instance, in 1892 William Beauchamp marveled that the name of Hiawatha, by then "the most famous of Iroquois names," had been

"almost unknown but little over half a century ago," by which he meant "famous" and "unknown" to Europeans, of course. It had been only forty-one years earlier, in 1851, that Lewis Henry Morgan had recorded the name of Sky Woman, the Peacemaker, himself. And in 1917 Hewitt was incredibly asserting that Jigonasach, a cofounder of the League and direct descendant of Sky Woman, was "little known" in "traditional" Haudenosaunee mythology! On the contrary: the fact that the Lynx's name was not uttered before Europeans for four hundred years was a measure of her *importance* in Haudenosaunee tradition.¹⁸

Second, since the Christian legend of Eve's responsibility for humanity's "fall" prevented women from acting as instruments of creation or salvation, a good Grandmother or a pivotal Lynx was out of the evangelical question. The missionaries therefore repositioned Grandmother as Evil, a twist on the original story of Sky Woman as a "Bad Medicine" woman. Since missionaries uniformly denounced medicine people as devil worshippers, they casually linked Sky Woman, the original Medicine Woman, to their Devil, even as they linked "witches" to Satan in their own culture. Native Keepers (oral historians) intended no such defamations, however: "Bad Medicine Woman" means something more akin to *Hard Luck Woman* than anything else. "Hard luck" literally describes Sky Woman's fate. After being pushed out of Sky World by a jealous husband during a period of disastrous civil strife, she fell to earth, a desolate planet, where she was marooned for the rest of her life. Her beloved daughter the Lynx, her only companion, died young, leaving the aged woman alone with twin grandsons, one of whom went mad. Clearly, all that is missing from this tale of woe is the country-and-western chorus: it is most emphatically about bad *luck*, not bad *women*. Evil was simply not an interpretation a Native listener put on this tale. Third, a now-"evil" Grandmother could not favor a "good" Sapling, as it made no sense in Christian cosmology for an Evil Mother figure to favor a Good Son figure. The missionaries therefore edited the original story further, making "evil" Flint, not "good" Sapling, Grandmother's favorite. Thus was Grandmother evicted from the Haudenosaunee Sky just as Eve had been evicted from the Christian Eden.

Given these missionary revisions, it should no longer be "difficult," as it was for Tooker in 1979, "to know why the younger twin is regarded as evil or to know why his grandmother, the woman who fell from the sky, is also so regarded."¹⁹ Nevertheless, missionary versions of tradition continue to be presented in scholarly literature as authentic. For instance, in his otherwise informative work *Iroquois Medical Botany* (1995), James W. Herrick perpetuates the Christianized version of Sky.²⁰ Although he does include the Lynx, Herrick does not know her name and, like Tooker,²¹ he uncritically accepts David Casick's backed-in missionary terms of "Good Mind" and "Evil Mind" for Sapling and Flint, respectively.²² More authentically, Sapling has a "Smooth Mind," a reference to his mental and emotional stability, while Flint has a "Wrinkled Mind,"

a reference to his passionate nature turned mad. No moral condemnation of Flint for his unfortunate insanity was traditionally implied (the equation of insanity with evil is a western notion). Herrick also persists in calling Grandmother "Wicked" and claiming that she "repudiated" Sapling, something which occurs *only* in missionary versions.³¹ In unmediated tales, Grandmother prefers Sapling, who is most Sky-like, and rejects Flint, who is most Earth-like.³² More poignantly, Grandmother blames Flint for the death of her beloved daughter Panther, for Flint was born second and hard, killing the Lynx in parturition.*

II. The Recovery Method: A Different Way of Thinking

I hope the foregoing shows that unscrambling women's tradition is not an insurmountable task. Yet before proceeding to the Jigonsaseh, there is another vital point to consider: method. Recovering tradition is not as simple as cramming for details. A shift in mindsets is also required, away from linear logic and toward a matrix of interlocking cycles. The first step in this direction is to take the metaphorical measure of Haudenosaunee discourse, whose metonymic allusions are not compressible into flat lines of intellectual abstraction.

For example, to restore authentic meaning to the Twins we must begin by thinking about them in a Haudenosaunee way. Originally the Twins concretized the East/West axis or "direction" of the sky: the East was Sapling, and the West, Flint. William Fenton alludes to this perception in discussing one color-coding of the Sky: red/East, black/West.²⁵ Red (dawn) is a color associated with Sapling through strawberries, one of his finest creations.²⁶ Also associated with Sapling, the Light of the Greatest Mind, is white, another color of morning.²⁷ If white is one of Sapling's colors, black – the color of flint – is always Flint's.²⁸ Just as Sapling/morning is associated with holiness, Flint/afternoon is associated with civic matters.²⁹ Meanwhile, "splitting the sky" yields North and South,³⁰ the "middle sky" which relates back to the earth elements of existence.³¹ For example, the father of the Twins was an earth being, North Wind, the blue (sacred) pinion of the split sky.³² Thus the Twins were essential in establishing the frame of reference for the Four Winds, or sacred cardinal directions.³³

As the above illustrates, Haudenosaunee metaphors do not operate in isolation but in complex association. Any attempt to "straighten them out" by transposing them into the logical, linear terms more comfortable to westerners destroys their content. There is no way to take them but on their own terms. Moreover, metaphors regularly forge palpable, direct links between the concrete and the spiritual realms, for there is no "mind/body" separation in Haudenosaunee thought.

The "Shining Chain of the League" is an example of one such extended metaphor, stretching from the spiritual to the pragmatic then circling back to spirit. Spiritually the Shining Chain image links the League to water, one of

the "Open Doors" to *orenda*, for the Great Law is an access point to spirit power.³⁴ "Doors," be they "Open," "Closed," or "Kept," always refer to places or shamans exhibiting strong psychic properties.³⁵ Simultaneously and on the concrete level, the metonymy of the Shining Chain gives practical directions to Iroquoia. The White (sometimes Shining) Roots of the Tree of Peace extend in all four directions.³⁶ People may follow them to their source, deep in the beating heart of Iroquoia.³⁷ Thus the way to Iroquoia is along the shining white direction of the morning Sky. In other words, follow the St. Lawrence River as the sun moves from East to West, then Split the Sky traveling North-South, down the Finger Lakes. At this juncture the "Root" metaphor, which has been operating pragmatically, doubles back on the spiritual "Shining" metaphor to involve the sacred Four Winds. Being sacred they form metonymic "shining chains," East to West, North to South, mirroring, describing, and exalting the League, which, like the shimmering waters of Iroquoia, contain all the strength of shining spirit. In this complex allusion to the all-encompassing political/spiritual scope of the Haudenosaunee federation, the League itself becomes an Open Door to the *orenda* of the Great Law (i.e., the Haudenosaunee Constitution).

Note how metaphors collide then cycle back out into new associational meanings which never actually detach from their axis: The water/shining metaphor of *orenda* interpenetrates the directional metaphor of the Four Winds, which in turn circles back into multiple meanings of Open Door, now in connection with League *orenda*, returning to where it started. This is the metonymic principle that cycles through and around all Haudenosaunee discourse. It is *not* a haphazard or chaotic method; it just looks that way to western scholars who are not used to associational logic. It is possible for westerners to grasp this principle. For instance, George Snyderman, writing in 1954, devoted an entire section of his "Functions of Wampum" to an appreciation of the Haudenosaunee use of metaphor as a discourse method. Among modern scholars, Christopher Vecsey makes direct reference to the "highly metaphorical language" of League tradition, while George Hamell emphasizes its vital connection to trade beads.³⁸

Because western scholars are unaccustomed to associational thinking, however, they are apt to overlook it or, worse yet, dismiss it under pejorative labels like emotive, primitive, illogical, uselessly poetic, or chaotic – terms that tell us more about western prejudice than Haudenosaunee logic. But if tradition is to be recovered, the as-yet unexamined impulse to privilege western-style logic over Haudenosaunee-style metonymy must be firmly resisted. In short, the sort of metaphorical explication illustrated above must not only be fully grasped; it must be regularly *used*. Only after allusional associations are appreciated may students mount a fruitful search of archeological and literary records for points of confluence with the oral record, to flesh out dates and details, the stuff of western history.

III. The Lynx in Time

I begin my reclamation project on the Jigonsasch by turning to oral tradition. Most Haudenosaunee Keepers regard history as divided into three Epochs: that of Sky, that of the League, and that of Handsome Lake, the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century prophet.⁴⁰ The Sky Epoch describes the origins of the Haudenosaunees, who are descended from the Sky People through Sky Woman and her daughter, the Lynx. The League Epoch is that of the cofounding of the Haudenosaunee League by Hiawatha, Jigonsasch, and the Peacemaker. The third Epoch, that of Handsome Lake, is the dire story of the European invasion with its attendant warfare, disease, and massive cultural destruction. The first two Epochs are pre-contact; the third is post-contact. We are concerned here with only the first two Epochs; treatment of the Epoch of Handsome Lake must await another day. Our women's tale of the Jigonsasch begins back in the mists of creation, with First Woman, She Who Fell from the Sky, and her beloved daughter, most usually called the Fat-Faced Lynx, the Panther, the Wild Cat.⁴¹

The Sky Cycle

Written renderings of Sky Woman's cycle are hard to find. One of the most coherent versions I know to exist was printed in *Akwesasne Notes* as "The Mohawk Creation Story." It contains correct proportions and emphases, such as the dedication of considerable attention to Sky World and the psychic nature of Sky People. Elisabeth Tooker includes mostly correct outlines of Seneca and Onondaga versions, although she perpetuates the missionary error of the Good Minded/Bad Minded Twins. Daniel Brinton, while correcting this error, barely knows any story except that of the Twins and refers only slightly to the women's portion of Sky as a prelude to, not the substance of, the Sky tradition. Finally there are the accounts found in C. M. Barbeau, Marius Barbeau, and the Hewitt-Curtain collection. In secondary material, Ruth Underhill presents a fast but essentially accurate sketch of the Iroquois cosmology. James Herrick's longer recital contains the outline but is flawed in detail, as noted above.⁴²

Sky Woman's cycle begins in Sky World, a physical place that floats among the stars and was, just then, hovering above the Rim of the Earth. Sky Woman was pregnant when disaster overcame her. Numerous versions of the cause of the disaster exist, ranging from husbandly treachery to a simple slip, but, however it came about, the anchor of the story remains the same: Sky Woman fell from outer space down to earth, landing on Turtle Island, the continent we today call North America that was specifically created for her by earth animals. Different versions have Sky Woman acquiring subsistence plants in different ways, but usually the Three Sisters (Corn, Beans, and Squash) are connected with her arrival on Turtle Island. The more authentic stories have her arriving with the seeds of agriculture clutched in her hands.⁴³

The next cycle, that of the Lynx, mainly explores the crucial mother-

daughter relationship so important to Haudenosaunee culture. The child born to the earth-bound Sky Woman is her Beloved Daughter, her Fat-Faced Lynx. When the child is grown enough, she and Sky Woman roam Turtle's Back on a sort of cartographic quest, exploring the lay of the land and naming the animals they encounter according to their means of locomotion. The pair also act as Corn Mothers, encouraging their many seeds into the dirt, then calling the Three Sisters up from them until their leaves strain upwards to hold the Sky. In the middle section of this cycle an adolescent Lynx is courted by North Wind, who assumes the shapes of different earth creatures until he finds one too handsome for her to resist, the human male form. Pregnancy results, causing Sky Woman ominous concern as she ponders what might come of an Earth/Sky mating. Her foreboding is warranted. Panther dies before her time in childbirth, singing potatoes into being with her death song.⁴⁴ Sky Woman is left bereft, wild with grief.

With Panther's death the action transfers in the third cycle of the first Epoch to the men's tale of the twin sons whom Lynx had died birthing. Sapling, the elder, is most Sky-like, pleasing his Grandmother. Flint, the younger, is personally ugly — in many accounts he is covered with warty boils⁴⁵ — and unloved by Grandmother, who does not think it was worth losing Lynx to gain him. Both brothers are, however, creators. Like all Sky People, they possess unparalleled *orenda*. An extended sibling rivalry, which finally culminates in a life-and-death struggle, ensues as Sapling and Flint vie for the attention and approval of Grandmother. Through frustration and rejection, the passionate Flint hardens into cutting madness, and Sapling must contain him for the protection of humanity. In the end, lacking the heart to kill his brother, Sapling seals Flint beneath the ground inside a mountain he has thrown down on top of Flint.⁴⁶ Flint is now confined to the edges of community; he is the Great World Rim Dweller, running the ridge of the West.⁴⁷

The League Cycle

The Second Epoch of history is the epoch of the Great Law, or the Constitution of the Five (later Six) Nations. In the League cycle, Deganawida, who is the Peacemaker; Jigonsasch, who is the head Clan Mother; and Hiawatha, who is the inventor of wampum writing, establish the great Iroquois League. To found the League, the triumvirate must first bring an end to a violent, all-consuming war between the Cultivators, or women-led agriculturalists, and the fearsome Cannibal Cult, led by Arotahon. In the end peace is made, the Law is given, and the era of the League begins.

Because of the nineteenth-century attempt to turn League tradition into a proselytizing tool, westerners also tampered with the tradition of the League, misidentifying Hiawatha as the Peacemaker (when actually Deganawida was) and transmuting him into a prophet of proto-Christianity, an interpretation Henry Wadsworth Longfellow cemented in the mainstream mind with his *Song*

of *Hiawatha*. Such tinkering did turn attention to League traditions, however, so that men's portions of it were rather well recorded. The primary versions of the League are the two Seth Newhouse accounts (of 1885 and 1916), commonly viewed among the Haudenosaunees as "the canon."⁵⁴ The *Chief's Tradition* (1900, first published in 1911) is also available, along with two versions (1899, 1912) by Six Nations Chief John Arthur Gibson. After being inexplicably unattended for nearly a century, Gibson's 1912 version has been recently translated and published as *Concerning the League* (1992). A good composite version including elements of all recitals may be found in Paul A. W. Wallace's *The White Roots of Peace* (1946).⁵⁵

The traditions of the League referred to by scholars — those of Newhouse, the Chiefs, Gibson, and Parker — tell only the *men's* portion of the story, however. Left out of the usual litany is the Keeping of Elizabeth Parker of the Wolf Clan of the Senecas. "Her Word Was Law" was variously preserved by Arthur C. Parker, who was her great-grandson in the male line.⁵⁶ Herself the daughter of a Jigonsasch, Elizabeth told of the Jigonsasch leading the farming faction she called "The Cultivators."⁵⁷ Yet even the astute Paul Wallace, who knew of and understood the Jigonsasch, ignored Elizabeth's telling. For their part the Chiefs were aware of this lapse in scholarly collections and uncomfortable with the serious distortion of tradition that resulted. They realized that if they politely left the tale of the Lynx/Jigonsasch to be told by grandmothers, the ethnographers would never get around to asking for it. They therefore boldly mentioned Jigonsasch, indicating the places where her story cycles belonged in men's tradition.⁵⁸

A. C. Parker not only recognized the problem of ethnographic privileging, he took it upon himself to admonish Euro-scholars that Jigonsasch

is a character who should be better known in Iroquois mythology.

There are several traditions about her, in the various events of Iroquois tradition. Her name passed as a title from one generation to another.⁵⁹

I believe that when he composed this passage, Parker was thinking of the Keepings of his foremother, Elizabeth. I further suspect that Elizabeth was in his mind — or was her story in his mouth? — when he wrote the allegory of the League, "The Maize Maiden," under his Seneca name, Gawaso Wanneh.

"The Maize Maiden" specifically lays out the women's take on League tradition. The story opens immediately after the title character, the Maize Maiden, brings agriculture to Iroquoia from the Neutrals, a tradition found in Black Lynx, the elder brother (i.e., the old economic system), and Corn Tassel, the younger brother (i.e., the new economic system). Black Lynx champions hunting as a way of life while Corn Tassel champions the new maize farming. Scorning Corn Tassel as a "servant of women," Black Lynx sets out to destroy

the maize way of life by destroying the corn in the fields, the grain in storage, and the Cultivators themselves, who grow and stockpile the corn.⁶⁰

After one devastating attack, Corn Tassel gently restaked the broken corn plants but, laughing, Black Lynx "flung Corn Tassel into the lodge fire and burned him in the embers."⁶¹ Next, Black Lynx turned on Corn Tassel's wife, the Maize Maiden herself, immolating her in the fire as well. "See my cheek and my breasts where the scars scarcely have healed," she told Corn Tassel. "This your brother did when he cast the meal into the fire."⁶² Here, Parker clearly intended a pun on the Cultivators as "meal" for Arotarho's cannibals.

The Corn Maiden (Lynx/Jigonsasch) and her husband, a revived Corn Tassel (Sapling/Deganawida), ultimately unite to overcome the hunters, with a little help from the Sky People.⁶³ In the final confrontation Black Lynx "fell with a scream" into a "crack yawning wide" and was "swallowed up" by the earth, the fate of Flint in the First Epoch.⁶⁴ "Ever since," Gawaso Wanneh (Parker) concluded, "when the corn is green, the faithful hold dances of joy," thus elucidating the women's meaning of the annual Green Corn festival.⁶⁵ More than just a harvest feast, Green Corn celebrates the survival of women's maize agriculture, its encoding into the Great Law.

In Gawaso Wanneh's telling, the Black Panthers of discord — counterparts of the White Panthers (later Europeans), those fire dragons of discord predicted in Deganawida's parting prophecy⁶⁶ — are represented by Black Lynx, who takes the role of the traditional male hunters. In political reaction against woman-brought maize agriculture, they have turned cannibal. The cannibals burn crops and eat maize growers as their "meal," neatly destroying both the crops and the constituents of the Cultivators. Not all men join the cannibals, however. Some stand by the female Cultivators, building palisades and defending the Corn Mothers (Clan Mothers) even at the cost of their lives. After many reversals, the corn camp, with the backing of their relatives, the Sky People, win. *This is the same story told in all men's traditions of the League, but from the Cultivators' point of view.*

Reconnecting the Epochs

Western scholars get lost in the transition from the Epoch of the Sky to the Epoch of the League, partly because they do not understand Haudenosaunee naming practices. It is a complex process that involves multiple names reverberating through the generations. There are three points to keep in mind. First, each individual typically has several different names. Sky Woman, for instance, is also called Grandmother. Most important, she is the Corn Mother, Otsisa, Ataensic, the Mature Flowers. Of the seeds she brought to earth from Sky World — "The Three Sisters," Corn, Beans, and Squash, and their Brother, Tobacco — the Elder Sister, Corn, is considered the greatest. It is therefore fitting that Sky Woman's traditional names refer to corn plants.⁶⁷ Similarly, Sky Woman's daughter is called by many names: the Wild Cat, the Fat-Faced Linx, the Panther, the Beloved Woman, and, ultimately, Jigonsasch. To add to western

confusion, Panther may also be called Corn Mother or Corn Maiden. Panther's Twins likewise have multiple names. Sapling, the Creator, may be called *Ioskeha*, from the Oneida for "the White one"; *Tijuska u* the "Jouskeha" or "Juskeha," as recorded by the early missionaries (accounting for its translation as "the Good One"); *Hamendju*; "Tarachiawagon, the Holder of the Heavens," alternately given as, "Tharonhiawagon, He who Grasps the Sky" and "Tarenyawagon," etc.⁶⁵ Flint is *Tawescare*; "the Dark one"; the Underground Dweller; the "Great Humpbacked One"; etc.⁶⁶

This multiplicity of names, like its counterpart, the multiplicity of story versions, is fairly common among Native North Americans but nevertheless tends to send scholars into name-shock.⁶⁵ Like Mary Dearborn, who strove so mightily in *Pocahontas's Daughters* to sort out the many names of the Native American author Mourning Dove, they typically assume that only one name can be the "right" name.⁶⁶ Faced with multiple names that turn into titles to be passed on hereditarily, frustrated scholars throw up their hands in despair and declare the sources untrustworthy. This is true especially if the figure is female. Multiple names are viewed as evidence of chaos in the stories but, in fact, the stories are fine: the character simply has more than one "correct" name.

The second point — and this is crucial — is that personal names of notable figures frequently become official titles in subsequent generations. This is true even when the notable officeholder is European: the governor of Canada was forever dubbed "Onontio" (Big Mountain) by the Mohawk because the surname of the respected first colonial governor was Montagny, Old French for "Big Mountain."⁶⁷ However puzzling, humorous, or just plain baffling this was to the Europeans, the Mohawk were doing no more than was customary by turning his name into a title. Onontio was in good company. For example, Atotarho was the personal name of the man who, after making peace with the Cultivators, served as the first chief executive officer of the Haudenosaunee League. Thereafter, every chairman of the League was called The Atotarho.⁶⁸ His once-personal name had become a title, meaning "Chairman of the Confederacy." In exactly the same fashion, the personal name Jigonsasch that belonged to the head Clan Mother of the League Epoch became the official title of all succeeding head Clan Mothers of the League.⁶⁹ Just as the League Chairman was now The Atotarho, the head League Clan Mother was now The Jigonsasch.

This mutation of the name Jigonsasch into a position title has caused confusion, even among Native American authors who have fallen out of the habit of applying the title principle, especially to women. For example, in his interesting article "Economic Motivations — An Iroquoian Perspective," John Mohawk misidentifies the Jigonsasch of the League with a later Jigonsasch who, as head Clan Mother in her era, defeated the Marquis de Denonville in 1687 when the French invaded the Seneca Nation.⁷⁰ Similarly, the editorial introduction to Pete Jemison's speech commemorating Gonandagan, the ancient capital of Seneca, makes the same error of mistakenly presenting Jigonsasch as a personal

name, then failing to distinguish between the Jigonsasch of 1687 and she of the League.⁷¹

This brings us to the third point to keep in mind: reincarnation. The western intellectual tradition resists taking themes like reincarnation seriously, but reincarnation can only be omitted to the detriment of interpretation. Reincarnation is, for instance, symbolically reenacted when names transmute into titles. More central to a discussion of the Jigonsasch, however, reincarnation links the story cycles of different Epochs with one another. Without reincarnation the story cycles lack context. Sky disconnects from the League, which in turn dwindles down into an unrooted war epic. Given reincarnation, however, it is quickly seen that primary characters of the first Epoch have come back in the second.⁷²

Not just the characters but also the *action* continues from Epoch to Epoch. If Sky closes in raging passions, the League opens in the them; if the first Epoch ends in war, the second begins in the midst of it, with brother once again pitted against brother in a fight headed up by a madman. Returning characters continue earlier plots so that the wounds inflicted in one era may be healed in the next. For instance, the primary problem of the first Epoch was the premature removal of the Lynx, whose untimely death so embittered Grandmother that she rejected Flint, turning a minor sibling rivalry into a serious Sky dysfunction. Note that the thrust of the plot in the League Epoch is to *repair* the central problem of the first Epoch: the Lynx is restored. Jigonsasch becomes a pivot of the plot, the great Peace Woman. She is not partisan, as Grandmother was, but works to reconcile Flint and Sapling, who are *both* her beloved sons. Thus the Haudenosaunee Epochs are unified, but because western scholars fail to think associatively about reincarnation, they mistakenly view the Epochs of Haudenosaunee history as completely unrelated to each other and immaterial to factual history.

Recapping their appearances in the Second Epoch are Sky Woman, Lynx, the elder Twin, Sapling, and the younger Twin, Flint. To aid identification of reincarnates, people receive back one of their old names, the one that most accurately describes their purpose in coming back.⁷³ Otherwise, outstanding characteristics carry over, allowing for identification. In the League Epoch, Sky Woman and Flint are almost immediately recognizable. Sky Woman is still called "Grandmother," one of her names. Grandmother opens League tradition by counseling her grandson on his peace quest, just as she had closed her Sky tenure, counseling Sapling on his quest to quell Flint. Flint is also obvious. Still a madman dangerous to humanity, he is Atotarho. Mystery surrounds the identities of Sapling and Lynx, however. Deganawida, the Peacemaker, is quickly revealed to be Sapling, through his connection to one of Sapling's names, Tarachiawagon.⁷⁴ To a Haudenosaunee audience, the recognition scene occurs during an exchange between Grandmother and the Peacemaker as he sets off on his quest in a "white stone canoe."⁷⁵ The tip-off is the white stone canoe: it connects the Peacemaker to one of Sapling's earlier incarnations, an Ice Age

Tarachiawagon who set off in a white stone canoe (an ice floe hollowed out and shaped to navigate), searching for new, habitable land after the moving White Stone Mountains (glaciers) that were choking the Turtle had begun to recede.

It is important to note that the Peacemaker's mother in his League life was not party to the exchange with Grandmother. This is another tip-off. His biological mother remained a bit player in the story cycles of the League; hence she could not have been his cosmic mother, Panther. The Lynx was yet to be found. As originally told and heard, then, there was an element of suspense surrounding the identity of Panther in this life. The quest could not proceed until the Peacemaker had found her, which explains why a main point of business in his quest was finding his cosmic mother. Wallace, who knew all the League traditions intimately, has the Peacemaker finding the Lynx before he goes to Hiawatha.⁷⁶ In "The Maize Maiden," Parker's Sapling and Lynx are actually married, explaining one source of the friction between the maize growers and the hunters.⁷⁷ Despite the odd interpretation Hanni Woodbury places on the Peacemaker's visit to Jigonsasch, Gibson was clear that making the visit was a matter of some importance to the Peacemaker.⁷⁸

The plot thickens when the Peacemaker hears of "a certain woman," i.e., an important Clan Mother.⁷⁹ The Peacemaker immediately visits her. A second recognition scene transpires as the Peacemaker reveals that the Clan Mother is Lynx. Mother and son are reunited. Elizabeth made the Panther-Jigonsasch reincarnation clear in her Keeping: "the Great Woman's name was Ji-kon-sa-sch, the Lynx."⁸⁰ Actually, Jigonsasch does not yet mean "Lynx." At the climactic moment when the Peacemaker recognizes his mother, he dubs her Jigonsasch, which means "The New Face," a reference to the new leaves of corn pushing up through the ground in spring.⁸¹ What Elizabeth meant was that the head Clan Mother, now named Jigonsasch, was the reincarnation of the Lynx.

"New Face" is a complex allusion that would have been instantaneously recognized by the old Haudenosaunee, like Elizabeth. Lacking cultural context, however, western scholars need help unraveling it. According to Haudenosaunee theology, when your bodily self dies your spiritual self faces a choice. You can walk the Milky Way Trail home to the stars, from whence your ancestors came, or you can fall into the spirit world below Turtle Island until it is time for you to return.⁸² "New Faces" are spirits who choose to reincarnate. They cool their heels "beneath the ground," awaiting the proper time to flow up through the feet of women and into their wombs to reincarnate.⁸³

Thus did Flint of the first Epoch lay beneath the mountain (i.e., in the holding sphere beneath the ground), awaiting his moment to reincarnate in the second Epoch as Aotarho. Since Sapling came back as the Peacemaker, the Twins have obviously reincarnated in the League Epoch – not to *continue* but to *resolve* their conflict. Similarly, the moment the Peacemaker called that "certain woman" Jigonsasch, the New Face, he knew that she was the Lynx, Sapling's

mother, come back to aid him – and Flint – in making the peace of the Five Nations Confederacy. Significantly, it is Jigonsasch of the League, the cosmic mother of both men, who suggested the final peace proposal that was acceptable to both sides.⁸⁴

In Classical and Romantic European literature, the hero's mother is normally no more than a stock figure, a vessel of sentimental clichés. It would be a serious error to project these traditional western stereotypes onto the Jigonsasch, however. She is not finished the moment she is found. Her continuing story was at least as important as that of the Peacemaker in League tradition. First, judicial review became the women's job because of the mediating skill shown by the first Jigonsasch, she of the League. Second, Jigonsasch of the League negotiated some crucial portions of the Great Law. If the first thing the Peacemaker did in League history was to find his mother, the first thing his mother did was to dicker with her son over the place of women in his League.

Jigonsasch demands lofty political and economic power for women in the League⁸⁵ and it is only after the Peacemaker agrees to her terms that she throws her considerable political weight behind him.⁸⁶ Her backing of his quest includes an army.⁸⁷ Not only is she the leader of the Cultivators, but she also is personally in charge of overseeing the provisioning of troops, an ancient obligation of clan mothers in times of war.⁸⁸ While doling out the food she exhorts the warriors to the paths of Deganawida's Peace, a powerful behest given her leadership status and control of the food supply.⁸⁹ Finally, Jigonsasch personally travels about Haudenosaunee territory lobbying for the League, a perilous undertaking with Aotarho's men looking to kill her.⁹⁰

Western war epics typically end like World War II, in "the utter destruction of the 'enemy,'" but the Haudenosaunee Epoch of the League ends in the Great Law of Peace and the reconciliation of parties. Aotarho, the crooked snake man who has caused so much misery to so many, is not slain. He is not even rebuked – he is courted.⁹¹ In the Sky Epoch it was Flint whom Sapling tossed into the deep darkness, but in the League Epoch it is the weapons of war, not his brother Flint/Aotarho, that Sapling/Deganawida casts into the "depths of the earth, down into the deep underearth currents of water flowing into unknown regions."⁹² Nor is it any accident that the Lynx/Jigonsasch, cosmic mother of both Sapling/Deganawida and Flint/Aotarho, crafts the final peace proposal, acceptable to all.⁹³ If her absence from the Sky Epoch caused havoc in the first place, her presence in the League Epoch sets all to rights.

IV. The Jigonsasch Recovered

To begin recovering the historical Jigonsasch of the League, we turn first to the Peacemaker's Great Law, more commonly known among historians as the Constitution of the Five (later Six) Nations Confederacy. In the A. C. Parker version of the Law, based on Newhouse, the wampum belts, or section of Law,

negotiated by Jigonsasch of the League are entitled "Clans and Consanguinity."⁹⁴ Because the accompanying traditions of Grandmother and Lynx/Jigonsasch have been obscured by western scholarship, historians miss the shattering significance of these belts of the Great Law. To demonstrate how recovery might proceed, I will zero in on the four strings of the forty-fourth belt of the Great Law, interpreting them in light of the oral traditions discussed above:

The lineal descent of the People of the Five Nations shall run in the female line. Women shall be considered the progenitors of the Nation. They shall own the land and the soil. Men and women shall follow the status of the mother.⁹⁵

These provisions are clear only if you know the women's cycles of tradition that lie behind the Great Law. Absent the Sky stories of Sky Woman and Panther, or the realization that they reincarnated into the League Epoch as Grandmother and Jigonsasch, the first string (sentence) seems unsupported and the second a nonsequitur. But if you know that the Haudenosaunee people did, quite literally, spring from the wombs of Sky Woman and the Lynx, you instantly understand why women are called "the progenitors of the Nation." It is a literal statement of fact, not "Indian hyperbole."

The "lineal descent" of the Clan Mothers runs through the Jigonsasch because Jigonsasch herself was not only the reincarnation of Panther but also a direct lineal descendant of hers.⁹⁶ To the Haudenosaunee, Sky Woman was the First Clan Mother and Panther was in line to be the second Clan Mother. The position of Clan Mother was duly inherited by Panther's female descendants, the daughters of Jigonsasch.

Similarly, bestowing sole proprietorship of "the land and the soil" on women can seem abrupt — *unless* you know that Turtle Island was created specifically for Sky Woman, whose legal heirs were her direct lineal descendants in the female line. Because Sky Woman brought the original crops — the Three Sisters — women are "the Cultivators" or official Haudenosaunee farmers, giving women control over the agricultural food supply.⁹⁷ This is actually a continuation of the agricultural system under Jigonsasch of the League, as encoded into law. We must recall that the Cultivators were locked in a deadly struggle with hunters-turned-cannibals over which subsistence system should prevail. Thus when the older hunters agreed to legal recognition of the newer female maize farming it was a hard-won *victory* for the corn camp, one worthy of celebration in the annual Green Corn festival. In this regard, it must be recalled that the Peacemaker supported both systems, hunting and farming.⁹⁸ Wise enough to understand that it was the push for an either-or choice that instigated war in the first place, the Peacemaker was open to a both-and solution. "Both-and" was, I believe, the substance of the peace plan put forward by Jigonsasch, the plan that was finally acceptable to both sides.

Finally, the Great Law counts descent through the female line. Clan identity derives from the mother's side of the family, just as Flint and Sapling derived from Panther, who in turn derived from the First Woman, Sky Woman. Ultimately, then, all Haudenosaunee count their descent back to the stars, for the Sky People do not come from Planet Earth.

"Clans and Consanguinity" reflects other provisions negotiated by the Jigonsasch of the League, not the least of which is the principle of *Ne Gashbedenza*, or popular sovereignty.⁹⁹ Conservative historians are still conducting an insular debate over how the "innovation" of popular sovereignty arose, turning a deaf ear to all suggestions that it harkens back to the Great Law. As recently as 1986, for instance, historian Jack P. Greene attempted to nail down a European origin for popular sovereignty in his well-received *Peripheries and Center*. He did not succeed. Although he was steeped in Greek, Puritan, British, and other European traditions, the best Greene could do after two hundred pages of minute inquiry was suggest that the "framers" of the U.S. Constitution drew "half-consciously" upon some vague antecedent he had been unable to pinpoint in European law.¹⁰⁰ Oblivious to the work of scholars like Jose Barreiro, Bruce Johansen, and Don Grinde, Greene failed to betray even the tiniest awareness that a fully functional, mature model of popular sovereignty was operating right under the noses of the "Founding Fathers."¹⁰¹

The principles of popular sovereignty are contained in Jigonsasch's provisions, the "Clans and Consanguinity" section of the Great Law. The wellspring of popular sovereignty are the clans of the Haudenosaunee League (eight today but, according to Newhouse, Keeper of the canon, fifteen pre-contact).¹⁰² Whether as the modern eight or the ancient fifteen, clans operate as the local level of government. All political power originates at the clan level and proceeds forward through the five (and, after the Tuscarora joined circa 1724, six) states and on to the federal level.¹⁰³ It is not coincidental that the eight/fifteen clans are set forth in the women's section of the Great Law. Women ran the clans, that is, they ran the local level of government.¹⁰⁴

Clanship was not a territorial proposition, which is the main reason western historians have such a hard time grasping the interface between the clans, which were non-territorial, and the states, which were territorial. Most westerners see that as mixing apples and oranges, but the old Haudenosaunee did not see identity as land-bound or racial. Identity was clan-based, which is why the clans *interpenetrated* all five, six, *seven*¹⁰⁵ nations of the League, like strands of a spider web, linking all citizens together in a reinforced and interlocking pattern of belonging.

This meant that each of the states of the League — Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, Mohawk, Cayuga, and Tuscarora — had all eight/fifteen clans. You were a citizen of the League based on your clan status, not your territory of residence. The ancient, native-born Haudenosaunee claimed citizenship early on as Pigeon Hawks or Wild Potatoes, as their later counterparts claimed status as Wolfs or

Turtles. Identifying nationally as Oneida, Mohawk, Seneca, etc. is a very recent development. Similarly, naturalized citizens of the League received their citizenship through adoption into one of the official clans. It did not matter which state you lived in; you were a citizen by virtue of your *clan* affiliation.

Thus, your clan membership was *much* more important than your state membership. Clan identity was your passport wherever you traveled within the *Hottinachiendi*, the Completed Cabin of the League.¹⁰⁶ Should you move from Onondaga (New York) to Seneca (Pennsylvania) to Western Seneca (Ohio) – as did the Lemni Lenape (Delaware), being serially adopted into the League between 1600 and 1782¹⁰⁷ – you *automatically* had “relatives” and a place to go. No citizen of the League was ever homeless.

Your clan identity was also your “political party,” the platform from which you entered the public forum of politics. Power flowed from the people (the clans) to the federal government this way: Women were in charge of both the literal birth-naming of children and the figurative naming of men to federal political office.¹⁰⁸ Women might impeach any man (or woman!) found unworthy of public office.¹⁰⁹ Women likewise had a gatekeeping authority over warfare. As I have said, the Jigonsasch were the traffic cops of the nation, who allowed or disallowed passage of war parties, thus giving them *tacit veto* power over warfare. Because federal officials could be put forward *only* by their respective Clan Mothers, and could be impeached by them, Clan Mothers effectively controlled the national agenda: Federal officials of the two Brotherhoods (Congress) and the Firekeepers (the Executive Branch) considered matters at a national level *only after* they had already been discussed, approved, and forwarded by the “women’s councils,” i.e., the Clan Mothers in their own councils.¹¹⁰ Explicitation of Jigonsasch’s provisions is only possible once the associative links between the Sky and League Epochs – my “Lynx in Time” – are grasped but, once grasped, they bring the historical Jigonsasch of the League into sharp focus.

III. Conclusion

I hope in this all-too-short space I have been able to shed new light on the extraordinary women’s stories that weave together the Epochs of Sky and League. Moreover, I hope that I have shown ways that oral history can be used to recover meaning in written sources like the Haudenosauné Constitution, which contains Jigonsasch’s splendid provisions. Finally, once the centrality of the Lynx in old Haudenosauné tradition is realized, that her story was common knowledge and often the subject of casual allusion, it is possible to begin spotting her in *western* sources.

For instance, the Lynx pops up in connection with cannibalism, in a cross-reference between Sky and League traditions, in *Les Relations des Jésuites*. The Haudenosauné are worried about the social disruption occasioned by the black robes converting League members to Christianity – a serious incursion on the

Great Law, which is spiritually based. A shaman finally dreams a solution: The Five Nations must, he declares, return to pre-League cannibalism to stem the Christianizing tide, i.e., he is proposing that a little old-fashioned terrorism will persuade potential converts against baptism. The shaman grimly acknowledges that such a step will ruin not only himself but the League itself. Saddened by the import of what he is doing, he rejects a volunteered male sacrifice, insisting that only the death of “*une femme*” [a woman] would do, “*comme autrèsfois*” [as of old].¹¹¹ If the good Jesuit fathers are bewildered to grasp the shaman’s meaning, his compatriots are not. His Haudenosauné audience understands that the young woman stands for Parker’s allegorical “Maize Maiden,” the reincarnated Fat-Faced Lynx of the the Sky Epoch, tossed into the fire as “meal.” Reversion to cannibalism, expressed concretely by eating the Great Peace Woman’s proxy, entails the worst possible violation of the Peacemaker’s instructions. It would undo the Great Law of Peace.¹¹²

References may also be extracted, gingerly, from other sources. For instance, the Lynx was still culturally vital and spiritually connected with pre-League cannibalism in 1773, when Moravian missionary John Heckewelder journeyed from the Muskingum to the Big Beaver River with his adopted Haudenosauné relatives. Starving, the hunters bagged “a wild cat” and even went to the lengths of roasting it. Yet the “night was spent without any body attempting to eat of the wild cat.” A discussion ensued among “the men on the propriety or impropriety of eating the flesh of all animals without restriction,” an oblique reference to the cannibalistic “meal” of the Lynx/Jigonsasch, whose name is also rendered Wild Cat. Despite the dire hunger of all involved, League spirituality prevailed. The lynx, “notwithstanding all the arguments in its favour, remained untouched.”¹¹³

Uncountable allusions of this nature are tucked away in the primary sources, awaiting only an insightful reader to appreciate their significance. (I found these last two examples by literally opening likely books and randomly scanning the texts.) Ultimately, it is unknowable how many stories of the Lynx were once in the mouths of women but, using the interpretive framework and methodology I have offered herein, I believe it is possible to begin reclaiming Haudenosauné women’s traditions.

Notes

1. McElwain, “Concepts of Time,” 275.
2. Tooker, *Nature Spirituality*, 43–44.
3. Tooker, *Nature Spirituality*, 44.
4. Britton, *Alytha*, 170.
5. The sun is the “messenger” running across the Sky. “Upon his wide chest was a bright ball of light. It was very brilliant” (italics mine). Parker, *Codé*, 134.
6. “Thanksgiving Address.”
7. Tooker, *Nature Spirituality*, 64 and 65, respectively.

8. McElwain, "Concepts of Time," 275.
9. Brinton, *Myths*, 169-72.
10. Barbeau, "Supernatural Beings," 289-97.
11. Barbeau, *Traditional Narratives*, 2.
12. "Sky Woman brought earth, seeds, and roots from which wild trees, fruits, and flowers grew. The domestic plants - potatoes, beans, squash, corn, and other crops - sprang from the grave of Sky Woman's daughter," Panther, Jensen, "Native Women," 51.
13. Tooker, *Native Spirituality* 38, 50-51; Underhill, *Red Man's Religion*, 175.
14. Flannery, *Algonquian Culture*, 155.
15. Brinton, *Myths*, 63, 65.
16. Underhill, *Red Man's Religion*, 175.
17. For an interesting, if painful, look at the missionaries implementing their ongoing goal of female disempowerment, see Anderson, *Chain Her by One Foot*.
18. A compilation of these sources and their comments may be found in Vessey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 91.
19. Tooker, *Native Spirituality*, 34.
20. Herrick, *Iroquois Botany*, 5-8.
21. Tooker, *Native Spirituality*, 40.
22. Cusick, "Sketches," 2; Brinton, *Myths*, 63.
23. Herrick, *Iroquois Botany*, 6, 11.
24. *Not* Flint, as is often mistakenly asserted. "The grandmother of the twins liked Djsukaha [Sapling] and hated the other," states the Seneca story collected by Curtin and Hewitt and quoted in Thompson, *Tales*, 15.
25. Fenton, *False Faces*, 134.
26. George Hamell associates specific references to strawberries, as opposed to any other type of berry, with nineteenth-century stories. Although I am not sure I agree with his dating, his discussion of berries is good. Hamell, "Trading in Metaphors," 8.
27. Brinton, *Myths*, 174; Hamell, "Trading in Metaphors," 7.
28. Brinton, *Myths*, 170n.1.
29. The "morning = holiness" equation is enshrined in the *Code of Handbome Lake*, which is only to be recited in the morning. Parker, *Code*, 6. That the afternoon is reserved for civic affairs is emphasized in traditions of the Great Law, where counselors are called to meetings that begin at noon, e.g., Parker, *Constitution*, 25.
30. Parker, *Constitution*, 19; Wallace, "Return of Hiawatha," 394.
31. Fenton, *False Faces*, 104.
32. Underhill, *Red Man's Religion*, 175. Hewitt and Curtin tentatively attribute paternity to West Wind. Thompson, *Tales*, 15. I find this version suspect and agree with Christopher Vessey that Hewitt was "not above revising" some of his legends." Vessey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 81. The Twins' father was a pre-existing earth spirit, not of Sky. Flint, a Sky person, is the West Wind. Furthermore, it makes no sense for Flint to father himself, and even less sense for him to father a Smooth Mind like Sapling.
33. Blue is usually associated with sacred objects and concepts, which is one reason why, along with white, it forms the color code of "a class of secret masks," Fenton, *False Faces*, 133. Note, also, that blue is the color of the sacred Lynx of the Dark Dance. Parker, *Code*, 119.

34. Brinton, *Myths*, 170, including footnote 1.
35. In his search for the origin of religious concepts, Wallace Chafe notes that the most ancient inscrutable Seneca word roots of all relate to water and fishing. Chafe, "Linguistic Evidence," 279. In researching the religious functions of wampum, George Snyderman found an ancient association between wampum and "waterfalls or deep places where there were fish," Snyderman, "Function of Wampum," 590.
36. Thus, for instance, does the Shawnee Prophet's name, Tenskawatwa, translate as "Open Door." Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet*, 34. The "Open Door" metaphor explains why Door Keeping, as described by William Fenton, is a shamanic task associated with spiritual ceremonies. Fenton, *False Faces*, 129-31.
37. Parker, *Constitution*, 30.
38. Parker, *Constitution*, 9.
39. Respectively, Snyderman, "Functions of Wampum," 475-77; Vessey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 82; Hamell, "Trading in Metaphors," 5-6.
40. Vessey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 81-82.
41. Parker, *Constitution*, 71 n.1.
42. Respectively, "Mohawk Creation Story," 32-(29); Tooker, *Native Spirituality*, 35-55; Brinton, *Myths*, 169-72; Barbeau, "Supernatural Beings," 289-97; Barbeau, *Mythology*, 37-49; Barbeau, *Traditional Narratives*, 4; Thompson, *Tales*, 14-17; Underhill, *Red Man's Religion*, 175; Herrick, *Iroquois Botany*, 5-8. Brinton makes but brief mention of Sky Woman - "Thus the unimaginate Iroquois narrated that when their primitive female ancestor was kicked from the sky by her irate spouse" - and hardly any mention at all of the Lynx - "a virgin mother, who died in giving [the Twins] life." Brinton, *Myths*, 197 and 170, respectively. Here, Brinton himself falls into the missionary trap by making Lynx a virgin mother of a Creator (Sapling), a revision paralleling the Christian Mary.
43. "Mohawk Creation Story," 32.
44. Sky Woman arrived with the seeds of Three Sisters (and Brother Tobacco), all of which originated in Sky World. Hence the Lynx and her sons created other foodstuffs, like potatoes and strawberries, later on. Jensen is correct in asserting that potatoes sprang from Lynx's grave but incorrect in attributing the Three Sisters to her. Jensen, "Native Women," 51. Tooker likewise incorrectly attributes all plants, not just the "stringed potato," to a Lynx-grave origin. Tooker, *Native Spirituality*, 39-40. Hewitt and Curtin family connect potatoes (alone) with the Lynx's fertility, which led to her death. Thompson, *Tales*, 15.
45. Tooker, *Native Spirituality*, 39.
46. The Flint-Sapling confrontation is the initiatory story of the False Faces. See various versions of it in Fenton, *False Faces*, 95-108.
47. Herrick, *Iroquois Botany*, 7.
48. Wallace, "Cooper's Indians," 74.
49. The 1916 Newhouse and the Chiefs' traditions are found in Parker's *Constitution*; the 1885 Newhouse version, "The Constitution of the Confederacy by Dekanawidah," as translated by J. N. B. Hewitt, is Archive No. 3490 at the Bureau of American Ethnology Archives of the Smithsonian Institution; the 1899 Gibson version, "The Dekanawidah Legend: A Tradition of the Founding of the League of the Five Iroquois Tribes," as told to J. N. B. Hewitt and translated in 1941 by William N. Fenton and Simon Gibson, is Archive No. 1517C, at the Bureau of American Ethnology Archives of the Smithsonian Institution; the 1912 Gibson may be found as Gibson's *Concerning the League*, and Wallace's composite retelling is *White Roots of Peace*.

50. Parker, "The Maize Maiden," 179-91. Elizabeth's Keeping entitled "Her Word Was Law," originally preserved by Parker in his biography of his paternal great-uncle, Ely S. Parker, and reprinted as an editorial appendix to Jenkinson, "Mother of Nations," 70.

51. Parker, *The Life of General Ely S. Parker*, 31; Elizabeth Parker, "Her Word," 70.

52. Parker, *Constitution*, 70-71, 88, 90.

53. Parker, *Constitution*, 90n.1.

54. Jenkinson, "Mother of Nations," 69; Veasey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 91.

55. Parker, "Maize Maiden," 180.

56. Parker, "Maize Maiden," 182.

57. Parker, "Maize Maiden," 189.

58. Parker, "Maize Maiden," 188-89.

59. Parker, "Maize Maiden," 190.

60. Parker, "Maize Maiden," 191.

61. Parker, *Constitution*, 103.

62. For *Osiris* as meaning corn, see Wright, "Semantic Roots," 75.

63. For "Ioskeha," see Brinton, *Myths*, 170, including footnote 1; for "Tijunkska," "Jouskeha," and "Juskeha," see Barbeau, "Supernatural Beings," 292, including footnote 3; for *Hanandjio*, see Barbeau, *Traditional Narratives*, 4; for "Tarachiwagon, the Holder of the Heavens," see Wallace, *Weiser*, 20; for "Tharonhiawagon, He who Grasps the Sky," see Tooker, *Native Spirituality*, 58; and for "Tarenyawagon," see Veasey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 83.

64. For Flint as *Tawawate*, see Barbeau, "Supernatural Beings," 292; for "the Dark one," see Brinton, *Myths*, 170; for the "Underground Dweller," see Barbeau, *Traditional Narratives*, 4; for the "Great Humpbacked One," see Fenton, *Fable Facts*, 27. It has always been my understanding that Flint was the original False Face. His nose was twisted sideways when Sapling threw the mountain down on him in the ending battle of the first epoch, as is retold in Fenton, *Fable Facts*, 95. Flint became connected to disease (and cure) in the colonial era. I could not tell from his text whether Fenton made these connections.

65. Western scholars continue to bemoan the lack of one "original or perfect version" of tradition without realizing that each and every version *is* original and perfect. Veasey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 80.

66. The name of *Cage-ue-a's* author is one of the first questions raised in a consideration of the text. Dearborn, *Pachontia's Daughters*, 18. Is the author's "real" name "Hum-Ishu-Ma," Cristal McLeod, Crystal Galler, Mourning Dove, Morning Dove, Catherine Galler, Mrs. Fred Galler, or Catherine McLeod? Dearborn spends the next two pages trying to pare these "possibilities" down to Hum-Ishu-Ma's one true name, never considering that they may all be correct.

67. Richard White, *Middle Ground*, 36.

68. This is common knowledge. For those who do not continually know it, see Parker, *Constitution*, 30; Paul Wallace refers to the inception of the word as a title of office when he mentions Atotarho as the "Head Chief of the Five Nations" and goes on to mention all "succeeding Atotarho." Wallace, *White Roots*, 34.

69. "The name [Djikonsasel] passed as a title from one generation to another." Djikonsasel is a dialect pronunciation of Jigonsasch. Parker, *Constitution*, 90n.1.

70. Mohawk, "Economic Motivations," 57.

71. Jenkinson, "Mother of Nations," 68.

72. Thus, for instance, a prophecy for the Epoch of Handsome Lake links descendants to

ancestors in the forever present, referring to them as "kinsmen"; while the Midwinter naming ceremony, part of the complex of rituals for raising up the dead, refers to the necessity "that persons should continue to be born anew." Tooker, *Native Spirituality*, 63 and 275, respectively.

73. Novices beware: sometimes the Grandmothers name wrongly. For example, not every Tarachiwagon in history is considered the reincarnation of the Creator. Conrad Weiser, a white colonial Indian Agent and close friend of Benjamin Franklin, was adopted by the Mohawk under the name "Tarachiwagon." Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 134. In this instance, his name described a Haudenosaunee hope that he could make a lasting peace between the Haudenosaunees and the Europeans. Although it was his quest, Weiser was unable to effect it because he was not really Sapling after all.

74. Veasey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 83.

75. Wallace, *White Roots*, 11-12.

76. Wallace, *White Roots*, 13-14.

77. Parker, "Maize Maiden," 186.

78. Gibson, *Concerning the League*, 90-91. Woodbury claims it was a rebuke. It was no such thing. In asking - respectfully - for her help, the Peacemaker pointed out that because she had the duty to feed passing war parties, she also had the ability to influence their behavior.

79. Wallace, *White Roots*, 13.

80. Elizabeth Parker, "Her Word," 70.

81. Wallace, *White Roots*, 14.

82. Brinton misrepresents this slightly as a sort of soulful dualism: "[A]mong both Iroquois and Algonkians, that a man has two souls one of a vegetative character, which gives bodily life, and remains with the corpse after death, until it is called to enter another body; another of more ethereal texture, which in life can depart from the body in sleep or trance, and wander over the world, and at death goes directly to the land of the Spirits." Brinton, *Myths*, 236. Actually there is no sense of separation, as suggested in Brinton. Note that reincarnation is a civic duty. You are "called" back, not for personal reasons but because your community needs you. There are simultaneous souls, however.

83. Wallace, *White Roots*, 40.

84. Jenkinson, "Mother of Nations," 69.

85. Veasey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 84. The results of her negotiations appear as the "Clans and Consanguinity" section of the Great Law. Parker, *Constitution*, 42, 44.

86. Wallace, *White Roots*, 14.

87. Like Parker's Corn Tassel in "The Maize Maiden," these are the men of the corn camp, "watching to protect the fields of corn." Parker, *Constitution*, 76. They pledge "to lie across the pathway like a log," meaning they will give their lives for the Peacemaker's cause. Parker, *Constitution*, 83. *Concerning the League* likewise shows the Peacemaker appealing to the men of the corn camp. Gibson, *Concerning the League*, 140, 181.

88. Jigonsasch was not feeding passing war parties out of perversity, as Woodbury suggests (Gibson, *Concerning the League*, 91. Woodbury footnote 2) but because it was required of Clan Mothers by law. John Heckewelder, *Thirty-Three Years Among the Indians*, 136-37.

89. Elizabeth Parker, "Her Word," 70.

90. Parker, *Constitution*, 88.

91. To wit, the Corn Camp makes Atotarho an offer he cannot refuse: Chairmanship of the League. Gibson includes an interesting section that shows the Peacemaker introducing the offer

with some gender arm-twisting. He demonstrates to Atotahio how thoroughly consensus is against him, an argument that carries great weight in policy-making in Haudenosaunee society. Gibson, *Concerning the League*, 233.

92. Parker, *Constitution*, 9.
 93. Jemison, "Mother of Nations," 69.
 94. Parker, *Constitution*, 42-44.
 95. Parker, *Constitution*, 42.
 96. Jemison, "Mother of Nations," 68.
 97. The fact that women did the farming caused a gloriously patriarchal misinterpretation of Haudenosaunee economics, one that lingers right up to the present. Because only male peasants did the "dirty work" of farming in Europe, colonial observers decided that women were being abused by lazy Indian men, who supposedly treated women like "beasts of burden." According to this skewed view, instead of performing "honest work," decadent men went hunting. Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 150. Actually, men owned the hunt just as women owned agriculture.
 98. The Peacemaker takes the newly converted Hiawatha (formerly a cannibal) deer hunting, instructing him that, "It is on the flesh of the deer that the Holder of the Heavens meant men to feed themselves." Wallace, *White Roots*, 16. In speaking with male guardians of the corn fields, the Peacemaker assures them that corn is the great sustenance of the people, "and that is what everyone will live by." Gibson, *Concerning the League*, 196.
 99. Vessey, "Iroquois Confederacy," 99.
 100. Greene, *Peripheries and Center*, 205. Greene's bewilderment is apparent in his whole capstone discussion of popular sovereignty, 202-7.

101. Barreto, "Indian Roots"; Johansen, *Forgotten Founders*; Grinde, *The Iroquois*; and Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*.

102. Many scholars seem unaware of Newhouse's listing of what he called the "original" clans: Great Name Bearer, Ancient Name Bearer, Great Bear, Ancient Bear, Turtle, Painted Turtle, Standing Rock, Large Plover, Little Plover, Deer, Pigeon Hawk, Eel, Bull, Opposite-Side-of-the-Hand, and Wild Potatoes. Parker, *Constitution*, 42.

103. Parker gives the entry date of the Tuscarora as 1724. Parker, *Constitution*, fn.1, but he also quotes the Chiefs' date of 1715. *Constitution*, 61. Don Grinde gives the latest date I know of, 1735 (Grinde, *The Iroquois*, 1), while Paul Wallace gives the earliest, 1710 (Wallace, *White Roots*, 3). All dates are correct, as their entry was a process beginning just before the outbreak of the devastating Tuscarora War in 1711 and ending only as the last refugees followed the Southern White Root of Peace up to the Fire at Onondaga in 1735.

104. Once more, even good scholars who are themselves Native American do not realize this. John Mohawk, for example, in attempting to figure out the organization of local government forgets to consider the role of the Clan Mothers. Mohawk, "Economic Motivation," 61.

105. Again most historians seem unaware of it, but eighteenth-century Haudenosaunee statemen would refer to the Seven Nations. In 1761, for example, Seneca George referred to the "seven nations," an allusion Paul Wallace explains merely by noting "the League was expanding." Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 71, 574.

106. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 41: 86-87. In another dialect, it is the *Kanonsionni*, which Paul Wallace renders as "the United Household." Wallace, "Cooper's Indians," 59.

107. The Lenni Lenape (Delaware) were pushed into League territory by the original European invasion, well underway circa 1600. Goddard, "Delaware," *Handbook*, 213-15, 221-24. Paul Wallace correctly observes that by 1700 the Lenni Lenape were "what today would be called

"displaced persons." Heckewelder, *Thirty-Thousand Miles*, ix. Their adoption into the League was a lengthy process, continuing for nearly two centuries. By 1712 they were being actively groomed for citizenship (Wallace, "Cooper's Indians," 71), but they continued to resist entry into the League as they were loathe to leave their mid-Atlantic homeland. It was not until the Paxton Boys began their war of genocide under the mantle of prosecuting the French and Indian War that the final holdouts agreed to move to Ohio under the League citizenship. Heckewelder, *Narrative of the Mission*, 78-79, 84-90. And it was not until after the brutal genocide against "the last of the Mohicans" (Delaware) by the Revolutionary Militia out of Fort Pitt at Coshon (Gnadenhuttent), Ohio, in 1782, that the remaining "Christian Delaware" ruefully acceded to League authority. Heckewelder, *Thirty-Thousand Miles*, 189-200.

108. Parker, *Constitution*, 43, 44.

109. Parker, *Constitution*, 42.

110. In 1724, Joseph François Lafitau recorded that "The women are always the first to deliberate . . . on private or community matters." Lafitau continued that the chiefs awaited the women's advice before deliberating on the matters themselves. Quoted in Bonvillian, "Iroquoian women," 54; "Iroquois women had their own council fires, as the men had." Wallace, *Cooper's Indians*, 72.

111. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 42: 154-55.

112. This entire episode may be found in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 42: 152-55.

113. Heckewelder, *Thirty-Thousand Miles*, 99.

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