



## *The Weekly Historical Note*

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### *Queen Anne's Missionaries*

The Iroquois have a long history of being exposed to Christianity. During the mid 1600s, Jesuit Priests established missions to the Iroquois. In 1667 a chapel was built in the Oneida homelands. The Jesuits were sent by the French, but in 1685 all of the Jesuit missionaries were recalled due to growing conflicts between the English and French and hostilities with the several tribes. It was not until the beginning of the 1700s that missionaries began to return to the Iroquois homelands; this time from the English.

In the year 1701, King William III of England established the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts to send more missionaries into North America. In 1709, an unforeseen event spurred the Society into action in the Iroquois homelands. Published in 1730, *An Historical Account of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, tells of the arrival of four Iroquois Chiefs in London. The original publication reads:

*Four Sachems, or chief Persons of four Nations of the Iroquois, came in the Nature of Embassadors to England, confirming the Peace made with the Govenor of New-York, and requesting Her Majesty would be pleased to direct that their Subjects might be instructed in Christianity, and Ministers might be sent to reside among them. The Archbishop of Canterbury received the following letter from the Earl of Sunderland, then on of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.*

*Whitehall, April 20. 1710.*

*My Lord,*

*The Inclosed being a Copy of what has been given to the QUEEN by the Embassadors lately arrived from the five Indian Nations, I am ordered by Her Majesty to transmit it to your Grace, and to signifie to you Her Pleasure, that you lay it before the Society for Propagation Religion, that they may consider what may be the more proper Ways of cultivating that good Disposition these Indians seem to be in for receiving the Christian Faith, and for sending thither fir Persons for that purpose, and to report their Opinion without Loss of Time, that the same may be laid before Her Majesty. I am, &c.*

*Sunderland, &c*



According to Dean R Snow, author of *The Iroquois*, the four men taken to England were, Theyanoguin, Cenelitonoro, Sagayonguaroughton (who was the grandfather of Joseph Brant, the well known Pine Tree Chief of the Mohawk involved in the American Revolution), and also a Mohican who remained unnamed.

The Archbishop called a committee in response to the Queen's request and it was determined "that two Missionaries should be sent to the Mohock and Oneydes Indians...together with an Interpreter and Schoolmaster, to teach the young Indians..." In addition the Queen ordered that a Fort, Chapel, and Mansion House should all be built near the Mohawk Castle. Reverend Mr. Andrews was selected to fill the roll of missionary and he arrived in New York in 1712. Snow clarified that the buildings constructed by the English were at Fort Hunter which was near the place where the Mohawk River and Schoharie Creek meet. After a large Mohawk residence moved to the area, the "new village came to be known as the Lower Mohawk Castle."

The influence upon the Mohawk and Oneida tribes from this early date cannot be accurately measured. All the duration of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Christian missionaries were sent to various places in the Iroquois homelands. It was in the later half of the 1700s that the Christian missionary, Samuel Kirkland, gained so much influence upon the Oneida that he convinced them to support the American Colonist in the Revolutionary War.

*Right:* Official Seal of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

**Sources:**

Humphreys, David. *An Historical Account of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*. (London: Joseph Downing, 1730).

Snow, Dean R. *The Iroquois* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998).

