

# Cornell as a Land Grant Institution

---

VP of Diversity and Inclusion: Colin Benedict

# Objectives

---

- Brief historical overview of the Gayogohó:no (Cayuga) Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy
- Introduce the historical context by which the Cayuga Nation (the original inhabitants of the land which is today Cornell) was displaced



# Intro to Haudenosaunee History

---

- Cayuga Nation, along with the Seneca, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk Nations formed the Haudenosaunee Confederacy under the Great Law of Peace in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century.
  - The Haudenosaunee (people of the longhouse) were also referred to as the Iroquois but don't do that it's weird.
  - The Tuscarora Nation later joined the Confederacy in 1722, leading to the other common name of "The Six Nations"
- Their constitution influenced many in existence today, including that of the United States

# Clans of the Cayuga

---

- Five clans, each signifying family lineage
  - Bear, Heron, Snipe, Turtle, Wolf
- Clans are determined by the citizen's mother
- Within the clans are Clan Mothers and Council Representatives who lead

# Sullivan Campaign

- Series of destructive raids carried out by Seneca and Onondaga, and American loyalists on the frontiers of New York and Pennsylvania in 1778. The raids crippled the American Continental Army by depriving it of food and manpower
- In response, Washington ordered 4,469 men under General Sullivan and General Clinton to destroy the ability of the Six Nations to wage war on the Americans.
- Despite their neutral status, the Cayuga Nation was targeted by the US Military in this campaign in 1779
  - Many villages were destroyed and orchards burned
  - The majority of losses of human life were due to exposure and starvation later
  - The Cayuga citizens were then further driven from their land, which was parceled and “granted” to soldiers



# Treaty of Canandaigua

---

- November 1794: the Sachems of the Confederacy Nation and the United States signed a treaty affirming the Cayuga Nation's right to 64,000 acres of sovereign land.
- The land was not returned to the Cayuga

# Aftermath

---

- For the 250 years following the signing of the still-unobserved treaty the Cayuga Nation continued to pursue their land claim
- Beginning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century they began buying their rightful spaces back

# “Land Grant Institution”

---

Morrill Land Grant Act (1862)- The purpose of the land-grant colleges was: to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.

Under the act, each eligible state received 30,000 acres of federal land, either within or contiguous to its boundaries, for each member of congress the state had as of the census of 1860. This land, or the proceeds from its sale, was to be used toward establishing and funding of a single institution of the states choosing.



# In the Context of Cornell's Founding

---

- Post-parceling (after the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign), 990,000 acres of land were granted to the State of New York through the Morrill Land Grant Act, and Cornell was approved as a land grant institution
- But with no federal land available within its borders, New York was given paper scrip to acquire land in other states.
- If the federal land within a state was insufficient to meet that state's land grant, the state was issued scrip which authorized the state to select federal lands in other states to fund its institution

## Continued: Wisconsin

---

- This was done through the buying and selling of pine forests in Wisconsin acquired by timber baron John McGraw. These forests were taken under duress from the Ojibwe and Menominee as well as surrounding tribes (TL;DR the Cayuga weren't the only victims on the path to the institution's founding)
- New York only received one tenth of the land grant, but by the 1920s Cornell had yielded one third of the total grant revenues generated by all states
-



# In the Context of Cornell Today

---

- Despite this history, attempts to recognize the original people and the process that led to Cornell's founding have struggled to advance
- However, Cornell's recognition of the Cayuga Nation is slowly increasing
  - Last semester marked the first time the Cayuga language has been taught at Cornell, with the Gayogohó:no language and culture course crosslisted with AIISP
- This indicates a potential shift towards a more respectful and reconciliatory relationship (we hope)

# In the Context of SA

---

- As student leaders on campus, you all have a responsibility to educate yourselves on the history behind the university, and how it came into possession of the territory it occupies
- When writing resolutions that have anything to do with a specific group on campus, it is your responsibility to reach out to them so you can follow the most informed and respectful path.



# Conclusion

---

And/or questions?