



## *The Weekly Historical Note*

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### *The Creation of The Iroquois League*

A long time ago, maybe hundreds or thousands of years before Europeans came to this continent, the Lotinuhshyu-nsh (Iroquois Confederacy) covered much of what is called New York State. Although the exact date the League was formed is not clear, oral history has kept alive the account of how it happened, and perhaps more importantly, why it was formed.

Bob Brown, Cultural Advisor to the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, explained that long ago, the people were divided and constantly at war with each other. The Creator gives each person a purpose, a reason why they are born at a certain time and place. Because the people were continuously doing harm to each other, they often did not live to accomplish the purpose that they had been given. Bob Brown stated that “we were all created for a purpose, we all had a responsibility, but it was not the purpose of taking another’s life.” In response, the Creator sent the Peacemaker as a messenger to the people. He was sent to restore peace and to instruct the people.

The Peacemaker was born among the Huron People, who are related culturally to the Iroquois groups. The Huron have a language that is similar to the Mohawk people. As it was, the Peacemaker went first to Kany-keha-k@ (People of the Flint, or the Mohawk). He spoke to them of the way that the Creator had intended for them to live, and they were the first to accept his message. He then moved to the west, to the On-yote-a-k@ (People of the Standing Stone, or the Oneida) and shared his message with them. They too accepted his message.

When the Peacemaker came to the Onutak-ha-k@ (People of the Hills, or the Onondaga), the people did not accept the Peacemaker because of their fear of Thatat@lho>, who had great power. It was determined that if they could persuade all of the other nations to unite, they might be able to persuade Thatat@lho> to listen to the Peacemaker.

The Peacemaker continued west and approached Khayuka-a-k@ (the Cayuga). The Peacemaker visited two places among the Khayuka-a-k@. The people who lived in the Northern land were called the people of the Mucky lands and the people who lived in the lower territories were called people of the Great Pipe. They were the next to accept the message of the Peacemaker. The last group that the Peacemaker approached were Tsitwana-a-k@ (People of the Mountain, or the Seneca).

After the Peacemaker had visited all of the five nations, the four nations who had accepted agreed to converge in the territory of the Onondaga and began to unite and try to appease Thatat@lho>. Many of the Onondaga people agreed with the message that the Peacemaker brought, but they still feared Thatat@lho>. It was then that they planted the Great white Pine as a symbol of peace and specified that it would be planted in the land



