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**No. 3. Locality as a Basic Factor in the Development of  
Iroquois Social Structure**

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# LOCALITY AS A BASIC FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF IROQUOIS SOCIAL STRUCTURE<sup>1</sup>

By WILLIAM N. FENTON

The Iroquois remain the classic example of a kinship state, and it is proposed in this paper to examine the effect of locality or coresidence on the development of Iroquois social structure. In so doing I accept the challenge of Murdock (1949, p. 79) that "Anthropologists from Morgan to Lowie have shown far more interest in the forms of the family, sib, and the clan than in the organization of social groups upon a local basis." I shall consider in turn the village community, which is the unit of Iroquois society and is the product of a distinct tradition; second, the coresidents of that society to see how local society is composed; third, community organization, or the public functions of society; fourth, the tribe, a confederation of communities speaking a common language; and fifth; the famous League of the Iroquois, which was a projection of the preceding. Finally, I offer coresidence, or the concept of locality, as a theory for interpreting Iroquois cultural history.

## THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

Starting with the present reservation communities, I employ the method of historical "upstreaming," using my own field data to afford a perspective for evaluating earlier field reports and particularly historical records. There are some 20 reservations and settlements of the Iroquois, located principally in New York, western Ontario, and Quebec—in the territory of their ancient homeland around the lower Great Lakes—with one outlier of Seneca and Wyandot in northeastern Oklahoma. Eight reservations comprise communities of between 600 and several thousand population, and ethnological field work has been carried on mainly in 7. In western New York, 3 reservations of the Seneca—Allegany (900), Cattaraugus (1,500), which form the

<sup>1</sup> First read in the symposium on the Concept of Locality in the Development of Iroquois Cultural Diversity, held at the meetings of the American Anthropological Association on November 17, 1949, a draft of this paper was circulated widely for critical comment in December. I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to the following persons for their replies: Profs. B. W. Aginsky, R. H. Lowie, Ralph Linton, George Peter Murdock, the late Frank G. Speck, and Mischa Tittle; and among my colleagues of this symposium, notably A. F. Brown and Anthony F. C. Wallace, of the University of Pennsylvania.

Seneca Nation, and Tonawanda (600)—have received ethnologists since Morgan's time, including the participants in this seminar. Wallace has studied Tuscarora (600), near Niagara Falls; St. Regis Mohawk (2,000) astride the International Boundary on the St. Lawrence has been reported by Mrs. Carse; a University of Pennsylvania field party in ethnology and linguistics worked at Onondaga near Syracuse in 1948 and 1949; and Six Nations Reserve on Grand River, Ontario, by far the largest in area and population (6,000), over the years absorbed Hewitt, Goldenweiser, Speck, and others. Information on the Caughnawaga Mohawk, principally famous as structural steel workers with an outpost in Brooklyn (Mitchell, 1949), and the Oklahoma groups is forthcoming. The study of the Oneida of Wisconsin has not been published, the Oneida of Thames River, Ontario, have been neglected, and in recent years ethnologists have ignored the Deseronto Mohawk group at Bay of Quinte near Kingston, Ontario, and the small band at Oka beside Lake of Two Mountains, west of Montreal.

Communities have been selected for field work in the past according to the character of the local culture. Those Iroquois communities which felt the teachings of the Seneca prophet and follow the Longhouse way have been most conservative and offer the best ethnological and linguistic opportunities. As long as the purpose of ethnology was recovery toward reconstruction of ancient Iroquois culture little interest was manifest in communities which are predominantly Christian—Cornplanter, Tuscarora, St. Regis, Caughnawaga, and Oneidatown.

Local schisms based on religious affiliation go back to early Contact times producing the separation of a large band of Mohawk to become the praying Indians of Quebec about 1670, ancestors of the present St. Regis and Caughnawaga bands, engendering the division of the Oneida into Protestant and pagan factions by 1874, and accounting for intense rivalry between pagan and Christian parties throughout much of the nineteenth century among the Seneca.

Identification with either faction implies a way of life which is observable in the settlement patterns of the present communities. The rural-neighborhood type of settlement pattern is typical of all the Iroquois reservations. This fact is epitomized in a song from the ritual of the Medicine Men, which says: "The houses of all my grandchildren extend in a thin line." Only at Ohsweken, seat of government on the Six Nations Reserve, and in longhouse districts of the New York Reserves, do houses cluster in villages. It is notable at Coldspring on Allegany, at Newtown on Cattaraugus, "down below" at Tonawanda, and in Onondaga Valley (Syracuse) that the modern longhouse and its ball ground, scene of councils and religious festivals,

is a focal factor in the community. Of the 126 dwellings on Tonawanda Reservation in 1935, all but 37 lay west of the Creek, and of the remaining 89, over half were concentrated in the longhouse neighborhood. Similarly, at Allegany, 72 households stretch between Red House and Quaker Bridge, sheltering 326 persons, and centering at Coldspring.

Iroquois settlements were formerly much concentrated. Before 1687, the League Iroquois were 12 or 13 villages, ranging between 300 and 600 persons per town: Mohawk (3), Oneida (1), Onondaga (2), Cayuga (3), Seneca (4). Two Seneca towns comprised upward of 100 houses, of which a good proportion were extended bark houses sheltering composite families. During the next century settlements dispersed and were smaller, the bark house giving way to log houses of smaller dimensions. By 1800 the bark longhouse was a thing of the past. With it went old patterns of coresidence.<sup>2</sup>

The old agriculture was another focal factor as long as it was the work of women. Between 1798 and 1800, the Quakers witnessed the change on the Allegheny River. As long as population concentrated in settlements, the men could not be induced to farm, but with gradual acceptance of farming the residence pattern changed. Settlement of Six Nations Reserve on Grand River saw similar changes. The emigreses from New York concentrated at first in bands—Upper and Lower Cayuga, Upper and Lower Mohawk. With further land cessions, the bands coalesced and settled on scattered farmsteads, located on surveyed lands in the Canadian pattern of townships, ranges, and concessions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The problem of making adequate statements about residence after marriage is not simplified by ethnographic data from the present reservation communities. To my own observations among the Seneca of Allegany, Tonawanda, and the Iroquois of Six Nations, I append the following statement by Augustus F. Brown, of the University of Pennsylvania, concerning the present patterns of residence after marriage among the New York Onondaga: "I can think of only two possible modifications or qualifications of your statements about residence . . . [Without] . . . a convincing amount of data . . . a few observations I made at Onondaga suggest . . . [that old patterns of coresidence did not pass with the bark house]. I noticed that although a daughter might have a nuclear family of her own in the sense that her house was physically separated from that of her mother, the physical separation was not great: the few minutes walk apparently put no great strain on the mobility of mother or daughter. The amount of mother-daughter inter-personal contacts in such a situation seemed to be great." (Brown's observation would also hold for the Seneca of Tonawanda, and somewhat less for Allegany and Cattaraugus, for the settlement pattern at Onondaga more nearly approximates the old Iroquois village settlements.)

For Brown's second point, see footnote 4.

<sup>3</sup>I am indebted to Professor Linton for calling my attention to similar changing patterns of settlement and their relation to farming in the Southeast. After conditions of general peace and security made it possible to abandon fortified settlements, most of the Southeastern tribes are described as living in scattered groups of families, each with its own establishment of several houses for different purposes. The straggling agricultural settlement pattern is described by various writers (Swanton, 1946, pp. 629-641). "Southeastern towns generally . . . consisted mainly of neighborhoods scattered through the woods and interspersed with fields" (Swanton, 1946, p. 638).

Until the establishment of reservations Iroquois settlements were never permanent. The old agriculture favored more permanent residence in single settlements, for part of the year at least, although exhaustion of the soil, scarcity of firewood, and depletion of game supply compelled removing the town to a new site within tribal territory, and not far removed, about twice in a generation. The "new town" versus "old town" is a recurring theme in Iroquois culture.

Village removal quite possibly gave the villages an opportunity to recompose the residence pattern so as to agree with the social situation. As we know after the removal of the Iroquois to the Grand River in Canada, they subsequently settled on farms and took up independent residence. Similar shifts, I am told by Owen Lattimore, have occurred in Mongol society. Thus society on removal to a new village can follow a theory of residence which its members favor or group in terms of a new economic pattern which they adopt.

Seasonal return to hunting and fishing economy meant that Iroquois villages were abandoned periodically. From the harvest to mid-winter, families went to the woods to hunt for meat, seeking hunting partners in settlements adjacent to hunting grounds. Villages were again evacuated in early spring: (1) a short removal to the nearby sugar bush for several weeks, (2) for a longer period in March and April to attend pigeon nestings, and (3) to nearby fishing sites. In all these activities a semblance of local organization was maintained. Village and tribal holdings in sugar bush, pigeon nesting sites, and fishing places formed a continuous territory with the farm and ordinary hunting lands of the village. Major pigeon nestings and long-term fall hunts were carried on at some remove from the village settlements and required the movement of persons from say Buffalo some 70 or 80 miles to south of Warren, Pa. (Fenton and Deardorff, 1943, p. 296 and map). Villages tended to move within rather narrow orbits, quite definitely within the above territory, moving to perhaps a day's walk from the old settlement, frequently the "old town" giving way to the "new town" as a gradual development of one out of the other. At earlier times the movements were more abrupt (Fenton, 1940). Use of hunting territory, fishing sites, berrying grounds, and medicinal plant stations were deemed local privileges belonging to the inhabitants of that place. Ultimately, such ownership rested in the tribe or "nation." To this day the title of lands rests in the nation; nothing like the Algonquian type of individual hunting territories was known. A Cayuga hunter, however, was careful to leave the pelt in the Seneca nation's territory, vouchsafing a privilege which was not extended to alien tribes outside the League. Similarly the use of fields and cemeteries will redound to local inhabitants. To the extent that coresidents are related unilater-

ally, clan fields will adjoin; cemeteries will contain the bones of predominately one clan.

The association of certain activities with places has given rise to Iroquois place names and was a factor in withholding the reservations which were laid out in 1796. Tonawanda, Caughnawaga, Cattaraugus, Allegheny (Ohii'yo'), Grand River, Onondaga to a degree—all lay along streams famous for spring runs of fish.

#### COMPOSITION OF LOCAL SOCIETY

Contemporary Iroquois society has been characterized by single residences of nuclear families. On marriage the young couple moves in with whichever set of parents has room and seeks a separate, or neolocal residence as soon as they are able to build a house on adjacent land. Data from Allegany and Tonawanda, checked by field work at Six Nations, show a tendency for nuclear families to aggregate into clusters of two or three related families. Sons or daughters occupy adjacent land. Within the community there is no consistent pattern of either matrilocal or patrilocal residence. If anything, the latter prevails in the accounts of marriages participated in by older informants whose mothers made the matches. The reason, I believe, lies in the newly adopted pattern of rural residence. Farms at first were transmitted matrilineally, but as holdings increased and White business methods were adopted, inheritance, like English names, went from father to sons. Although New York Agency has never disturbed enrollment of band or tribal members through the mothers, according to Iroquois custom law, in Canada the dominant culture has enforced double descent by requiring that band members be enrolled with the fathers, with the result that "citizenship" in the Six Nations, inheritance, and residence after marriage have been displaced to the male line. Internally, the Grand River Iroquois cling to descent and succession through the mothers. As one might expect, legitimacy is far more of an issue in Canada.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Continuing Brown's comment from footnote 2, which makes an analogy of my example concerning moieties (p. 49), "One might say that (at Onondaga), very often, for various reasons, an extended household is 'partitioned,' but the effect is not a complete change from an extended matrilocal household to a classical isolated nuclear family." Apropos of this, Brown's impression of Onondaga strengthens my point that the residence at Allegany, Tonawanda, and Six Nations has resulted from the pattern of rural residence which in the latter case was enforced by the Dominion Government by (a) parceling the land, and (b) enforcing double descent. "My hunch is that the Onondaga prove this point by the contrasting lack of (a) and (b): i. e., they continue to display more coresidence than the groups you mention."

"The second possible modification for Onondaga . . . stems from [retention of old patterns derived from coresidence]. Your statements that nuclear families are now characteristic, and that older residence was probably matri-patrilocal, do not fit my impression of Onondaga. Without evidence to demonstrate it one way or the other . . . my hunch is that matrilocal residence is more frequent at Onondaga than at the other reservations." Brown questions that residence could have been matri-patrilocal earlier, unless the term be interpreted to mean that the couple instead of later moving to the husband's parents' house, moved to a neolocal, or independent residence. "For Onondaga

As Linton (1936, pp. 163-169) and others have indicated, the crucial factor in residence after marriage is whether one spouse must leave his local community. Informants express a marked aversion to marrying outside the community, although data afford numerous exceptions. A man feels an outlander in his wife's community and has no property rights. A Tonawanda chief was demoted for marrying an Allegany Seneca woman. A woman from outside is without kindred save in a classificatory sense, and her children only have rights in her home village. The exceptions favor distant matrilineal residence.

Possibly the problems of tribal enrollment and payment of treaty annuities have augmented the problem of outsiders. The outlander (*oyá'ji ónq'*) is the marginal Iroquois who has the misfortune to be born of a New York Iroquois father and a mother from Six Nations, or any other place. He is enrolled nowhere and lacks citizenship in the Indian sense. That locality is the factor involved is evident from the fact that on the Six Nations Reserve, where all the League tribes are present, most marriages are within the larger community and intertribal marriages have been accepted for several generations.

I infer from older data that residence was matri-patrilocal with respect to a composite household and that the operation of the system required but two intermarrying lineages. Even after generations of independent residence the terms for one's maternal lineage and the household (*sadinonhsaat*) are synonymous. The latter term comprises a matron, her daughters, and all her descendants through females "who came out of the same house." Locally the household is a powerful unit of public opinion and the core of Iroquois polity. It is balanced on the father's side by his maternal household, or lineage, one's father's kinsmen (*agadoni*), and by extension of his clansmen, presided over by the father's sister, or her female forebear. The two comprise the kindred, one's body of relations.

The distinction between the maternal family or household and the clan is a local problem.<sup>5</sup> The maternal family and the clan are syn-

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the latter would mean simply a variation on the matrilineal pattern—in that the wife owns the neolocal house, and the husband is still living in his wife's house."

Quite possibly these points of doubt cannot be cleared up by future field work at this late date, but it will be interesting to see what information Onondaga yields to Brown's field investigations.

By contrast, Wallace found matrilineal residence to be characteristic of 53 percent of Tuscarora marriages during the first 2 years, 29 percent patrilineal, and 19 percent neolocal in some 78 recorded cases.

\* Murdock (1949, p. 47) and in correspondence suggests a return to Lowie's use of "sib" instead of "clan," on grounds which he has argued in his *Social Structure*. Nevertheless, I have adhered to the use of the term "clan" for the present paper because the Iroquois themselves constantly use the term in their daily speech. The so-called Iroquois clans are true sibs, but I must concede that they do have "clans" in Murdock's sense—a compromise kin group based both on a rule of residence and rule of descent plus social integration (Murdock, 1949, p. 68). Such a compromise kin group among Iroquois comprises a matron, an unmarried son, her several daughters, the husbands of the latter, and

onymous to the extent that local clansmen can relate themselves genealogically to a distant matriarch. The Iroquois know their mothers at least (Titiev, 1943, p. 513), and that is all that the Iroquois themselves claim for the distinction between maternal family and clan, both based on maternal descent. The distinction arises in those communities in which knowledge of the connecting links between maternal lineages in a clan has been lost, or it is known that two lineages came out of different houses in distinct communities (Tonawanda Snipes and Turtles).

Now the importance of the maternal family is political, as Goldenweiser indicated, and politics are local business. In precisely those local groups where the system of life chiefs survives (Tonawanda, Onondaga, Tuscarora, Six Nations), the distinction is made between chiefly lineages and the clan. Controversies rage as to which lineage in a clan possesses a title and whether the clan mother is the oldest woman of the chiefly lineage or the oldest woman of the clan (Tonawanda Turtles in National Gypsum Co. case). If the local title-bearing lineage lacks a likely candidate for chiefship, the matron loans her title to the matron of another lineage who installs her son, or sister's son, etc., and the second lineage after a generation or so claims the title, or swears that it belongs to the whole clan. Similarly, a title may pass from one community to another, or to another clan in the same phratry. In the two communities of the Seneca Nation—Allegany and Cattaraugus—which adopted the elective system of Councilors after Buffalo Creek, the practical distinction between maternal family and clan has blurred. The same process has been going on since 1924 at Six Nations, including the Canadian Delaware.<sup>6</sup>

The clan, however, is the permanent social unit in the community, and in theory it is the exogamic unit. Arising out of the unilocal matrilineal lineage or household, to adapt Titiev (1943, pp. 525-526) to Iroquois parlance, is the multilocal matrilineal lineage. The lat-

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their children—who, after the manner of the present "Beaver Clan" at Quaker Bridge, gather at the house of one of the daughters for birthday parties, frequent Sunday-night picnics during the summer, and whenever an excuse presents itself. At its core is a maternal lineage (for it does not include other Beaver Clan lineages of the community) and a fringe of spouses—members of other sibs whose common fortune it is to have married Beaver wives. Clearly such a unit of society was formerly the household, although psychologically for the Iroquois, the fringe of spouses would belong to the households of their mothers. Since writing the present paper it now seems hopeful that the application of Murdock's concept to Iroquois society may clear away confusion attending coresidence of sib and maternal family and the relation of the maternal family to the father's maternal family—the body of kindred which Goldenweiser called the bilateral family. In fact, the Iroquois household or "clan" in the compromise sense was, and still is, a cooperating unit in many endeavors.

<sup>6</sup> The distinction made here between chiefly lineages and the clan suggests to Professor Linton some interesting questions on clan growth. He writes: "Obviously clans are come by through the isolation and increase of particular lineages or through the change of a lineage from one settlement to another. As a matter of fact, I suspect that the functional study would show a continuous series ranging from emergent lineages scarcely stronger than nuclear family to full clans." Precisely this development is what my Seneca data and those of Goldenweiser from Six Nations Reserve indicate.

ter becomes blurred in the clan when the members of an original maternal family lose track of connecting links. To illustrate, the Tonawanda Seneca Snipe clan of some 40 members comprises 3 maternal families, one of which has been local since before 1830, a second came from Geneseo, and a third went from Geneseo to Buffalo Creek and thence to Tonawanda after the breakup. The latter two can be traced to a single Genesee household. Likewise, the Bear clan at Tonawanda comprises two unrelated maternal families, a small chiefly line from Portage on Genesee, and a larger lineage traceable to three daughters of one matron who walked out from Buffalo Creek. Clearly the locus of the maternal family and the strength of the clan follows the migrating matron. A woman who marries outside of her community takes her lineage with her.

Although in theory the clan is the exogamic unit, several cases of endogamy in my Tonawanda genealogies were explained as extra local affairs between lineages: Father was of the Tonawanda Snipes, mother of the Genesee Snipes out of Buffalo Creek. To marry in the same maternal household is a far greater sin than to marry in the same clan.<sup>7</sup> The Seneca, nevertheless, have an ancient tradition of a longhouse that was partitioned in half so that a man could go out one door and around the house to get married at the other end; I first heard of this from John Jimmerson of Hawk clan in 1933, and it is confirmed as the Kiliou (Eagle) clan in a French source of 1666 (O'Callaghan, 1949, vol. 1, p. 3).<sup>8</sup>

The status of a clan depends on its local representation. A census of 72 families in the Coldspring community on Allegany in 1947 gives the following distribution of the 8 clans in a population of 326:

Sex	Moiety I					Moiety II				
	Bear	Wolf	Beaver	Turtle	Total	Deer	Snipe	Heron	Hawk	Total
Males.....	22	19	32	27	100	10	21	21	18	70
Females.....	24	7	32	29	92	15	7	23	19	64
Total.....	46	26	64	56	192	25	28	44	37	134
Total population.....	326									

<sup>7</sup> Morgan was aware of local considerations as they affect exogamy, which Lowie has called to my attention. At a number of places in *Ancient Society*, Morgan (1878, pp. 88, 90, 91) held that the phratry was formed by the segmentation of an original gens (clan) and that their former exogamy derived from original clan exogamy, but that the latter restriction had long since been removed. His theory called for local segmentation, removal to another settlement, and adoption after a lapse of time, of a new name. Then reunion of the old segments took place at a higher level, forming the moiety system of two phratries.

<sup>8</sup> The word "Kiliou" suggests Kineu, "Eagle," in one of the Central Algonquian dialects, to F. G. Speck. The word is certainly not Seneca and casts some suspicion on an otherwise authoritative document.

Beaver, Turtle, and Bear are the largest clans in that order. Wolf having but seven females is threatened with local extinction. These clans comprising the first moiety far outnumber the second moiety, Heron, Hawk, Snipe, and Deer in that order. Snipe has but seven women. Shrinking of the second moiety threatens the local ceremonies which depend on moiety reciprocity.<sup>9</sup>

By contrast, a Tonawanda census (made for relief purposes in 1935) of 105 households, in which men outweigh women and children, on whom data is incomplete, shows a proportionately different distribution of clans:

Sex	Moiety I					Moiety II					
	Wolf	Turtle	Bear	Beaver	Total	Snipe	Hawk	Deer	Heron	Eel	Total
Males.....	23	28	15	11	77	25	26	8	7	1	67
Females.....	12	25	10	16	63	20	18	6	3	0	47
Total.....	35	53	25	27	140	45	44	14	10	1	114
Total population.....	-----254										

Once more the first moiety outnumbers the second: Wolf, Turtle, Bear—all clans having chiefs in council—are large, but so is Beaver. In the second moiety, Snipe and Hawk which hold all titles on this side, Snipe having three, overshadow Deer and Heron, which verge on extinction, a fate that has already befallen the Eel clan. It is said that the latter two have merged. Viewed statistically, some weight attaches to the argument that the lesser clans without chiefships are the remnants of adopted tribes. Similarly, Goldenweiser's data from Grand River Seneca show that Duck, Eel, and Ball clans lacked chiefs, and the first two were already extinct.

Considering the distribution of clans among the Five Nations of the Confederacy and the Tuscarora (the Sixth Nation), Turtle, Wolf, and Bear, being the only clans among the Oneida and Mohawk, are always present and are probably most ancient; Snipe, Hawk, Ball(?), Deer, Heron, and Beaver exhibit fading distributions. Eel remains an enigma. The Seneca Duck clan is not found in New York, and further indication of local segmentation lies in differentiation of cer-

<sup>9</sup> Already the Coldspring Seneca have anticipated the possibility that moiety reciprocity cannot always be maintained; whenever the ceremonies demand participation by persons of opposite sides and one moiety lacks proper personnel, they simply borrow the necessary person from the other side. There is also a formal pattern for returning him with thanks. So long as the moieties remain but mildly disproportionate the fiction of true moiety reciprocity can be maintained, but the late Professor Speck, in reading this paper in manuscript, commented that he considered the threat to the ceremonies a far more important consequence than the breakdown of possible moiety exogamy in the past.

tain genera: Big Snipe, Black Bear (Ca.), etc. Distribution of chiefships among tribes and clans of the League would argue that Deer and Beaver were preeminently Onondaga clans.

To summarize the relation of clans to coresidence, I note that exogamy, common possession of a clan name, plus political rights (possession of an office) keep the figment of common descent from a matron alive. Similarly, separation (1794) and residence apart in the territories of two sovereignties have given the clans of the Seneca and Onondaga a sense of complete distinction and political autonomy. Tribal offices have been retained in New York or carried to Canada by migrating matrons of the same clan, or the offices have been assigned by the council to new clans with the result that the councils of the Tonawanda Seneca and the New York Onondaga are duplicated on the Grand River. When the latter chiefs meet their New York counterparts at Tonawanda or Onondaga, two chiefs of the same title sit down together. In disputes the Tonawanda chiefs have asserted that an invisible barrier at the Boundary sweeps the "horns of office" from the heads of Canadian chiefs.

The whole question of the local character of Iroquois personal name sets must be put off. Be it said that they belong to the clan and they tend to be repeated with or without attached statuses wherever the clan is represented.

Whatever the origin of the Iroquois moieties, their functions are primarily ceremonial at the village, tribal, and confederate levels. They function in burial of the dead, and semiannually the town divides spatially for the Bowl Game and similar reciprocal rites (Fenton *in* Hewitt, 1944, pp. 81, 82-84). Morgan (1878, 1881, p. 11), Titiev (1943, p. 529), and I (1940, pp. 204-205) have variously discussed the origin of Iroquois moieties by a process of clan segmentation and differentiation. It is only important here to underscore that clans arise from clans in local removals. The process has not always been the same among the five tribes.

Moiety arrangement of clans in two reciprocal phratries progressively strengthens as one moves from the social organization of Onondaga, to Cayuga, to Seneca, which was westward in historic times.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The discussion of moiety differences and their possible former connection with marriage, their strength among the western tribes and weakness among the eastern tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy, raises some interesting questions of diffusion. Professor Linton has called my attention to the Sauk and Fox dual division, as reported by Tax (*in* Eggan, 1937, pp. 268-269, 271), in which membership is arbitrarily assigned from the father alternately to his children in order of birth. If it is nonhereditary, it has no influence on marriage, but serves to provide an equal division of the tribe in games, dancing contests, feasts, and a spatial separation of the tribe into south and north with associated color symbolisms—white and black, which are reminiscent of red and white color symbolism in the Southeast. If such an arrangement was uncommon among Central Algonquians, at least it was not incongruous in an area where the clan system was "characterized by (a) patrilineal descent; (b) totemic clan names, of which over half a dozen agree [and overlap with names of Iroquois clans]; (c) moieties linked with upper and lower worlds,

In the other direction, Oneida and Mohawk had but three clans, and the data on their differentiation into moieties is not clear, particularly for the Oneida. In 1940, I used *Megapolensis* as a source for indicating local differentiation of two clan towns into moieties, when one split during a removal. But the Mohawk-Oneida chiefs in council (nine apiece) do not have the same feeling about moiety segregation as the other three tribes; the former still regard their colleagues as siblings, not true cross-cousins. Have the Mohawk and Oneida accepted the moiety divisions for administrative reasons from the other three tribes among whom it is basic? Sex dualism, which governs Oklahoma-Delaware dual divisions and functions (Speck, 1937, p. 24), is about all the eastern Iroquois recognize.

Among the Onondaga and Seneca of Tonawanda, the two moieties refer to each other as if they occupied opposite sides of the same long-house, bringing us back to the composite sides of the same household: "The four chimneys, or fireplaces" (Turtle-Wolf-Bear-Beaver) and "the five fireplaces" (Snipe-Hawk-Heron-Deer-Eel) designate the other moiety. In Canada, the Onondaga address "Two fireplaces" (Deer and Eel clans) and "Four house corners" (Wolf-Turtle-Beaver-Small Turtle). For the Seneca at least, such designation of clans as fireplaces goes back to 1666, when the two divisions are called "four clans" and "five clans."<sup>11</sup> Niotithesqué probably does not mean tribes. Even then Moiety I comprised Turtle-Wolf-Bear-Beaver, and Moiety II, Deer-Snipe-Great Plover-Little Plover-Eagle. What clinches the argument is the statement that "These nine tribes formerly occupied nine villages which were finally collected together in order to sustain war . . ." It is also said that they ranged themselves by divisions on opposite sides of the fire. The author of the French document also implies that exogamy applied to the locale as well as to the house, and in the custom of partitioning the house could be the original expedient for the beginning of moieties.

The moieties are not now exogamous but may have been formerly. Goldenweiser thought that intraphratrie marriages were less frequent

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respectively; (d) the ownership of name-sets by clans" (Lowie, 1948, p. 257). Linton queries, "Is it possible that the emergence of moieties among the western Iroquois was due to diffusion from their Algonquian neighbors? If so, in view of the Algonquian pattern, you would not expect it to be related with marriage regulations." Rather I would say the dual divisions of the Central Algonquian and neighboring Siouan are of a piece with the moiety system of the Iroquois. Who borrowed from whom cannot be ascertained at this late date. As Sapir once pointed out, the Iroquois clan tradition appears older than the moiety tradition (Sapir, 1916, p. 39). This opinion is fortified by the absence of moieties among the eastern tribes, and the fact that the Mahican and Delaware neighboring the Mohawk and Iroquois share the same threefold divisions of somewhat localized clans of several maternal lineages called Turtle, Turkey, and Wolf (Wallace, 1949, p. 10). Wallace, in another paper (1947), has demonstrated that Delaware social organization was a near duplicate of Iroquois. The one fundamental difference seems to have been the absence of family hunting territories among the Iroquois.

<sup>11</sup> The names given by the early Seneca to their moieties recall the Hidatsa designations of Four Clans and Three Clans. (See Lowie, 1948, p. 245.)

in the older sections of Grand River genealogies. Moreover, older informants agreed that ancient exogamy of sides was the pattern. Quite possibly this was the system. Similar genealogies from the Allegany Seneca barely extend beyond four generations. In 311 recorded marriages, 31 percent were endogamous and 69 percent exogamous with respect to the sides, in a community which has no tradition of moiety exogamy.

#### LOCAL ORGANIZATION

A constantly recurring theme in Iroquois mythology and history is the village, its headman, and the council of elders. Quite rarely in folklore do we encounter the assertion of Asher Wright (Stern, 1933, p. 143), which is constantly repeated by informants, that each clan had its own chief, that formerly the different clans tended to reside together, if not in composite households, in adjacent districts of a settlement with which the name of the dominant clan was associated. The clans had their separate councils, but there was also, and still is, an ad hoc village council of ranking clan chiefs, elders, and others whose wisdom was respected. The public, or the assembly, still includes the local residents who are the sounding board of local opinion. As local residents they engage in such joint enterprises as work parties—hunting, lumber, railroading, steel gangs—sports, drinking, and war parties. The mutual aid society is primarily a local affair; only secondarily do clan, rank, and moiety intrude, and principally to the extent that its membership boasts a clan chief, who is also the ranking chief of the community, and perhaps a federal chief in the League; and out of deference to his position he may be asked to speak, but he may not have charge of the enterprise. The mutual aid society apparently had its beginnings as a society of males who banded together to assist the women of a clan to whom they were married and their own sisters. They were coresidents in a composite household, or at least of the settlement.

The religious organization of officials who are keepers of Handsome Lake's Code and their assistants who control the present longhouse centers is discussed in an earlier paper (Fenton, 1936).

#### THE TRIBE

A Chief was appointed by the oldest woman of the maternal family in which the title descended. Her descendants and those who were related clanwise were his constituents. The matron and the chief tended to reside in the same settlement, for when the Chief removed, the clan had no one to regard with confidence unless he returned for village councils. If the matron removed, local succession was in jeop-

ardy. The results of deliberations by the clan were taken from village councils to the council of the tribe. The ranking clan chiefs residing at a place were the cochiefs of that settlement. All eight of the Seneca chiefs are now concentrated at Tonawanda, but formerly the Seneca had at least four villages, and all the rest save the Oneida had each two or three principal towns with satellite settlements. The tribe thus spoke a common language, it comprised two or more settlements, it was governed by a common council of village chiefs who also represented constituent clans, and they governed a common territory adjacent to the towns. In time all clans were present in all villages, probably about in the same proportions as they are now. As any clan predominated in a settlement, members had to seek mates in the next village, or divide their own house in twain, thus distributing the clans again.

The clan is the cement that binds the tribe. To this day in traveling, one is greeted on arrival in another settlement and asked, "To what clan do you belong?" You are told, "That house is over there." The house was identified by the clan eponym which was painted or carved on the gable.

#### THE LEAGUE

The analogy of the maternal household was projected to the League. The League was in theory a kinship state, but it allowed for considerable local autonomy. The League arose as a confederation of villages, and the chiefs who became its founders were the then heads of settlements who in common had been installed in office by the matrons of their respective maternal families, households, and—by extension—their clans. No attempt was made to level local differences, and the tribes were consequently unequally represented in the League council. Although the Mohawk and Oneida each had 9 chiefs (3 in each clan), the Onondaga were 14, the Cayuga 10, and the Seneca 8. But each tribe had one vote, and unanimity was the rule. Each tribe had its own method of counciling, although two patterns prevailed. The Seneca, Cayuga, and Onondaga employed a moiety system in which the adjacent chiefs were siblings who conferred over the fire with cross-cousins, or offspring. The Oneida and Mohawk were not comfortable with the moiety system, being all more or less siblings, but preferred a tripartite arrangement which seated one committee of chiefs apart in control. The latter arrangement was also used by the Onondaga, to a limited degree by the Cayuga, and still less by the Seneca. The tripartite arrangement with the Onondaga seated north of the fire in administrative control became the pattern for League councils: the Mohawk and Seneca sat east of the fire and the Oneida and Ca-

yuga west. On ceremonial occasions, as in the Condolence Council, the Longhouse which was the League was divided into two tribal moieties: Mohawk-Onondaga-Seneca as Elder brothers, father's kinsmen (the agadoni principle); and the Oneida and Cayuga as Younger Brothers, nephews or offspring (the maternal principle). Thus we see the bilateral organization of the Iroquois local family projected on the League.

#### A THEORY FOR HISTORY

How does the recognition of local cultural differences help us to understand Iroquois political history? Elsewhere I have indicated how the Condolence Council became the instrument of treaty making (Fenton, 1949). Here I should like to suggest the effect of local autonomy on the solidarity of the Iroquois state. Lowie (1948, p. 52) has indicated that, "Centralized authority over a large territory cannot come early in history, for such centralization implies communication to the margins of the area. . . ." Now, the Iroquois did not lack for communication; what they lacked was control. Power remained in the hands of local chiefs, and the latter in the course of history were not always the clan chiefs. They were war chiefs, and brilliant minds like Red Jacket who rose in national emergencies. In the minds of the Colonial officials and in the minds of the Indians, they were the chiefs of certain places. At the Treaty of Canandaigua in 1794, Farmer's Brother and Red Jacket represented the people of Buffalo Creek. Cornplanter stood for the Allegany settlements. Each local chief brought a bundle of sticks enumerating his constituents. At one point in the proceedings the Seneca chiefs, who also held the titles of League Chiefs, upbraided Cornplanter for spending too much time with Colonel Pickering, the United States Commissioner for the treaty. They said Cornplanter was not even a Sachem (Federal chief), and this is one of the few occasions where real League chiefs were also signers of a treaty. What had happened?

If we look at Iroquois history in terms of local autonomy and recognize cultural differences, we can see that an old process was at work. As the League grew old, village autonomy reasserted itself, and the League began to erode at the edges. Local factions broke away: Brant led the Loyalist Mohawk to Canada; the Oneida who had helped the American cause of independence were split by religious dissension; the bulk of the Seneca remained at Buffalo Creek to break up over a treaty in 1838; and Cornplanter's band withdrew to Pennsylvania. We have come full cycle to the modern reservations as communities for independent study.

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