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SUN DANCE by FRED KABOTIE

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The A.S.C.N.Y. is affiliated with the Division of Anthropology, Cayuga Museum of History and Art, Auburn, N. Y.

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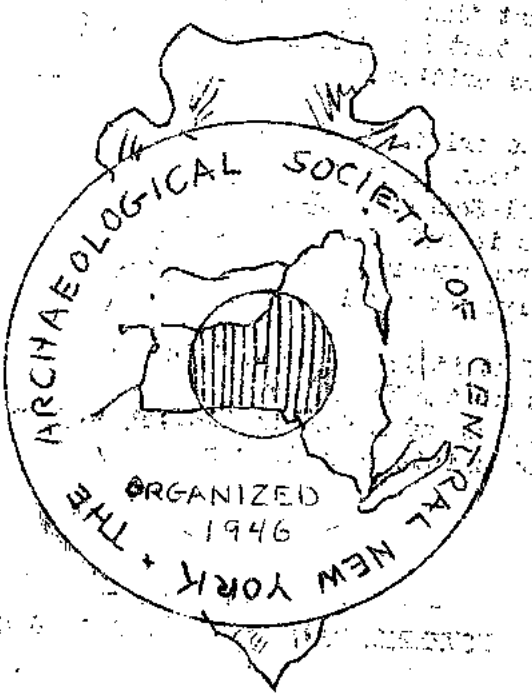

Where was the foot of Cayuga Lake in 1779 ?

By Harrison C. Follett.

Subsequent to 1945 the history of the Sullivan-Clinton campaign through Cayuga County and adjacent territory was prepared by the writer and published in the Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Central New York. In this work, the subject matter of this article was thoroughly discussed. It is deemed essential to publish at this time for the benefit of subsequent members and in an attempt to more emphatically have it understood that the writer, regardless of intimations, has in no manner been persuaded to change his mind as it pertains to the actual route pursued by the army of 1779 across the foot of the lake or Montezuma Swamp in 1779.

In 1887 the full history of the campaign as prepared by General John S. Clark of Auburn, N.Y. was published by the State of New York.

By extensive research and archaeological exploration by the writer, Mr. Harry L. Schoff, Mr. Newton E. Farwell, and others, many discoveries were made which obviously proved the 1887 history to be in gross error in so far as it pertained to Cayuga County. These known errors combined with several others throughout certain sections of the region augmented the history of the campaign as prepared by the writer as well as that of the Archaeological History of Cayuga County. The writer, who was then a resident of Cayuga County; as an ardent student of Archaeology and an ardent admirer of history of fact, became unintentionally involved beyond a mere personal interest, in the subjects named and was persuaded to submit the whole for publication as before stated.

That there may be no misunderstanding by the reader, it is considered essential that he understands the conditions under which the artcile which follows is written.

The original manuscript maps and other data essential to verbatim citations has long been deposited in the archives of the secretary of the Cayuga County Historical Society. Also, access to the history of the campaign as published by the State is not now available to the writer. Therefore the article must be written wholly from memory, and any mistakes made should be overlooked, yet criticism in an instructive manner is solicited.

What it is hoped will be accomplished by this preparation mainly is to establis firmly that the trail across the swamp could not possibly have occured as cited by th 104-C map as published in 1887; viz: at the close proximity of the foot of Cayuga Lak as it now exists when in a normal state.

NOVEMBER MEETING - ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY CENTRAL NEW YORK

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 12th

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We are happy to announce that our speaker for the November meeting will be Glenn Rogers of Geneva. Mr. Rogers is president of the Geneva Historical Society and a well known speaker on historical topics over WGVA. His subject will be, "Stories along the Trail" and we look forward with great anticipation to an interesting and informative evening. Reports on recent diggings, collections to look over and general discussion will fill the evening.

PLAN TO ATTEND AND BRING A FRIEND.

The Article.

In the year 1886, a year previous to the publication by the State of New York, Mr. D.W. Adams, a resident of Auburn, (who was no relation to W. W. Adams of Union Springs,) gave an extended address before the Cayuga County Historical Society, which they published in pamphlet form. The text as reviewed by the writer obviously indicates that he was positive that the Army detachments of Sullivan's Army crossed the Montezuma Swamp as the writer determined at nine miles from their respective camp at Waterloo, or in the vicinity of where Waterloo now stands. So well versed was he in the subject that he made no mention of East Cayuga or Go-wa-gua, both of which archaeology proves erroneous as cited in the State publication.

Whether or not Adams was aware of the preparation by Clark when he gave the address, we do not know, but as the text may appear to indicate, he was more or less familiar with Clark's work and in view of this it is likely that he did not agree with its citation of the route pursued by the Army across the dense swamp.

As the Army began the westward march they followed substantially the Indian paths that led from one Indian Village to another, their main objective point being the head Castle Village that was located on the Genesee Valley flats on the and west side of the Genesee River near the present village of Cuylerville in Livingston County, N.Y.

This trail the writer has traveled over on foot from one end to the other and repeatedly over several long sections of it.

The return journey by the Army to the east end of Seneca Lake was over the same ground on which they traveled west. The entire route was surveyed by link and chain by the army engineers, and when followed on their map by spacing compass or calipers using the identical scale as the records indicate, it will be seen that if any variation occurs, it is very slight. Then, too, it will be found that the village quoted by the official Journals seldom if ever fails to disagree with the Journals where error is detected.

The mystery that appears to prevail in this particular instance is the route pursued across the swamp of Montezuma, which up to but a few years ago was difficult to cross even in dry weather. Few persons living today enjoyed the experience of the writer in the early nineteen hundreds, in middle July, when a relay of three teams of horses were required to pull an auto across the swamp road, and it required several weeks of labor at a very good salary to fill the empty purse created by the event.

In the history of the Campaign published by the State is a large map designated as 104-C and on a reduced scale to render it less cumbersome. It was sorted out from about forty different ones by General Clark. By the use of this map and applying spacing compass, and using the Journals as a guide, the distance traveled will be found that at the point involved, there occurs a discrepancy that cannot be made to comply with the distance cited as traveled by the Journals, nor beyond the present foot of Cayuga Lake does it correspond with the mileage quoted by the Army Journals. And in addition, Indian sites charted on the map in five cases do not correspond with archaeological determinations. Two charted sites did not exist at all, namely East Cayuga and Go-wa-gua; the latter at Union Springs was not established until after 1779, and the other south thereof, neither of which the Army Journals mention as existing. Furthermore, the village of Cayuga is charted on the north side of Great Gully, but instead archaeology finds it on the south side.

Here also map 104-C obviously indicates the route as extending directly north and south and with the same line as the present highway. This error may not appear of much consequence to persons not familiar with the actual route. As will later be seen, considering the whole, it amounts to over a mile distance as actually traveled. The precipitous creek bank at this point together with the actual location of the villages required a round about maneuver. Also one-half mile directly south was a deep ravine through which flowed a creek, called for identification purposes, Slocum Creek, a large portion of which flows from the uplands. To the east a short distance occurs a six to eight foot precipitous drop over a rock ledge which formed the head of the ravine cited, and caused a veering of the trail. Immediately south occurs a high, steep hill which also was shunned by the trail, but the 104-C map indicates a straight passage through the area, or on a direct line of the present highway.

The object of this detailed citation is to indicate in particular that the route as shwon on this map at this point is not dependable, and if not here combined with other drastic errors, it surely is apt to likewise be so at the present foot of Cayuga Lake, as will be seen.

While the writer was wrestling with the problem created by the identification of the route as per the 104-C reduced map, Mr. Glenn Norris, historian of Tompkins County, N.Y., in a search through the army maps on file in the archives of the New York Historical Society of New York city, discovered two small maps produced on a scale of one inch to one mile, of which he made photostatic copies and presented them to the writer. They were designated as 90-F and 90-G or 96-F and 96-G.

These two maps definitely coincide with archaeological explorations, geography and geology, and in every important detail sustain the determinations as cited in this article and also coincide with the Army Journals.

On map 96-G, (if designation is correct), it will be seen that at about one-quarter of a mile north of Great Gully the actual trail veered sharply to the right and crossed both streams near Cayuga Lake into which they emptied parallel to each other and where the banks were shallow. A short distance therefrom, the trail entered the main town called the Castle that was situated on the farm known locally as the Dill homestead, thence it turned directly east and at about one-half mile distant passed through the village of Cayuga (Indian), then turned nearly abruptly south and passed through the village of Upper Cayuga, so named in the Army Journals from its location high above the Castle and the Cayuga Villages. The trail then veered eastward and crossed the creek above the aforementioned falls, and thence in a southerly direction avoided the steep hill before named and continued south parallel but distant about one eight of a mile from Cayuga Lake.

Now by referring to the other map, the trail obviously shows the abrupt turn north parallel to the ridge that extends north and south parallel to the swamp on the west side. This ridge is conspicuous and is designated on map 104-C— a rare occurence on this map, which is of particular note.

As the north end of this ridge was reached, a sharp turn to the right in a slightly zig-zag line, the trail crossed the swamp and reached the east shore line where the present Rene Menard bridge crosses the outlet of Cayuga Lake, which according to the Army Journals was the foot of Cayuga Lake, and cited specifically as being 70 perches (rods) or 1155 feet wide and armpit deep. On the apex of the hill above stood two vacated Indian long houses.

This route coincides with the Journals in detail by mileage, by geography, and by geological formation, and is repeated here in answer to the question which has arisen at various times since the recent publication of the history of the Campaign as compiled by the writer. Substantiating it are the low, wet, marshy and gouged out by water sections in the area between the present foot of the lake and the trail or present roadway over which it passes at present. In further support of this deduction is the location of Black Lake nearby on the north side of the highway, its inlet and outlet and the low marshy land that extends several miles north, which geology obviously indicates, was in not too distantly remote times a part of Cayuga Lake, which in the course of time has receded to its present level as all the lakes have done, a point, of course, which is difficult for a person or persons who may not be versed in the subject, to realize.

Excavations throughout the swamp area have revealed in the silt deposits of the old lake bed, clam shells, fish bones, and various other sufficient evidences to support our determinations as cited. Again, a rapid recession of the lake could have occured after 1779. This is evidenced in particular as noted by our history of archaeology at Kipp Island and in our research a verbal citation is recorded that definitely indicates that in the early 1800's, water in long duration surrounded Kipp Island, and it was then of such depth that to approach the Island the use of a boat was necessary, and was thus so for several years, thereafter. (See this record in the township of Montezuma in the 'Archaeological History of Cayuga County' by the writer.)

Sometime subsequent to 1929, Dr. Alexander Flick, then State Historian, resurrected at some place in Pennsylvania a Journal made by Lieut. Boyd, who accompanied Col. Gansevoort's detachment of 100 men who were directed to proceed to Albany by the nearest route from their army camp then located just south of the destroyed Kanadasaga Fort northwest of the present city of Geneva. This journal, at the time General Clark compiled the campaign history, could not be found, and as it appears, no other that cited the actual departure of this contingent from the army detachments to enter Cayuga County, therefore speculation as to the route they took and at what point they seperated was resorted to; and as the 1887 history states, therefore assuming they were a combined force as they entered the county. They are cited by a monument placed in 1929 at the roadside a mile or so south of the present village of Cayuga and on the south side of the Auburn branch of the New York Central and Hudson River railroad as the place where they departed.

The Boyd Journal copy was furnished Judge Searing by Dr. Flick, then State Historian, and in kindness, Judge Searing furnished the writer with a copy for which we are very thankful. From this journal we learn that this detachment left the main army camp several hours in advance of the other. Three detachments, all of whom moved independently to some extent of each other, encamped separately and operated separately as duty required. Col. Dearborn separated entirely to carry out the campaign on the west side of Cayuga County for the same purpose.

According to Boyd's Journal, Gansevoort and 100 men left Major Butler's detachments several hours in advance from their encampment and after marching over the Indian trail for nine miles, reached the opposite side of Cayuga Lake. Now arises the probable question as to the exact course taken; however, as before cited and taking into consideration the well known Indian trail quite definitely charted on Johnson's map of 1771 and other early maps and the mileage quoted from the point from which they were detached, the point cited as encamped near the Indian Village that was located near where Waterloo

now stands, they could not have possibly crossed the Montezuma Swamp at any other point. It was in fact the highest point although not conspicuous by a casual observation, but that which now separates the main part of the swamp from Cayuga Lake. In protest of this route as we cite, we have been confronted by persons not familiar with natural land formations and relying to some extent upon the campaign history as published in 1887, who state that they had traveled through the area adjacent to the foot of the present lake level and had seen the causeway erected by the army across the swamp. For the information of those persons, the probable ridge referred to is that contracted for a roadway that in early days crossed this part of the swamp. Building of any bridge or causeway by those detachments was in no instance resorted to. Then by common reason, if at a mile north of the present foot of the lake it was arm-pit deep, it surely near the mouth of the outlet known as the Seneca River would naturally be several feet deep and the current naturally swift. In this citation some tradition which is cited by Genl. Clark in his unpublished manuscript has been purposely omitted as common sense indicates it to be erroneous.

Reverting to the Boyd Journal, as they reached the last hillside at what is now Rene Menard Bridge, the journal states that they proceeded up the lake one mile and at a corner of the lake, (Mud Lock, where a natural corner exists), then branching off, traveled ten or eleven miles to camp on the east side of the outlet of Owasco Lake.

Let us now ask why they pursued this route, and in answer we cite because at Mud Lock, the Indian trail coming direct from Onondage extended from the foot of Owasco Lake in a north westerly direction, passed just south of the high, steep hill just east of Mud Lock, and continued to the junction point at Rene Menard bridge, the only safe place at which the outlet of Cayuga Lake could be forded. A correct spacing of this route will render it obvious that any other route could not be made to be in accord with the Journals as per the mileage quoted.

A review indicates that an important error is omitted which we cite and which appears to indicate an attempt to fortify to some extent General Clark's determinations. Coincidentally at Mud Lock in very ancient times there existed an Algonkian Indian Village site and its discovery, and not being versed in the modern science of archaeology supposed it to be the place where the Jesuit missionaries in 1672, cited as Thioharo, which in fact was located a full mile north or at the point before mentioned as Rene Menard Bridge beside the ford and Indian trail by which the army passed and called Ghaharo. In support of Clark's error and in seni support of our deductions, we cite the following from an oration by the Rev. Chas. J. Hawley of Auburn, N. Y., published in the 1887 history, which was given in Aurora, Cayuga County, N.Y., at a celebration of the first centennial of the Campaign. Among the statements made was the quoting from the Journals of the Army of 1779, that at the foot of Great Gully existed in 1779 the three villages that comprised the Jesuit Mission site of St. Joseph in 1656, and also the three Indian towns visited in 1677 by Wentwoth Greenhalgh; and ten miles north at Mud Lock was the Jesuit Mission of St. Stephen in 1672. What could be more erroneous ? History and archaeology say that these towns did not exist before 1740.

In consideration of all the erroneous evidence produced, and the pertinent facts produced, especially that Thioharo (Ghaharo) did not exist at Mud Lock as cited definitely in the Journals of the Army, substantiated by archaeology, as existing a mile north where they state the Indian houses stood at or near the point where they crossed the outlet of the lake, we must remain firm in our conviction that the level of Cayuga Lake in 1779 was much higher and extended to Free Bridge or Rene Menard Bridge.

THE STORY OF CORN PLANT

Johannes, or John Abeel, eldest son of Christoffel and Margueritta Breese Abeel, was born in Albany, April 8, 1722, and is recorded as an "alleged lunatic for the following reasons:

He early developed a taste for hunting and finally became a fur trader among the Indians of the Six Nations, with whom he was on terms of intimate friendship, so much so that he became enamoured with an Indian princess, named Aliquipiso, of the Turtle Clan of Seneca Tribe and married her. Their son, born about 1742 became the famous Corn Plant.

The History of Montgomery County, N.Y. PP218 & 233, contains the following additional facts relating to John Abeel:

"John Abeel, an Indian trader, settled in the town (Minden) a short distance from Fort Plain in 1748. He secured several hundred acres of land of one of the grantees of the Blucker parent. In his previous intercourse with the Indians, he had married the daughter of a Seneca Chief, the ceremony being performed after the Indian fashion. A child of this marriage was the famous chief, Cornplanter (Corn Plant).

Abeel erected a stone dwelling upon a knoll directly above the flats. He married on Sept. 22, 1759, Mary Knouts, a member of one of the prominent German families and at the beginning of the Revolution was living on his farm. During the invasion of October 1780, he was taken prisoner by a band of Indians, and while immediately expecting death, Cornplanter addressed him as father, thus securing his safety. He was given the liberty either to accompany the Indians under the protection of his son, or to return to his white family. Much credit is due him for choosing the latter, and after hostilities had ceased, Cornplanter visited him and was received with much hospitality."

John Abeel, by his second wife, had several children, descendants of whom are still living in Montgomery County, N.Y.)

Corn Plant (usually, but improperly spelled Corn Planter) was one of the most unique characters in American history, and it appears somewhat strange that after a lapse of a century or more the tru history of his parentage should now for the first time be brought to light, proving beyond a doubt that he was a grandson of one of Albany's most distinguished mayors. There may have been an effort on the part of those interested to cover up the facts at the time by permitting a misspelling of the name which has passed into history as O'Bail (easily mistaken for Abeel), but Corn Plant's own statement to the Governor of Pennsylvania in 1836 in which he gives an account of his early life (omitting the name of his father) confirms the newly discovered evidence of his parentage. He says: "I feel it my duty to send a speech to the Governor of Pennsylvania at this time and inform him of the place where I was born, which was at Connewaugus, on the Genesee River.

We are indebted to Mrs. Joseph Sanders of Oneida for this interesting account of Corn Plant. It is from her family genealogy.

When I was a child, I played with the butterflies, the grasshoppers and the frogs, and as I grew up I began to pay some attention and play with the Indian boys in the neighborhood, and they took notice of my skin being a different color from theirs and spoke about it. I inquired of my mother the cause, and she told me that my father was a resident of Albany. I still eat my victuals out of a bark dish. I grow up to be a young man and married me a wife, and I had no kettle or gun. I then knew where my father lived, and went to see him, and found he was a white man and spoke the English language. He gave me victuals while at his house, but when I started home he gave me no provision to eat on the way. He gave me neither kettle nor gun, neither did he tell me that the United States were about to rebel against the Government of England.

I will now tell you, brothers who are in session of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, that the Great Spirit has made known to me that I have been wicked and the cause thereof has been the Revolutionary war of America. The cause of Indians being led into sin at that time, was that many of them were in the practice of drinking and getting intoxicated. Great Britain requested us to join with them in the conflict against the Americans, and promised the Indians land and liquor. I myself was opposed to joining in the conflict, as I had nothing to do with the difficulty that existed between the two parties. I have now informed you how it happened that the Indians took part in the revolution and will relate to you some circumstances that occured after the war. General Putnam, who was then at Philadelphia, told me there was to be a council at Fort Stanwix, and the Indians requested me to attend on behalf of the Six Nations, which I did, and there met with those commissioners who had been appointed to hold the council. They told me that they would inform me of the cause of the revolution, which I requested them to do minutely. They then said that it originated on account of the heavy taxes that had been imposed upon them; that the Americans had grown weary thereof and refused to pay, which affronted the King. There had likewise a difficulty taken place about some tea which they wished me not to use, as it had been one of the causes that many people had lost their lives, and the British Government now being affronted, the war commenced and the cannons began to roar in our country.

General Putnam then told me at the Council at Fort Stanwix that by the late war the Americans had gained two objects: they had established themselves an independent nation and had obtained some land for the Indians to live on, and General Putnam said it should be granted, and I should have land in the State of New York for the Indians generally, and as he considered it an arduous task, wished to know what pay I would require. I replied that I would use my endeavors to do as he requested with the Indians, and for pay therefore I would take land upon which I now live, which was presented to me by Gov. Mifflin. I told General Putnam that I wished the Indians to have the privilege of hunting in the woods and making fires, which he likewise assented to.

"The treaty that was made at the aforementioned council has been broken by some of the white people, which I now intend acquainting the governor with. Some white people are not willing that the Indians should hunt any more whilst others are satisfied therewith; and those white people who reside near our reservation, tell us that the woods are theirs, and that they have obtained them from the Government. The treaty has also been broken by the white people using their endeavors to destroy all the wolves, which was not spoken about in the council at Fort Stanwix by General Putnam, but has originated lately."

Corn Plant further complains that "white people could get credit from the Indians and do not pay them honestly according to agreement", also that "there is a great quantity of whiskey brought near our reservation, and the Indians obtain it and become drunk." He complains further that he has been called upon to pay taxes, and says: "It is my desire that the Governor will exempt me from paying taxes for my land to white people, and also to cause the money I am now obliged to pay to be refunded to me, as I am very poor".

"The Government requested me to pay attention to the Indians, and take care of them. We now arrived at a situation in which I believe the Indians cannot exist unless the Governor will comply with my request, and send a person authorized to treat between us and the white people the approaching summer. I ha now no more to speak".

The singular production of Corn Plant was of course dictated to an interpreter, who acted as a memoensis, , but the sentiments are undoubtedly his own. It was dated 1822, when the lands reserved for the Indians in the northwestern part of Pennsylvania became surrounded by the farms of the whites and some attempt was made to tax the property of the Seneca Chief, in consequence of which he wrote this epistle to the Governor.

The letter is distinguished by its simplicity and good sense, and was no doubt dictated in the concise, nervous and elevated style of the Indian orator, which has lost much of its beauty and poetical character in the interpretation. His account of his parentage is simple and touching; his unprotected, yet happy home, where he played "with the butterflies, the grasshoppers and the frogs, is sketched with a scriptural felicity of style. There is something very pathetic in his description of his poverty when he "Grew up to be a young man," and married a wife, and "had no kettle or gun," while the brief account of his visit to his father is marked by a pathos of genuine feeling. It is hoped indeed that as the account stated the father was "non-compos mentes."

Corn Plant was one of the parties to the treaty at Fort Stanwix in 1784, when a large cession of territory was made by the Indians. At the treaty of Fort Harmer, five years afterwards he took the leading part in conveying an immense tract of country to the American Government, and became so unpopular that his life was threatened by his incensed tribe. But this chief, and those who acted with him, were induced to make liberal concessions by motive sound policy; for the Six Nations, having fought on the royal side during the war of the Revolution, and the British Government having recognized our independence, and signed a peace without stipulation for the protection of her misguided allies, they were wholly at our mercy. In an address sent to the President of the United States in 1790 by Corn Plant, Half Town and Big Tree, occurs the following:

"Father, we will not conceal from you that the Great Spirit and not men has preserved Corn Plant from the hands of his nation, for they ask continually "Where is the land upon which our children and their children after them are to lie down ? You told us that the line drawn from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario would mark it forever on the East, and the line running from Beaver Creek to Pennsylvania would mark it on the West, and we see it is not so, for first comes one and then another and takes it away by order of that people which you tell us promised to secure it to us." He is silent, for he has nothing to answer. When the sun goes down he opens his heart before the Great Spirit and earlier than the sun appears again upon the hills he gives thanks for his protection during the night, for he feels that among men become desperate by the injuries they have received, it is God only that can protect him".

In reply to this address, President Washington remarked: "The merits of Corn Plant and his friendship for the United States are well known to me, and shall not be forgotten; and as a mark of the esteem of the United States, I have directed the Secretary of War to make him a present of $250.00 either in money or goods, as Corn Plant shall like best."

In his effort to preserve peace with his powerful neighbors, Corn Plant incurred alternately the suspicion of both parties, the whites imputing him a secret agency in the depredations of lawless individuals of his nation, while the Senecas were sometimes jealous of his apparent fame with the whites, and regarded him as a pensionary of their oppressors. His course, however, was prudent and consistent, and his influence very great.

He resided on the banks of the Alleghany river, a few miles below the junction, upon a tract of fine land within the limits of Pennsylvania and not far from the line between that State and New York. He owned thirteen hundred acres of land, of which six hundred were comprehended within the village occupied by his people. The Chief favored the Christian religion and welcomed those who came to teach it.

Referring to his personality, an eminent writer says: "He was the rival of Red Jacket. Without the commanding genius of Red Jacket, he possessed a large share of the common sense, which is more efficient in all the ordinary affairs of life. They were both able men; both acquired the confidence of their people, but the patriotism of Red Jacket was exhibited in an unyielding hatred of the whites, while Corn Plant adopted the opposite policy of conciliation toward his more powerful neighbors. The one was an orator of unblemished reputation, the other an orator of unrivalled eloquence. Both were shrewd, artful and expert negotiators, and they prevailed alternately over each other, as opportunities were offered to either for the exertion of his peculiar abilities. The one rose into power when the Senecas were embittered against the whites, and the other acquired consequence when it became desirable to cultivate friendly relations upon the frontier.

On one occasion Red Jacket was boasting of what he had said at certain treaties, when Corn Plant quickly added, "Yes, but we told you what to say." Horatio Jones said of Corn Plant: "He was one of the best men to have on your side, but it was decidedly unlucky if he thought you were wrong."

Corn Plant was the first as well as one of the most eloquent temperance lecturers in the United States, and labored hard to save his people from this growing evil, for which his white neighbors were largely responsible.

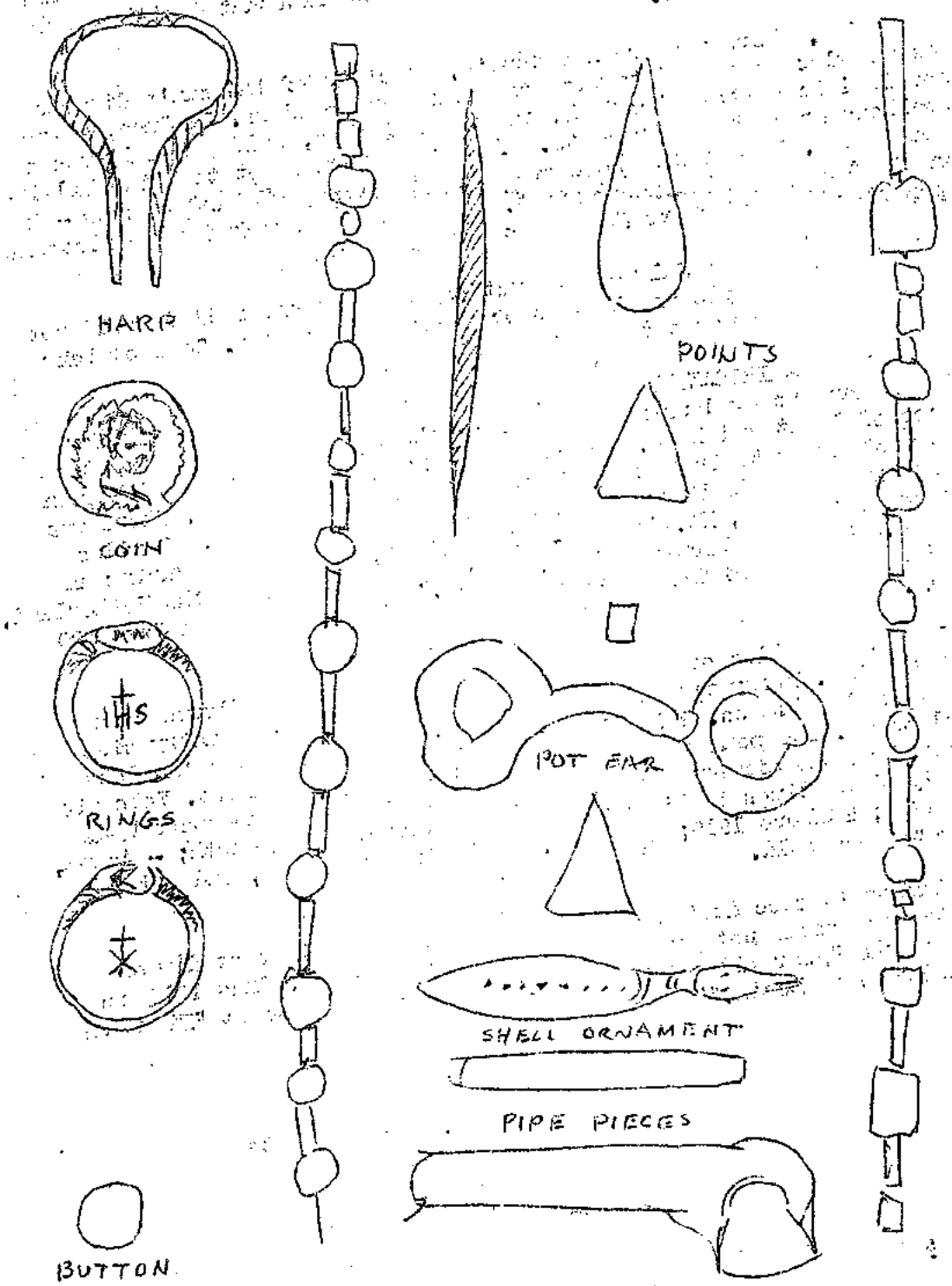
In his latter days he became superstitious, and his conscience reproached him for his friendship toward the whites, and in a moment of alarm, fancying that the Great Spirit had commanded him to destroy all evidence of his connection with the enemies of his race, he destroyed an elegant sword and other articles which he had received as presents.

There can no longer be any doubt of his relationship to the Abeel family. His mother told him that his father's name was Abeel, or O'Bail. The latter name does not appear in the Albany records, and it is doubtful if such a person ever lived in that city. The name of Abeel is still preserved with the tribe on the reservation.

The history of Montgomery County, page 233 says:

Cornplanter visited Fort Plain in his native dress about the 1810, bringing with him several Indians of dignified rank. They were cordially welcomed by the chief's relatives, going first to the house of Joseph Wagner, father of Peter Wagner,

who was grandson on the mother's side of John Abeel. The party also visited the house of Nycholas Nygert, whose wife was a sister of Mrs. Wagner and was richly entertained, and then at the house of Jacob Abeel, living with his widowed mother on their old homestead. The Indians were treated with hospitality. The visit lasted several days, and the guests were the central attraction of village society, for Cornplanter was a man of noble bearing, and was decorated with all the native display of costume appropriate to his rank. His father at that time had been dead more than a dozen years.



HILLTOP RENE MENARD BRIDGE SITE
WARD COLLECTION

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FROZE TO DEATH

1816

All across the northern United States that spring of 1816, the frozen fields were unplanted, the young crops killed by unnatural cold and the farmers plagued by the freekish weather. Drouth and frost struck one section, flashfloods another. Temperatures fluctuated with one drop of 40 degrees over night.

By May, there were seen sunspots, an eight of the sun's diameter and smoked glass was used to view the signs and wonders. In June, 6 inches of snow fell in central New York, twelve in Quebec, half grown leaves shed and swallows froze in their nests. The same storm swept to Maine killing corn and sheep. In Vermont there were one and one-half feet of snow - in Boston eight nights of killing frost. Elsewhere in New England hailstorms stripped blossoms and drove June peas into the mud.

Snow flurries in July and August prevented corn, fodder would not make. So feed for cattle was brought from southern states. Some panicky farmers sold out and moved to the midwest.

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW on Sunspots 1816, said, "No cause for alarm," but gave no explanation for the weather. Later tests showed the importance of light and heat, and queries were made on what would happen if the sun should get tired of lighting and warming the earth. There was no mention of what made it cold in New England - an event 10,000 miles away. It was a volcano, Mt. Tomboro, 13,000 feet, that killed during an eruption 56,000 on an obscure island, Sumbawa, near Bali, in the Netherland, Indies, five days and nights a blazing funnel dimmed the sun in Java 500 miles away.

Molten lava boiled over the rim seven miles wide and flowed down the mountain side. Fiery fragments of stone falling on the country side like rain burned villages. Whirlwind and tidal waves completed the loss of coastal towns. The peak of the volcano was leveled 4000 feet. Volcanic dust rocketed in the air and the upper air current carried it around the world. Only three times in history has dust encircled the earth; - Asama, Japan, in 1783; Tomboro 1815; Krakatao, Sunda Straits, 1883, and after each the world was cold.

In Tomboro's case dust made a great cosmic umbrella that dimmed the sun. Its rays could not penetrate with usual strength. Thus 1816 has come to us as the "year without a summer." Americans called it "Eighteen Hundred and Froze to Death."

Rev. R. C. Hebblethwaite

THE OCTOBER MEETING

The October meeting was well attended. Mr. Charles Wray, the speaker, presented a very fine collection of color slides showing some of the many artifacts he and Harry Schoff have collected in their exploration of the Seneca village Sites. We are sorry that Harry could not also be with us. The doctors had just finished excavating on him for a bad appendix and we heard that he is doing fine.

The following is an extract from an article written by Charles Wray and Harry L. Schoff and published in the Pennsylvania Archaeologist. It covers his talk to us at the meeting and is used with the permission of the authors.

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE SENECA SEQUENCE IN WESTERN NEW YORK 1550-1687

Charles F. Wray and Harry L Schoff

The Iroquois Five Nations, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk, made their home in northern New York State. The Seneca, by far the most populous of the groups, were the youngest member and were the guardians of the western door of this league of nations.

Many collections of archaeological material have been gathered from the sites of ancient Seneca villages and burial grounds. Some of these collections have been scattered and lost. This great wealth of material has long needed studying and an attempt at correlating and dating the sites should be made while there yet remains some record in the ground. With this in mind we offer this tentative outline of the sequence and dates of the major Seneca villages, basing our conclusions on the results of twenty years of personal field research.

The Seneca villages of the early historic period (1550-1687) are located in a relatively restricted area of some 100 square miles in Western New York, approximately twenty miles south of Rochester, in the counties of Monroe, Ontario and Livingston. They comprise twenty-two known sites of which thirteen are of major size, the remaining nine being lesser villages or substations. The major villages are divided geographically into two groups, a western group of seven villages along the water-shed of Spring Brook, and an eastern group of six villages in the Honeoye and Mud Creek valleys.

The Senecas had two coexisting great villages which they moved seven times in approximately 150 years in a general northward direction. Since they moved only seven times they must have remained 15 to 25 years in each location. In changing their villages they usually moved a scant one or two miles. This northward trend in their migration was first noted by Houghton. The destruction of their villages in 1687 by the French army of General DeNonville terminated this northward migration and documented the date and location of the Seneca capitals at that time.

After the destruction of their towns, the Seneca moved eastward ten or twenty miles to the present Canandaigua and Geneva area and subsequently scattered in numerous smaller villages about the Finger Lakes and the middle and upper Genesee Valley.

The prehistoric villages of the Seneca have not been positively identified. They may be represented either by the series of fortified sites found in the Bristol and Genesee valleys and best represented by the site at Richmond Mills, or they may be represented by the series of valley bottom sites such as found at Dansville and Long Point. Archeological evidence supports the latter.

The destruction of the Seneca burial sites has been in progress for 250 years. Present-day excavations show that very shortly after burial some of the graves were robbed of their useful articles such as wampum, glass beads, iron axes and good brass kettles. Native material was left behind. Whoever did the looting knew where most of the important graves were and where in them to look. This may have been done by the Senecas themselves or possibly by DeNonville's Indian allies during their invasion.

With the arrival of the early settlers the graves were again dug into; this time the scavengers were in quest of iron for the blacksmiths. Excavation of these graves discloses only iron rust stains where axes, knives and guns had been. The native made material was left behind scattered in the grave fill.

The search by the curious for Indian relics began as early as 1822, but did not become popular until the turn of the century. Only the oldest of the Seneca sites escaped the several lootings probably because their locations had been forgotten and because less trade material was found on them. Scientific excavation of these important burials has been a recent development.

CONCLUSIONS

Prehistoric Seneca Archaeology is in a confused state. Projecting the cultural trends backward as indicated by their early historic sites, we would expect their prehistoric villages to be on fortified high ground and to possess a culture comprised of low collared castellated and spouted grit tempered pottery of medium size, lacking pipes, but with a well developed bone, stone and shell industry.

The pottery suggests strong links with the Erie and weak connections with the Richmond Mills type (Cayuga). The rarity of pipes, especially of clay similarly shows little connection with Richmond Mills. The relative abundance of ocean beads and pendants, evidently not manufactured in their own villages suggests connections to the south (Maryland and Virginia). All their flint artifacts were made of western New York or Ontario-Onondaga flint, so if they were new comers they would have had to come from the direction of Buffalo. The general northward and eastward migration of Seneca historic villages would indicate their movement from south or west. The recent pottery study by McNeish suggests a lineage coming from the Dansville area, some thirty miles to the southwest.

The first European trade goods arrived in the hands of the Senecas by an indirect source, probably by barter and trade with the coastal Indians or from the early exploring and fishing boats. The style of wearing earring, often only one ear being decorated, might stem from the same style popular among the Basque, whose boats were early along the Atlantic seaboard.

The stone axe was the first native tool to be replaced by its European iron counterpart. Next in order of their replacement went hammerstones, flint knives, arrow-points, perforators and scrapers, bone tools, pottery, grinding stones, combs, wampum and lastly pipes (after 1800).

The first articles of European origin the Seneca received, other than the iron axe and knife, attracted their esthetic sense rather than their common sense. Brass kettles were cut up and made into beads and pendants and not until 50 or 75 years later is there evidence of their being used for cooking and eating or as offerings to the dead. Glass beads were evidently among the first articles that these Indians desired and they soon acquired them in abundance. The recent study of trade material by Mr. Kenneth E. Kidd of the University of Toronto has disclosed that nearly 600 different varieties of glass beads were brought into this country for the Indian trade.

The custom of giving the dead offerings used their stock of European material nearly as fast as the Seneca received it. There just was not too much left to hand down to the next generation. This is best shown by the cycle of bead types found on their sites. The earliest sites produced mainly pound Polychrome beads; afterwards tubular types were dominant and these in turn disappeared in favor of round single-colored glass beads. The wire wound variety of glass bead does not occur on these pre-1700 sites. This cycle of bead types probably also reflects European influence. The later bead types were cheaper and easier to manufacture than the complicated polychrome varieties and probably represent exploitation of the growing Indian fur trade. On the sites after 1700 there appears to be a mixture of earlier and later bead types— perhaps the result of looting of the earlier burial grounds.

Basic burial customs were slow to change and aside from the ever-increasing amount of European material given to the dead little change took place until the Jesuits were established among the Seneca, around the 1650's. The extended form of burial was slowly adopted and by 1687 nearly half of the burials were extended. After 1687 most burials were made in the extended position in progressively shallower graves until by 1779 they were barely below the present plow depth. Cemeteries were more numerous after 1650 and were usually close to the village site often beginning at the edge of the refuse heap and on ridges or sides of ridges facing the village. Some cemeteries were as far as half a mile from the village. Villages were compact and concentrated as late as 1687.

The long house was the only type of dwelling and these structures were of large size, containing several families. DeNonville describes the long houses at Sonnontuan as being over 50 feet long and 20 feet wide. A long house site explored by members of the Morgan Chapter, N.Y. S.A.A. at Factory Hollow in 1950, was found to be over 100 feet long and 15 feet wide.