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BROKERS OF UNDERSTANDING: INTERPRETERS AS AGENTS OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN COLONIAL NEW YORK

A language is a world unto itself. Certain men and women in colonial New York bridged the linguistic worlds of the Iroquois and their European neighbors while also serving as guides through contrasting cultures. Nancy Hagedorn, now a Research Fellow at Colonial Williamsburg, will become, in fall 1996, a member of the Department of History at St. John's University, Jamaica, New York.

On the morning of October 8, 1745, Conrad Weiser, interpreter to the Six Nations for the province of Pennsylvania, visited the encampment of the Indians who had arrived in Albany several days before to meet with Royal Governor George Clinton of New York and commissioners from Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. He quickly learned that his old friends were dissatisfied with the treatment they had received at the hands of the governor, having suffered the cold discomfort of inadequate housing and scarce provisions for many days–without having seen or heard from Governor Clinton. Such inhospitality was contrary to Iroquois custom: "If a white Man, in travelling thro' our Country, enters one of our Cabins," they told him, "we dry him if he is wet, we warm him if he is cold, we give him Meat and Drink, that he may allay his Thirst and Hunger, and we spread soft Furs for him to rest and sleep on; we demand nothing in return."[1] After leaving the disgruntled Indians, Weiser spoke to the governor's secretary and suggested that Clinton meet with his Iroquois guests as soon as possible to smooth matters over and avoid a more serious breach in relations. The governor apparently took his advice and met with the Six Nations that evening.[2]

During the session that night and throughout the ensuing week of the conference, Weiser acted repeatedly to mediate both cultural and diplomatic misunderstandings between the English and their Indian guests. For example, when Mohawk chief Hendrick interrupted the translation of the governor's opening speech and spoke "very bold and rude" to Clinton regarding his persistence in pursuing the author of a "late Alarm" among

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[1] Paul A. W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 226.

[2] Conrad Weiser's Journal and Report of the Albany Conference, October 1745, Penn Mss., Indian Affairs, vol. 1, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, in *Iroquois Indians: A Documentary History of the Diplomacy of the Six Nations and Their League*, ed. Francis Jennings, William N. Fenton, Mary A. Druke, and David R. Miller, microfilm (Woodbridge, Conn.: Research Publications, 1984), reel 12, 7 Dec. 1745 (hereafter cited as *IIDH*, reel, date); Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 229-31.

the Iroquois, Weiser asked Hendrick "to forbear and hold his Tongue" and chastised the Indians for their ill manners in ignoring their own "old and good ways" of respect toward speakers and thoughtfulness and deliberation in replying.[3] From his intermediate position between European and Iroquois cultures, Weiser and others like him interpreted more than languages. Euro-Americans and Indians brought different cultural perceptions, expectations, meanings, and values to all their exchanges, whether across the trade counter, the communion table, or the council fire. When interpreters translated and explained disparate languages and rituals infused with cultural meanings and values, they acted as brokers, mediating the confrontation of European and Indian cultures.

As cultural brokers, interpreters inhabited the cultural frontiers of North America– those places "where peoples with different culturally expressed identities meet and deal with each other." Of necessity they became "repositories of two or more cultures," often using their multicultural knowledge and understanding to forge bonds and build bridges across the cultural divide.[4] By virtue of their specialized skills, these intermediaries gained prestige and influence in both worlds as long as they maintained the fine balance between them and performed satisfactorily. Their roles and sometimes even their identities shifted as circumstances demanded. Interpreters provide an excellent opportunity to study the interaction of Iroquois and European culture in early America. Their special knowledge and mediating role placed them in a position to exercise a powerful influence on the exchange of ideas and material culture in colonial New York.[5]

The most prominent interpreters among the Iroquois acquired their special skills and knowledge through close association with the Indians. Hilletie van Olinda, Arent Stevens, and Andrew Montour were of mixed ethnic parentage and the product of the most basic kind of intercultural mingling and exchange and were peculiarly well suited to act as interpreters and cultural mediators. Through a combination of casual exposure and formal instruction, each gained sufficient command of the languages of both parents to serve as an interpreter.

Hilletie van Olinda (ca. 1645?-1707) was the daughter of Dutch trader Cornelis Antonissen van Slyck and a Mohawk woman. She was raised among the Mohawks of Canajoharie until she was in her teens, when she went to live with a female trader in

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[3] Weiser's Journal, Oct. 1745, *IIDH*, reel 12, 7 Dec. 1745.

[4] For a discussion of the use of the concept of the cultural broker in anthropology and its emergence in the historical literature, see Margaret Connell Szasz, "Introduction," in *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker*, ed. Margaret Connell Szasz (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 3-20. See also James Clifton, ed., *Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers* (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989), 24.

[5] Several historians have chosen similar cross-cultural groups such as missionaries, white Indian captives, and traders to illuminate the processes that occur where disparate cultures meet. See James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 32 (January 1975), 55-88; James P. Ronda, "'We Are Well As We Are': An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions," *William and Mary Quarterly* 34 (January 1977), 66-82; James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Daniel K. Richter, "Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics: New York-Iroquois Relations, 1664-1701," *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988), 40-67; John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York**:** Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).

Albany. There she learned to read, write, and speak Dutch and was baptized. She married a Dutch colonist, Pieter van Olinda, and lived her adult life among the colonists.[6] Although her parents apparently did not live together, she had frequent contact with and exposure to her father's culture through family visits and trade. Hilletie indicated that as a child, she sometimes "went with her mother among the Christians to trade and make purchases." She served as provincial interpreter from about 1690 until shortly before her death in 1707. Arent Stevens (1702-1758), who may have been Hilletie's nephew, was the son of Jonathan Stevens, an English colonist, and Lea, a woman of mixed Indian-European parentage. Little is known of Arent's early life, but he eventually followed in Hilletie's footsteps and became provincial interpreter in 1747.[7]

Andrew Montour (ca. 1715-1772) was the son of interpreter Madame Montour and an Oneida war chief named Carondawana. In addition to living in a multi-ethnic household, Andrew was exposed to a variety of Indian cultures and languages as the family resided first among the Oneidas in New York and then, following Carondawana's death in 1729, among the Delawares and Shawnees of Pennsylvania. His mother was familiar with several European and Indian languages and spoke at least French, Oneida, and probably Mohawk fluently. During the 1710s and 1720s, she and her husband, presumably with Andrew and his siblings in tow, attended many Indian conferences in New York. Montour undoubtedly received his early training and exposure to interpreting at his mother's knee.[8]

Other interpreters acquired their skills from different, though similarly intensive, multi-ethnic experiences. Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen (ca. 1677-1742) and Jan Baptist van Eps (b. 1673) were taken to Canada as captives with twenty-six other men and boys following the French and Indian attack on Schenectady in 1690. Van Eps, a boy of seventeen at the time of his capture, remained with the Canadian Indians, probably Caughnawagas, for three years. He made his escape during his captors' attack on the Mohawks in February 1693. Soon after his return, in July 1693, he swore an affidavit

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[6] For Hilletie's own account of her upbringing, see Joel Munsell, comp. and ed., *Collections on the History of Albany,* 4 vols. (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell, 1865-1871), 2:362-63, 370. For information and examples of her activities, see Jonathan Pearson, *Contributions for the Genealogies of the Descendants for the First Settlers of the Patent and City of Schenectady, from 1662 to 1800* (1873; reprint, Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 229; idem, A History of the Schenectady Patent in the Dutch and English Times; Being Contributions toward a History of the Lower Mohawk Valley, ed. J.W. MacMurray (Albany, N.Y: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1883), 183-84; *Calendar of Council* Minutes**,** 1668-1783**,** [Berthold Femow, comp.] New York State Library *Bulletin* 58 (March 1902),(Albany,N.Y:University of the State of New York, 1902),77,97,100, 204,205,210 (hereafter cited as Fernow**,** *Calendar); Calendar* of Historical Manuscripts in the Office of *the Secretary of state, Albany, New York, vol.2, English Manuscripts,1664-1776,ed.* Edmund B. O'Callaghan (Albany, N.Y:Weed**,** Parsons, and Co., 1866),291,327,337,349 (hereafter O'Cal., Calendar); Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York**,** ed. E.B. O'Callaghan, 15 vols. (Albany, N.Y: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1853-1857),4:364 (hereafter O'Cal., *Documents);* N.YCol. Mss. 36:30, NewYork State Archives, Albany, in *IIDH,* reel 4, 25-26 Feb. 1690.

[7] Munsell, *Collections,* 2: 362; Pearson, *Genealogies of Schenectady,* 177; Nancy L. Hagedom, " 'A Friend to Go Between Them': Interpteters Among the Iroquois, 1664-1775" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1995), 239.

[8] For more detailed information about Andrew Montour, see Nancy L. Hagedorn, 11 'Faithful, knowing, and prudent': Andrew Montour as Interpreter and Cultural Broker, 1740-1772," in Szasz, *Indian and White Worlds,* 44-60; Hagedorn "A Friend To Go Between Them," 234.

based on his knowledge of the Indians regarding the "marks and figure" on several clubs left at Deerfield following a murder. His testimony led to the release of two Mohawks who had been held as suspects in the case. By 1698 he began appearing regularly in the records as an interpreter, most often employed in carrying messages and invitations into the Iroquois country.. He stopped interpreting for the government about 1712, possibly because he decided that trading was more lucrative. Although he held a number of civil offices, he followed no steady trade other than interpreting until after his retirement from that post in 1712.[9]

Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen remained with the Indians for a longer period and apparently achieved a much greater level of linguistic skill and a deeper understanding of Iroquois culture than Van Eps. Taken at thirteen, Van der Volgen was adopted by his French-allied Indian captors (also probably Caughnawagas), who raised him to young manhood. He returned to New York society about ten years later, first appearing in the Indian records of the Albany commissioners in the fall of 1700. There is no extant contemporary account of his return, although it appears that he did not "escape." Family legend has it that during a visit to his Dutch family-a privilege often granted to adoptees-his sister cut his scalplock while he slept. He was supposedly so ashamed that he could not return to his Indian family and decided to remain in New York. In any case, for the next forty-two years, "Lawrence Claes" was constantly employed by the commissioners and the governor as a council interpreter, messenger, and resident agent among the Iroquois. By the sheer volume and length of his service, Van der Volgen had an influential role in the conduct of Anglo-Iroquois diplomacy.[10]

Van der Volgen may also have influenced Van Eps's career as New York's interpreter. After he returned from captivity, he became the primary provincial interpreter and Van Eps was relegated to a secondary role. Van Eps may have tired of his subordinate status by 1712 and decided to focus his energies on trade. He disappears from the official accounts until 1722, when he was arrested and prosecuted for spreading false reports among the Indians. Two years later, the Albany Common Council resolved not to grant trade licenses to seven Indian traders at Schenectady; one of those denied

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[9] O'Cal., *Calendar,* 235; O'Cal., *Documents,* 4:16; Gov. William Phipps to Gov. William Fletcher, Mass. Arch., 30:335a, *IIDH,* reel 4, 26 July 1693. For examples of Van Eps's interpreting activities, see O'Cal., *Documents,* 4:370, 494, 497-98, 499, 539, 559, 562, 569, 655, 727, 911; Fernow, *Calendar,* 133, 138, 139, 142, 148, 149, 158, 178, 183, 267, 285, 310, 323; *The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1723,* ed. Lawrence H. Leder (Gettysburg, Pa: Pennsylvania History Association, 1956), 188, 204, 205-06, 214-15, 218-19 (hereafter Leder, *Indian Records); IIDH,* reel 7, 30 May 1711, and 17-18 Aug. 1711 (11). The date of Van Eps's death is unclear and it is difficult to distinguish him from his son John Baptist, Jr. (bapt. 1713), who was trading and interpreting by at least 1740. The elder Van Eps's youngest child, Catarina, was baptized in 1723. He may have been the Jan Baptist van Eps who signed a proposal of Schenectady inhabitants in 1744, since a "Jno. B.B. Eps Junr." and a Jacobus van Eps also signed, though he would have been quite elderly (71 yrs. old). *Pearson, Genealogies of schenectady,* 38, 221-23; idem, *Schenectady, Patent,* 164, 176-79.

[10] The references to Van der Volgen's activities are voluminous; only a few are noted here. Pearson, *Schenectady Patent,* 173-74, 342; idem, *Genealogies of Schenectady, 217*-18, 222; O'Cal., *Documents,* 4: passim; O'Cal., *Calendar,* 276,293, 416,524; Fernow, Cal*endar,* 166, 168, 181, 195, 204-05; Leder, *Indian Records,* 188, 191-92, 223-24; *IIDH,* reel 11, 12 Aug. 1741. For a brief synopsis of his career,. see Hagedorn, "A Friend To Go Between Them," 240.

was Jan Baptist van Eps.[11]

Conrad Weiser (1696-1760), Pennsylvania's provincial interpreter, was one of the first interpreters deliberately placed among the Indians to learn their language and diplomatic methods. The Weisers came to New York with a group of about three thousand Palatine settlers under the sponsorship of Governor Robert Hunter in 1710. Hunter hoped that they would provide labor for the production of much needed naval stores. When the endeavor broke up two years later, Conrad's father led a delegation to negotiate with the Mohawks for land at Schoharie for the now displaced Palatines. During the negotiations, as Weiser recalled in his autobiography, "a chief Of the Maqua [Mohawk] Nation Named Quaynant visited my Father. [T]hey agreed that I should go with Quaynant to his country to learn the Maqua language.[12] The sixteen-year-old Weiser spent the next four or five months with Quaynant's family in a small Mohawk village south of the Lower Castle on Schoharie Creek. By the time he left in July 1713, his father's family had settled a couple of miles away. Weiser maintained close contact with his Mohawk family over the next fifteen years, frequently visiting and spending time with them.[13] Van Eps, Van der Volgen, and Weiser all perfected their language skills and deepened their understanding of Iroquois culture through prolonged residence among the Indians.

One of the most obvious and concrete forms of cultural exchange involved New York's fur traders. Elements of European culture made their way into Iroquois longhouses through trade, and it was through trade contacts that many Euro-Americans acquired a basic familiarity with the cultures, languages, and material world of their Indian neighbors. Colonial officials and Iroquois leaders recognized the importance of trade in securing and maintaining vital diplomatic and military alliances, and interpreters played an essential role in cultivating such ties when they translated during delicate trade negotiations and acted to avoid misunderstandings.[14] Nearly all interpreters were active in the fur trade at some point, many as traders themselves. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, interpreters frequently arose from the ranks of the colony's traders, and many of the most influential and knowledgeable Dutch interpreters employed by the English government, such as Arnout Comelissen Viele (1640-ca. 1704) who served as New York's provincial interpreter during the 1680s and 1690s, gained their specialized linguistic skills as active participants in the Albany fur trade. In addition to interpreting, Viele became a trader and innkeeper in Albany. He spent considerable time in the 1680s and 1690s living with the Onondagas and also traveled far to the west along

[11] Fernow, *Calendar*, 287; Pearson, *Schenectady Patent, 418; IIDH*, reel 8, 4 Sept. 1722.

[12] Quoted in Wallace, *Conrad Weiser, 17.*

[13] Ibid., 17-18, 25-26; *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, ed. Samuel Hazard, 16 vols. (Harrisburg, Pa.: Theophilus Fenn, 1838-1853; vols. 1-3 reprint, Philadelphia: Jo Sevems and Co., 1852), 5: 471 (hereafter Hazard, *Minutes).*

[14] Thomas E. Norton, *The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), 5.

the Ohio River in an effort to expand New York's trading contacts.[15]

Interpreters continued to be culled from the traders' ranks throughout the eighteenth century. While many continued to acquire their first knowledge of Iroquois language and culture while trading with the Indians, few pursued the fur trade as a primary source of income during their tenure as provincial or post interpreters. John Butler (1728-1796), one of Superintendent of Indian Affairs Sir William Johnson's most active and trusted interpreters and Indian officers, was the son of Captain Walter Butler, the commander of Fort Hunter. In 1742, Captain Butler brought his family, including fourteen-year-old John, to the Mohawk Valley. Within three years, John and his brothers were part of William Johnson's trading network at Oswego. By 1755, he apparently left full-time trading to work as a salaried interpreter and Indian officer in Johnson's Department of Indian Affairs. William Johnson, George Croghan, and Arent Stevens also began their careers as traders.[16] Other interpreters took up the trade when they tired of interpreting or found their salaries inadequate. Jan van Eps, for example, may have been in financial need when he quit interpreting in 1712 and turned to trading. He petitioned several times for payments due him for making trips to Onondaga. The New York government was particularly dilatory in paying its interpreters during the first decade of the eighteenth century, as witnessed by similar petitions for back pay from Lawrence van der Volgen and Hilletie van Olinda.[17] Some traders relied on their Iroquois consorts or wives to provide the necessary linguistic skills to conduct business. The commercial arena is, in fact, one of the few in which female interpreters become visible in the surviving records. Both Molly Brant, William, Johnson's Mohawk mistress, and Sarah Ainse, Andrew Montour's Oneida wife, were well-known traders during the third quarter of the century. Like their male counterparts, however, they only rarely stepped into the diplomatic arena.[18] Iroquois women had long engaged in the fur trade and were accustomed to bartering with Albany merchants. Some traders, like Evert Wendell, Jr., apparently employed females even as agents. A sizable proportion of Wendell's accounts were with women. These women brought to their European husbands and lovers trading experience, insider cultural knowledge, and useful language skills. They also wielded vital influence behind the scenes. Through them, their male partners gained access to extended familial networks and trade partnerships that were invaluable in obtaining and

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[15] Charles A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail, or the Ventures and adventures of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path,* 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), 1:4, 143; Jacob Leisler's Letter Book, New York State Archives, Albany, Col. Mss., 36: 142 in *IIDH,* reel 4, 1690 (II); David A. Armour, "The Merchants of Albany, New York, 16861760" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1965), 17, 21, 48-49.

[16] *Dictionary of American Biography,* s.v.v. "Butler, John," "Croghan, George"; *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* s.v. "Butler, John"; John C. Guzzardo, "Sir William Johnson's Official Family: Patron and Clients in an Anglo-American Empire" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1975), 47, 61, 109.

[17] O'Cal., *Calendar,* 267,310,323; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992), 365 n.15.

[18] I know of no recorded instance of Molly's serving as an interpreter in a public treaty council. Sarah, Montour's second wife, apparently interpreted for William Johnson in March 1757 at Fort Johnson. *The* Papers *of Sir William Johnson,* ed. James Sullivan et al., 14 vols. (.Albany, N.Y: University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), 9: 634 (hereafter *Johnson Papers).*

maintaining a successful trade. Finally, as one trader quickly discovered, one could "carry on Trade much better & with a great deal less Expense" if one's wife served as his interpreters.[19]

Another means by which European material goods found their way into the hands of the Six Nations was the presents that were given as signs of good will at the conclusion of treaty conferences. Johnson noted that "a great deal of Skill is required in [the] distribution of presents" in order to know who should receive them, on what occasion, and what the presents should be. Otherwise, a lot of money might be "lavished to little purpose."[20] More important even than the expense was the offense that might be given if improper gifts were offered for condolences or to cement alliances. Interpreters helped to avoid such breaches of protocol, frequently choosing appropriate presents to be given by their English employers.[21] They had tremendous influence on the nature, quantity, and quality of the clothing, arms, ammunition, tobacco, wampum, alcohol, provisions, tools, and trinkets that the Iroquois received.

A less tangible, though no less significant, aspect of cultural exchange in early New York involved the interchange of ideas, particularly of religious concepts and beliefs. Religious translation normally required greater linguistic sophistication than did trade interpretation since it involved the accurate communication of abstract concepts as well as of words and ideas tied closely to the temporal world. Even traders and interpreters proficient enough in an Iroquois language to carry on trade or simple diplomatic negotiations often found their talents inadequate when it came to interpreting Christian doctrine.[22]As Gabriel Sagard, Récollet missionary to the Hurons, noted, some Christian words were nearly untranslatable, not only for linguistic reasons but because of cultural differences between European Christians and Iroquois. "The mysteries of our holy religion" could not be explained to the Indians

> except by paraphrases; that is to say, for one of our words we had to use several of theirs, for with them there is no knowledge of the meaning of Sanctification, the Kingdom of Heaven, the most Holy Sacrament, nor of leading into temptation. The words Glory, Trinity, Holy Spirit, Angels, Resurrections, Paradise, Hell, Church, Faith, Hope and Charity, and a multitude of others, are not used by them.[23]

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[19] Armour, "Merchants of Albany," 83-84; James Sterling Letterbook, 1761-1765, p. 131, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.

[20] *Johnson Papers*, 6: 652.

[21] See for example, Caldwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada which are dependent on the Province of New York*, 2 vols. (1727; reprint, New York: Allerton Book Co., 1922), 2: 97; Witham Marshe, *Lancaster in 1744*, ed. William H. Egle (Lancaster, Pa.: New Era Steam Book & Job Print, 1884), 17; *Treaty with the Ohio Indians at Philadelphia in November 1747* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1748), p. 6, in *IIDH*, reel 13, 13-16 Nov. 1747; Hazard, *Minutes*, 5:148; 7:95.

[22] J. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Narratives of New Netherland, 1609-1664*, Original Narratives of Early American History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 128.

[23] Gabriel Sagard, *The LongJourney to the Country of the Hurons*, ed. George M. Wrong (1632; reprint, Toronto, 1939), 73-74.

A Jesuit missionary faced similar cultural differences in 1640. He noted that "even the parables and the more familiar discourses of Jesus Christ are inexplicable to them [the Hurons]. They know not what is salt, leaven, stronghold, pearl, prison, mustard seed, casks of wine, lamp, candlestick, torch; they have no idea of Kingdoms, Kings, and their majesty; not even of shepherds, flocks, and a sheepfold." Even something as basic as the trinitarian invocation was hard to translate because of the peculiarities of Iroquoian grammar and cultural taboos. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" became "in the name of our Father, and of his Son, and of their holy Ghost." To complicate matters further, "Father" itself had to be omitted if anyone present had a father who had recently died.[24]

Given the subtleties and pitfalls of religious translation, few mastered it. Until a missionary acquired sufficient linguistic skills and sensitivity to preach and catechize without aid, he had to rely on an interpreter, and most of those who eventually learned to preach in an Iroquois language received their first instruction from a knowledgeable interpreter. The Dutch Reformed minister at Albany, Godfridius Dellius, owed his successes in converting the Mohawks, meager though they were, to his interpreter, Hilletie van Olinda, who not only taught him "to pray and preach in their language," but also interpreted the public confessions of proselytes, stood as sponsor for baptismal candidates, and helped Dellius translate several religious texts during the 1690s. Fifty years later Anglican missionary John Ogilvie had the assistance of several interpreters when he visited the Six Nations during the 1750s. Ogilvie rarely names his interpreters, but it appears that in August 1754, his "very Good Interpreter" may have been Jacobus Clement, since Ogilvie reported that he returned to Albany in company with Clement about a week later. Clement's skill would have been above the average since he served as the provincial interpreter following Lawrence van der Volgen's death in 1742.[25]

Missionaries also relied on their interpreters for less tangible aid. Since many of the men and women whom the clergy employed were well known to the Iroquois as diplomatic or trade interpreters, they often wielded considerable influence among potential converts. In 1770, Harry Munro, an Anglican minister working among the Mohawks, wrote to Daniel Burton that he was "bound in gratitude to mention the infinite Obligations" he was under to Daniel Claus (1727-1787), protégé of William Johnson. According to Munro, Claus's influence among the Indians was "great" because he was "Well acquainted with their Language & Customs; a true friend to Religion, & to the Church of England." The minister was particularly indebted to him for "the Pains he takes in translating my discourses to the Indians, which he does to their great Satisfaction." He also set a good example by attending divine services. Like Dellius

[24] The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, 73 vols. (Cleveland, Ohio, 1896-1901), 20:71-73; 10: 1 19-21.

[25] O'Cal., *Documents, 4:364; Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany, New York 1683-1809* (Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978), 1: 49, 50, 52, 73; John Ogilvie, "A Joumal of Time spent at the Mohawk with some Occurrences," Coll. #12878, typescript, pp. 1-2, 8, 9, 24, New York State Library, AJbany, N.Y

before him, Munro owed all his "satisfaction among the Indians" to his interpreter.[26]

Claus had been involved in religious translations and had aided the missionary efforts of the Anglican Church for quite some time. Almost a decade earlier, he corresponded with Johnson about proofreading and correcting some Indian prayer books that were to be printed. He was also interested in several manuscript catechisms circulating among the Mohawks near Montreal that he felt "would be of vast service towards promoting Religion among the Indians" if they could be printed in primers for them. Missionary interpreters' services were so vital that Johnson found it necessary in some cases to pay them out of his department's accounts, which were expected to be used primarily for military and diplomatic expenses related to Indian affairs. John Picket, Conrad Weiser's nephew, appeared in Johnson's accounts in 1759 for his service to the minister at Conajohare, one of the Mohawk castles.[27]

Participation in mourning and condolence rituals and burials also provided opportunities for interpretation of religious customs and beliefs. Weiser took advantage of just such a situation in 1750 when, enroute from Oneida to Onondaga, he and his escort learned of the death of the Onondaga chief and speaker Canasatego. Along the trail, his old Indian companion sang a lamentation song about the "evil spirits" that now held sway. Later, as they rested, Weiser treated his companion with some rum and attempted to console him by reminding him that "nothing was certain in the world, and that the great Being that had created the World knew how to govern it, that ... he would order every thing well, to which he [the Indian] said Amen in his way."[28]

The interpreter who provided a coffin to bury an Indian woman killed by lightning at Schenectady in 1755 was also engaged in an exchange of religious culture. His actions had an immediate effect on Indian burial customs. Missionaries performed similar services. Bishop Commerhof noted that when Shikellamy's four-year-old daughter died at Shamokin in 1748, the Moravians provided the wood and nails for the coffin. The resulting burial represented a melding of European and Indian custom, for the little girl was buried in her Christian coffin with a selection of native grave goods.[29] The religious sphere, like that of trade, provided employment for a number of interpreters who otherwise would have found few public outlets for their talents. Indians, for example, were only rarely mentioned as interpreters in the records of formal treaty conferences, though logic suggests that some were present as quiet checks on the accuracy of the translations offered by their European counterparts. Indian interpreters appear much more frequently in the annals of Indian missions. An informal tradition of employing Indian converts as convenient and available interpreters goes back at least as far as Hilletie and Dominie Dellius in the late seventeenth century. In the 1730s and 1740s other missionaries continued to follow his example and employed Indian converts as their language tutors and translators. Johannes and Isaac, both Indians, served Moravian

[26] *Johnson Papers,* 7:962.
[27] Daniel Claus to William Johnson, March 18, 1761, Claus Papers, MG19, Fl, vol. 1, 34-38, Mss.Div., Pub. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, *IIDH* reel 23, 18 March 1761; *Johnson Papers, 3:158.*
[28] Hazard, *Minutes, 5:475.*
[29] *Johnson Papers,* 2:583; Wallace, *Conrad Weiser,* 272-73.

missionary Hendrick Joachim Senseman among the Indians of Dutchess County for two years in the early 1740s. Thirty years later at Oquaga, Indian clerk and convert Good Peter served as an interpreter until "Mr. Crosby," the missionary there, became fluent in the language.[30] The Christians' message may have been more palatable to potential converts when delivered by another Indian. In addition, the missionaries' own purposes were served by parading these men and women —often converts themselves—through their journals and diaries as visible evidence of their successes.

Religious interpretation also offered one of the few public venues for female interpreters during the eighteenth century. Only two women ever became prominent diplomatic interpreters in New York–Hilletie van Olinda and Madame Montour-and both of them were gone by the late 1720s. Hilletie's interpreting ceased about 1707 and she died shortly thereafter. Madame Montour began interpreting about the time Hilletie stopped and continued to interpret at conferences until at least the early 1720s. She left New York for Pennsylvania in the late 1720s. After their departure, no woman again achieved prominence as a regular, salaried interpreter for the province. Women remained active in other areas such as trade, but they rarely stepped into the diplomatic arena and only occasionally become visible in the records. Throughout the century, however, women interpreted publicly in religious situations. Early female interpreters such as Hilletie sometimes performed in both spheres, translating during treaty conferences as well as for local ministers and missionaries. Later, when few were engaged to interpret in front of the council fire, some found employment before altars and communion tables in Indian chapels and meeting houses.

One such woman was Rebecca Kellogg Ashley, who acquired her knowledge of Iroquois language and culture during the twenty-five years she spent with a group of Canadian Iroquois as captive and adoptee. Rebecca was taken captive with her father, two brothers, and a sister during the attack on Deerfield in 1704. She remained with her captors until her brother Joseph persuaded her to leave them and return to Massachusetts in 1728. After her return she met and married Captain Benjamin Ashley. In 1752, they moved to the Indian Mission School at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where her husband had been hired as a teacher. At the school they met missionaries Gideon Hawley and Timothy Woodridge, with whom they journeyed to Oquaga the following year. Rebecca served as the mission's interpreter until her death in 1757. Hawley acknowledged her superior linguistic skills and knowledge when he agreed to hire both Rebecca and her husband, even though Ashley was "a fanatic, and on that account unfit to be employed in the mission." Ashley had to be employed, however, if the mission was to have the services of his wife as interpreter. She was "a very good sort of woman, and an extraordinary interpreter in the Iroquois language and apparently worth the extra irritation and expense. Her services were so crucial to the mission, in fact, that her death in 1757 apparently precipitated its breakup.[31]

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[30] *Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York*, ed. Hugh Hastings and Edward T. Corwin, 7 vols. (Albany, N.Y.: James B. Lyon Printer, 1901-1916), 4: 2852-53; Samuel Kirkland's Joumal, 1772-1773, Kirkland Papers, Burke Library, Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y, *IIDH*, reel 30, Oct. 1772-Nov. 1773.

[31] Timothy Hopkins, *The Kelloggs in the Old World and the New*, 3 vols. (San Francisco, 1903), 1: 35-38, 58, 62,

Although many of the most obvious cultural exchanges appear to have occurred primarily in one direction, information, ideas, and material goods flowed both ways. One of the best examples of two-way exchange and of the blending of Iroquois and Euro-American cultural elements into a single pervasive and enduring form is the emergence of a standardized Anglo-Iroquois diplomatic protocol, or "forest diplomacy"-a term coined by William N. Fenton–during the early eighteenth century. Although the roots of forest diplomacy can be traced to the Iroquois Condolence Council, a ritual for mourning dead chiefs and installing their successors, by the mid-eighteenth century it also incorporated many elements borrowed from European practice such as gun salutes, toasts, the distribution of European trade goods as presents at the conclusion of councils, and the keeping of written records of the proceedings and treaties.[32] In short, forest diplomacy is a construct of the "middle ground" between Iroquois and European culture. As each side attempted to apply its own cultural rules and expectations to the diplomatic situations arising from contact, they shifted and were adapted to meet the exigencies of the new circumstances. To be successful, both sides had to try, in Richard White's words, "to understand the world and the reasoning of others and to assimilate enough of that reasoning to put it to their own purposes." The result was a set of rituals based on apparent cultural parallels and congruities that allowed them to understand each other and to operate successfully in the diplomatic arena. At the center of this process of adaptation and accommodation were interpreters.[33] During the last century, anthropologists and ethnohistorians have devoted considerable effort to describing the form and structure of forest diplomacy in eighteenth-century North America. As early as the late nineteenth century, ethnographers such as Horatio Hale began describing the Iroquois Condolence Council and drawing parallels between it and the ritualized openings of eighteenth-century Anglo-Iroquois treaty councils.[34] Recently, Daniel Richter, drawing on the work

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63; *Ecclesiastical Records, 5:3401*.

[32] William *N. Fenton,American Indian and white Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 22-24; Hazard, *Minutes,* 5:313; Michael K. Foster, "Another Look at the function of Wampum in Iroquois-White Councils," in *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League,* ed. Francis Jernings, William N. Fenton, Mary A. Druke, and David R. Miller (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 110, 111 n.4; William N. Fenton, "Collecting Materials for a Political History of the Six Nations," American Philosophical Society, *Proceedings* 93 (1949), 235; idem, "Iroquoian Culture History: A General Evaluation," Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin* 180 (1961), 272; idem, "The New York State Wampum Collection: The Case for the Integfity of cultural Treasures," American Philosophical Society, *Proceedings 115* (1971), 446.

[33] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 52, 93. For a detailed discussion of the roles of interpreters during Anglo-Iroquois treaty councils and of their central importance to the proceedings, see Nancy L. Hagedom, " 'A Friend To Go Between Them': The Interpreter as Cultural Broker During Anglo-Iroquois Councils 174*01770," Ethnohistory* 35 (Winter 1988), 60-80.

[34] Horatio Hale, *The Iroquois Book of Rites,* Brinton's Library of Aboriginal American Literature, no. 2 (Philadelphia: D.G. Brinton, 1883), 59-80; "An Iroquois Condoling Council," Royal Society of Canada *Transactions,* 2d ser., 1 (1895),45-65; William M. Beauchamp, *Civil, Religious, and Mourning Councils and Ceremonies of Adoption of the New York Indians,* New York State Museum *Bulletin,* no. 113 (reprint, Albany: University of the State of New York and State Education Department, 1981), 344, 393; idem, *The Iroquois Trail; or*

of John Philip Reid, gave a plausible explanation for why this essentially political ritual for mourning dead chiefs and installing their successors might have been adapted for diplomatic use. Richter and Reid emphasize that in eastern North America, peace was "primarily a matter of the mind." The term, they state, "did not imply a negotiated agreement backed by the sanctions of international law and mutual self-interest" but was "a matter of 'good thoughts' between two nations, a feeling as much as a reality."[35] Within this context, the Condolence Council's origins in the Deganawida myth and its links to the founding of the Iroquois League make sense, as does the use of its rituals for clearing hearts and minds of bad or mournful thoughts, wiping tears, and clearing throats, ears, and paths in diplomatic situations. According to Iroquois tradition, the league was founded during a period of great internal strife and conflict. Deganawidah, the Peace-maker, taught the Five Nations to use the rituals called the Condolence Council as a means of transforming grief into good thoughts and feelings, allowing a return to harmony among the five Iroquois nations and the formation of Great League of Peace. The Condolence continued to be used as a method for preserving good thoughts among members of the league and for perpetuating its existence by providing a means of replacing dead chiefs on the league council. Diplomatic use was merely a logical extension beyond the league of the ceremony's use within it, namely the restoration of "good thoughts" and reason among the participants through the symbolic removal of the source of grief or discontent.[36]

It may be noted that while established forms of forest diplomacy seem to draw most heavily on Iroquois tradition and custom, there is ample evidence that similar concerns with opening and maintaining lines of communication and restoring "good thoughts" also existed in intercultural diplomatic rituals among non-Iroquois eastern Indian groups. The symbols and rituals varied, but the emphasis and purpose were essentially the same. Iroquoian forms became predominant perhaps because Europeans were most familiar with them and employed them in dealing with other Indian groups. In any event, many elements of the Condolence were readily transferable to diplomatic use and were particularly helpful in providing a model for regulating interaction between two

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Foot-prints of the Six Nations, in Customs, Traditions, and History (Fayetteville, N.Y: H.C. Beauchamp, Recorder's Office, 1892), 97, 143. Hale's and Beauchamp's accounts of the Condolence Council are apparently quite fragmentary. The only known full-length account was dictated in Onondaga by Seneca chief John Arthur Gibson to Alexander Goldenweiser in 1912. It has recently been translated and edited by linguist Hanni Woodbury. See Hanni Woodbury, trans. and ed., with Reg Henry and Harry Webster, *Concerning the League: The Iroquois League Tradition as Dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson,* Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, Memoir 9 (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1992).

[35] Daniel K. Richter, "Ordeals of the Longhouse: The Five Nations in Early American History," *in Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800,* ed. Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 17-18; John Philip Reid, A *Better Kind of Hatchet: Law, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Cherokee Nation during the Early Years of European Contact* (University Park, Pa., 1976), 9-17. See also Fenton, *American Indian and White Relations,* 24.

[36] Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change in the Process of Iroquois Treaty Making," in Jennings et al., *Iroquois Diplomacy,* 22. First in their dealings with the French, and later with the English, "Iroquoian diplomats adapted the language and rituals of the Great Peace to create the protocol of intercultural diplomacy." Richter, "Ordeals of the Longhouse," 22.

temporarily estranged "sides" or groups. The rituals creating a clear mind and the rules governing the issuing of invitations, the exchange of wampum, the allotment of speaking roles, and the taking of turns during the meeting, plus the expected movement from sorrow to contentment and from disharmony to harmony during the Condolence Council also had a parallel in diplomatic councils, which were often called to alleviate existing or potential conflicts.[37]

The clearest theoretical description of the diplomatic use of condolence rituals is William Fenton's paradigm of forest diplomacy. From his extensive knowledge of the twentieth-century ceremony and his reading of a variety of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century treaty accounts and documents, Fenton has formulated an idealized protocol of Iroquoian diplomacy based on the Condolence. The parallels include the opening of the road by an invitation offered on a string or belt of wampum, the greeting at the Wood's Edge, the clearing of eyes, ears, and throats by the Three Bare Words, and the opening condolence ceremony of the actual council.[38] By the 1750s and 1760s, certain elements of the Condolence Council became standard to nearly all intercultural diplomatic exchanges and are clearly visible in extant treaty accounts: The opening statement expressing "condolences" for losses on both sides; the symbolic opening of the paths of communication (usually by drying tears, opening throats, clearing the path, and wiping away the blood or covering the graves of the dead); and the use of wampum to punctuate and regulate the exchange of propositions across the council fire. By tracing the appearance of these elements in extant treaty accounts and particularly their use by English participants, it is possible to determine, at least in broad terms, that this recognized form of "forest diplomacy" emerged between about 1690 and 1740.

Before the mid-1690s, key elements of the protocol are almost non-existent in the records of English intercultural diplomacy and are frequently absent from accounts of Iroquois behavior as well. This was not simply clerical oversight but a reflection of cultural myopia: On occasions when the Indians did offer condolences or speak on wampum or skins, the English seldom returned the gestures in kind; the very possibility that these elements could be consistently omitted indicates either that they had not yet assumed central importance in diplomatic proceedings or were not fully comprehended by the men who recorded the conference proceedings.[39]

In 1682, when the Five Nations came to Albany to renew peace with the English

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[37] Thanks to Michael Foster for pointing out to me the depth of the parallels.

[38] Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change," 21-30. See also Fenton, "Problems in the Authentication of the League of the Iroquois," in *Neighbors and Intruders: An Ethnohistorical Exploration of the Indians of Hudson's River*, ed. Laurence M. Hauptman and Jack Campisi, National Museum of Man, Mercury Service, Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper no. 39 (Ottawa, 1978), 265.

[39] For accounts of some of these conferences between 1680 and 1693, see O'Cal., *Documents*, 3:321-28, 347, 417-18, 430-44, 483-84, 485-86, 533-36, 557-61, 712-14, 77172, 773-80, 805-09, 840-44; *Documentary History of the State of New York*, ed. E. B. O'Callaghan, 4 vols. (Albany, N.Y.: Weed, Parson, and Co., 1849-1851), 2:164-70 (hereafter O'Cal., *Documentary History).* The French apparently conformed to the emerging protocol in their dealings with the Five Nations sooner than did the English. It is unclear how far back Iroquois use of the condolence for *diplomatic* purposes extends. Their use of the condolence as a diplomatic device may itself be a product of contact. I wish to thank Bill Starna and Jack Campisi for making this plausible suggestion.

following a series of Iroquois raids into Maryland and Virginia, the Albany commissioners and the agents for Maryland and Virginia clearly indicated their ignorance of appropriate diplomatic procedures. The English opened the conference with threats of war and demands for reparations before renewing peace. They gave no wampum and made little effort to remove bad feelings and obstacles to a good understanding. In their reply, the Mohawks prayed "that the Mischiefs done may be forgott & forgiven,... drank down like wine and may not remain in the heart, and to wipe off the tears and blood that is spilt," they gave two belts of wampum on behalf of themselves and the Onondagas. The Oneidas and Cayugas made similar gestures. The English agents failed to comprehend the significance of the Indians' actions, however, and told the interpreters to ask whether the Indians "expected that these Belts would wipe off the Blood their young men had spilt in Maryland." At the close of the day's meeting, "the four belts of peak [wampum] were not taken up, but were left lying upon the ground & the Indians went away." The following day, matters were smoothed over and the agents accepted the belts "for a beginning, and to beget a right understanding in order to further our Treaty"-a result, no doubt, of some behind-the-scenes maneuvering by the interpreters. The English agreed to "cover the blood," forgive and forget the Iroquois raids, and marked their pledge with rolls of duffles.[40]

Throughout the remainder of the 1680s and early 1690s, the English continued to misinterpret condolences that the Indians offered and rarely returned them. When the Mohawks informed the Albany magistrates of the death of Canondondawe in April 1687, the commissioners merely indicated their sorrow, asserting that it was "a debt that nature ows & must be paid" and giving them twenty-five fathoms of "strung wampum" and a cask of rum. Three years later when the Mohawks offered condolences for the deaths at Schenectady in February 1690, the English indicated that "Your Coming heir according to the Custom of your ancestors to Condole the death of the brethren murthred at Shinnectady is very acceptable," but again failed to return the gesture. Even as late as June 1692, the English mentioned their grief at the losses the Indians suffered at Cadaraqui, but pointed out that it was "their own fault" and gave them no wampum. At the same conference, the Oneidas chided the English for their "accusing" tone and for speaking "only of the losse of the Christians and tak[ing] no notice of the losse of our Brethren the Maquaes who were killed" during the expedition against Canada.[41]

Until the late 1690s, the English also seemed at a loss to understand the Iroquois use of wampum and rarely spoke on it as the Indians did. When the Iroquois presented belts, strings, or skins with their speeches, the English assigned them a monetary value to aid in determining the amount of gifts to be given at the conclusion of the council. These presents sometimes included bulk or strung wampum. But accommodation was a two-way street and in August 1694 the Five Nations tried to follow the English custom and gave only a general present at the close of the conference, offering no belts or pelts after individual portions of their speeches. Their speaker explained to the Europeans across the

[40] O'Cal., *Documents,* 3: 324-26.

[41] Propositions of Mohawk Tahaiadoris to Albany Magistrates, April 5, 1687, P.R.O., Kew, England, COI/62, *IIDH,* reel 3, 5 April 1687; O'Cal., *Documentary Histoty,* 2:167; *O'Cal., Documents, 3:840-42.*

fire that "we follow your Custome in giveing our Present altogether, and so gave a Parcell of Bever and Peltry."[42]

Despite the apparent willingness of the Iroquois to adapt to what they perceived as English custom in 1694, within five years English practice changed and they began to follow the Iroquois custom, presenting belts and strings with condolence-type openings and to "enforce" specific requests or proposals. The first recorded instance in a conference setting seems to have occurred in February 1694 when Colonel Peter Schuyler gave belts with his proposals that the Indians have nothing further to do with the French. He presented the wampum in order to elicit a definite answer-indicating a new understanding of the protocol surrounding wampum and the fact that it required a response. Significantly, this incident occurred about one year after Jan Baptist van Eps's escape from captivity with an Iroquois group. Throughout the remainder of the 1690s, English use of wampum during intercultural diplomatic exchanges became increasingly regular. By the 1720s and 1730s they used wampum to punctuate their proposals and responses almost without fail.[43]

Other aspects of English diplomatic behavior also changed during the mid-1690s. English condolences offered for the deaths of individual Indians or resulting from particular events began to appear in the records of Anglo-Iroquois councils. This progression was probably a natural one, since most of the condolences offered by the Indians prior to about 1700 were also specific. They condoled the deaths of individuals and deaths resulting from particular events, such as raids, expeditions, or epidemics. After 1693, the English offered specific condolences for sachems who died or were killed-for example, in June 1699 for the death of Aqueendero of the Onondagas and in July 1701 for the son of Sadaganahties of Onondaga and Sinnonnandduwan of Cayuga– and for Indians who lost their lives as the result of specific accidents, war, disease, or natural catastrophes.[44] In February 1693, following a French attack on the Mohawks, Governor Fletcher apologized to the Indians for having no proper presents with which to condole their loss, but promised "to be with you at the beginning of summer to renew the ancient covenant chain,...and to give you something to wipe off your tears for the losse of your relations, which I heartily condole." But even in this instance, despite his realization of the need to condole, Fletcher was apparently still insensitive enough to ask the Indians

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[42] *O'Cal.,Documents,* 3: 321-28,438-44, 484-86,771-72, 773-80; 4:235-41; Propositions of the Five Nations to Governor Fletcher at Albany, Aug. 15-20,1694, N.YCol.Mss., 39: 184 [a9], N.Y State Arch., Albany, *IIDH,* reel 5, 15-20 Aug. 1694.

[43] O'Cal., *Documents,* 4:90, 279-82, 407-09, 567-73, 659; IIDH, reel 6, 21 Oct. 1698.

[44] O'Cal., *Documents, 3:* 483, 806, 808; 4: 571, 906; O'Cal., *Documentary History, 2:164*70; Propositions of Seneca soldiers to Albany Governor Ingoldesby, Albany, May 31, 1693, N.YCol. Mss., 39: 63, N.Y State Arch., Albany, IIDH, reel 4, 31 May 1693. For references to condolences for death by war or disease, see O'Cal., *Documents,* 3:808; 4: 41-42, 23537; A *Journal of New York Governor Fletcher's Expedition to Albany, 1696* (New York: William Bradford, 1696), *IIDH, reel* 5, 17 Sept. through 9 Oct. 1696 *(11); Account of a Treaty Between Governor Fletcher and the Five Nations at Albany* (New York: William Bradford, 1694), IIDH, reel 5, 15-28 Aug. 1694; Propositions of Cayugas in Albany, N.Y. Col. Mss., 41:118, N.Y StateArch., Albany, in *IIDH,* reel 5,28 Sept. 1697 (11); Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RGIO, vol. 1820, 41, 43, Fed. Arch Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in *IIDH,* reel 10, 8 Sept. 1733 (11), and 1 1 Sept. 1733.

to attack Canada in the meantime. They reminded him that he had "been acquainted with us of old, that it hath always been our custom first to condole the death of those who are killed by the enemy, being all one heart, one blood one soul," and that they were it now in some manner drunk with the blood lately Shedd" by the French. "It is not usuall for us whilst under such greife and anxiety as doth now seize us," they noted, "to pursue to revenge our selves of the enemy." They further pointed out that the English had lost blood as well as the Mohawks "and therefore the blood ought to be revenged unanimously by both sides." Fletcher did finally get around to condoling with the Indians as promised in July.[45]

Interestingly, many of these specific condolences were not part of opening ceremonies, but occurred during or after the regular business of conferences. In these cases, the ceremonies frequently involved the recognition of new Indian sachems and captains and do not seem to fit what later became the expected pattern of Iroquois diplomatic protocol, because business was concluded before grief was removed and the participants restored to a good understanding. They seem, instead, to adhere more closely to the original purpose of the Iroquois Condolence as a political ritual for mourning and replacing dead chiefs.

The Albany commissioners also began to send special emissaries to condole with the Iroquois in their towns and villages when they learned of particular losses. In 1691 they reported to the commander-in-chief in New York that the Mohawks had lost ninety men in two years. The commissioners felt that it would be "extreamly needful to condole the death of those Indians now killed by giving their friends a present of 1000 or 1200 gilders in white strung wampum to wipe their tears. This we offer to Your Honor's consideracon as a business of no mean concern." These condolence missions occurred with increasing regularity after 1700.[46]

The general condolence openings, or "usual Ceremonies of Condolance," so prevalent under William Johnson began to appear in accounts of council openings with some regularity during the 1740s. The ceremony expressed sorrow for the deaths of any individuals on either side of the fire and cleared away obstructions to a good

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[45] O'Cal., *Documents,* 4:21-22, 41; Gov. Fletcher's Speech to Five Nations, Feb. 25, 1693, P.R.O., Kew, England, *C05/1038, IIDH,* reel 4, 25 Feb. 1693, 25 Feb. 1693 (II).

[46] O'Cal., *Documents,* 3: 815-16. An alternate source gives the commissioners' recommendation as follows; "We must condole with them by giving them white-strung wampum to wipe off their tears. This is an important matter." See Albany Officers to Commander in Chief in New York, Dec. 30, 1691, *Calendar of State Papers,* 1689-1692, item 1968, 580*81, IIDH,* reel 4, 30 Dec. 1691. For condolence missions, see O'Cal., *Documents,* 4: 891; Journal of Johannes Bleecker & David Schuyler's Trip to Onondaga, 2-29 June 1701, enclosed in letter of Lt. Gov. Nanfan, Aug. 20,1701, P.R.O., Kew, England, C05/1046, *IIDH,* reel 6, 2O Aug. 1701 (11); Petition of Lawrence Claesen, Oct. 3, 1706, N.Y. Col. Mss., 51: 167b, N.Y. State Arch., *IIPH,* reel 7, 3 Oct. 1706; Min. of Ind. Comm., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 40-41, 202v-203, 252, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, IIDH, reel 9, 5 June 1723, 9 Sept. 1727, and 9 Sept. 1727 (11); Min of Ind. Comm., Ind. Recs., RGIO, vol. 1819, 290v-292v, 295-295v, *IIDH,* reel 10, 21 July 1729, and 27 Sept. 1729; *Peter Wraxall , An Abridgmet of the Indian Affairs Contained in Four Folio Volumes, Transacted in the Colony of New Yorl; from the Year 1678 to the Year 1751,* ed. Charles H. McIlwain, Harvard Historical Studies, no. 21 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1915; reprint, New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), 177. Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen was present on each of these trips.

understanding so that the business of the council could begin. Particular individuals were seldom named. The speaker merely "grieved for the Loss of your People who are Deceased since our Last Meeting," and wiped their listeners' tears. In 1743, the River Indians condoled the "Loss of all your people whether died by the course of nature or killed in war" since their last meeting. By the 1750s, mainly through the influence of William Johnson and his officers, this opening ritual became so formulaic and predictable that it frequently appears in the records only as the "usual Ceremony of Condolance," with little or no explanation.[47] The use of standardized expressions of grief for any and all deaths at the openings of councils during the 1750s and 1760s may have resulted from Johnson's attempt to streamline and rationalize the system of forest diplomacy. By offering general-purpose condolences at the opening of every conference, perhaps he hoped to eliminate some of the delays and difficulties caused by failure to remember to condole specific deaths. He may also have adopted it as the most obvious and efficient way of removing major obstacles to a good understanding during the exigencies of the Seven Years' War. Whatever the reason, these general opening statements of condolence and references to the opening rituals as "Ceremonies of Condolance" clearly became common under Johnson's administration.[48] By the 1740s, conference protocol assumed most of the characteristics recognized in the forest diplomacy of the 1750s and 1760s. Reciprocal gestures of condolence and the ritual drying of tears, clearing of throats, hearts, and paths became customary, and the outlines of treaty protocol are clearly discernible in the records of Anglo-Iroquois conferences from the mid-eighteenth century onward.[49] Interpreters, particularly Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen who served as the

[47] Min. of Ind. Comm., Ind. Recs., RGIO, vol. 1820, 71-72v, 390v, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, IIDH, reel 10, 18 Sept. 1735, reel 13, 2 July 1746; Report to Indians Commissioners, Aug. 9, 1743, Harrnanus Bleecker Papers, Mss. #AV9902: 101, N.Y State Library, Albany. For examples of general openings, see *Johnson Papers, 1:* 62528;3:209,430,475-77,483-85,537-38,761-62;9:174-79,356-58,589,730-33,79697, 13: 428; Hazard, *Minutes, 5:* 476-77, 6:69, 7:68, 508-10, 650-52; O'Cal., *Documentary History, 2:633; Treaties at Harris Ferry & Lancaster, March-May,* 1757(Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1757), 4-5, *IIDH,* reel 20, Mar.-20 May 1757; Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RGIO, vol. 1823, 333-336v, Fed. Arch. Div., Pub]. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, *IIDH,* reel 23, 16-18 Jan. [1759]; Minutes of Indian Affairs in Pennsylvania, MSS 970.5, M665, Croghan's Joumal,April-Nov. 1759, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, IIDH, reel 22,15 Mar. 1758-12 April 1760.

[48] *Johnson Papers,* 3: 442, 761.

[49] O'Cal., *Documents,* 4: 896-908; *Cadwallader Coldeti Papers,* 9 vols., New-York Historical Society *Collections,* vols. 50-56, 67-68 (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1917-1937; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1937), 68: 420; A *Treaty of peace & Friendship Made and Concluded between His Excellency Sir William Keith .... and the Chiefs of the Indians of the Five Nations, At Albany...* (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1722); Procced ings of a Conference at Albany,July 19, 1701, P.R. O., Kew,England,*C05/1053,IIDH,* reel 6, [19 July]1701; Proceedings of a Conference at Albany, 10-21 July 1 701, en c I.in Ietter from John Nanfan, P.R.O., Kew, England, C05/1046, *IIDH,* reel 6, 2O Aug. 1701; Procs. of Conf. at Albany, Aug. 1715, encl. in Gov. Hunter to Board of Trade, P.R.O., Kew, C05/ 1051, *52 IIDH,* reel 8, 29 Sept. 1715; Min. of Ind.Comm., Ind. Recs., RG IO, vol. 1820, 40v-42v, Fed. Arch. Div., Pubi. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in [IDII, reel 10, 8 Sept. 1733, 8 Sept. 1733 (II), and 11 Sept. 1733; Min. of Ind. Comm., vol. 1820, pp. 71-72 v, *IIDH,* reel 10, 18 Sept. 1735, and 20 Sept. 1735; Pennsylvania Provincial Records, 1:90-91, Pennyslvania Historical and Museum Bureau, *IIDH,* reel 11, 28 Sept. 1736; Hazard, Nfin*utes,* 4: 663.

provincial interpreter for New York between 1700 and 1740, undoubtedly played an active role in these developments. His long tenure in office and nearly single-handed control of diplomatic interpreting during those years allowed him to wield considerable influence as an advisor to New York officials and fostered consistency in the practice and protocol of intercultural diplomacy. The deeper understanding of Iroquois culture, language, and methods of doing business acquired by Van der Volgen and other interpreters like Jan Baptist van Eps and Conrad Weiser after 1700, combined with their central role in diplomatic exchanges, also helps to explain the adoption of an essentially Iroquois ritual as the basis for Anglo-Iroquois interaction during the first half of the eighteenth century.

Changes in the needs and interests of Albany and English officials and in the nature of Anglo-Iroquois contacts also played a role in the development of a regularized, intercultural, diplomatic protocol during these years. Before 1690 the primary concern of both the Dutch and the English was trade, which could be handled on a relatively simple diplomatic basis. After 1690 conferences and contacts more frequently focused on defense, alliance, and peace–complex and sensitive matters that required complex and sensitive diplomatic maneuvers. At precisely this point, when circumstances made it expedient for colonial officials to become more familiar with the niceties of Iroquois diplomacy and to apply them, the new breed of more experienced and knowledgeable interpreters entered the diplomatic arena.[50] Undoubtedly, the confluence of these factors accounts for the emergence of a more sophisticated and increasingly standardized forest diplomacy between 1690 and 1740. The role of the interpreters in that development cannot, in any event, be ignored.

Before 1695, the principal interpreters among the Iroquois for the English government in New York were Jacques Cornelisse van Slyck (1640-1690), Hilletie van Olinda, and Amout Cornelissen Viele. Van Slyck was Hilletie van Olinda's brother. He left his mother's people for his father's world at an early age and seems to have attempted to live as much as possible within its boundaries. He married a Dutch woman and pursued his father's calling as a trader. He clearly retained his ties with his mother's people, however, for in the 1670s his Mohawk nephew Wouter lived with him in Schenectady. Interestingly, Wouter could speak very little Dutch. Jacques attempted to keep it that way and "would hardly speak a word of Dutch to him, in order that he might not be able to leave him too soon, and go among the Christians and under Christianity".[51]

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[50] Mary A. Druke, "Iroquois Treaties: Common Forms, Varying Interpretations" in Jennings et al., *Iroquois Diplomacy*, 93; Michael K. Foster, "On Who Spoke First at Iroquois White Councils: An Exercise in the Method of Upstreaming," in Foster, et al., eds., *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press for the Center for the History of the American Indian of the Newberry Library, 1984), 183; Dorothy V. Jones, *License for Empire: Colonialism by Treaty in Early America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, -1982), 30.

[51] *Pearson, Schenectady Pateni,* 17, 188-89, 412; idem, *Genealogies of Schenectady*, 239; idem, *Early Records of the City and County of Albany, and Colony of Rensselaerswyck (1656-1675),* 4 vols. (Albany, N.Y., 1869), vols. 2-4 revd. and ed. A.J.F Van Laer (Albany, 1916-1919),l: 354, 423-24; 3: 85-86, 212, 280-81; Leder, *Indian Records,* 29, 3 1; O'Cal., *Documents,* 3: 815. "Joumal of Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter," in Munsell, *Collections* 2:363.

Van Slyck, Van Olinda, and Viele had certain characteristics in common as interpreters. First, all seem to have been highly skilled linguists and to have interpreted frequently and well. Second, none of them pursued interpreting as a full-time occupation, even though they drew a salary for their services. Finally, although Van Slyck and Van Olinda lived with the Mohawks for much of their childhood and Viele spent considerable time among the Iroquois on his trading voyages as an adult, none of them seems to have absorbed the basics of Iroquois intercultural protocol–either by choice or because of their circumstances or gender. None of them substantially affected the development of forest protocol in the period before 1700.

By the turn of the century, interpreting in the colony was increasingly controlled by two new interpreters who entered the diplomatic arena as a result of the French and Indian attack on Schenectady in early February 1690. As former captives, Jan Baptist van Eps and Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen represented a new type of interpreter that came to dominate the principal interpretive positions in New York and Pennsylvania for the remainder of the colonial period. They acquired their knowledge of Iroquois language and culture through extended periods of residence among the Indians. In addition, they pursued "careers" as interpreters, deriving most of their livelihood from that occupation, instead of engaging in translation as a side line when circumstances required it. As a result, they and those who came after them, seem to have paid particular attention to learning not just the languages of the Iroquois but also their methods of doing business. From their mediating position, they helped transfer and translate this knowledge to their English employers, with the result that during their years as provincial interpreters for New York, "traditional" forest diplomacy began to assume a recognized, standard form for the first time.

The development of forest diplomacy during the first half of the eighteenth century in New York is merely one of the best documented and most public examples of the influence of interpreters on the exchange and amalgamation of Indian and European culture in colonial America. Interpreters participated in all aspects of cultural interaction from the formal, public arena of treaty councils to the private, day-to-day exchanges between spouses and friends. Without the involvement and mediation of skilled, knowledgeable interpreters, Anglo-Iroquois confrontations would have taken a much different form. Certainly, the ability of these men and women to translate disparate, even alien, ideas and to cultivate a good understanding between the English and the Iroquois had a profound impact on the commingling of cultures in colonial New York.

Source: *New York History* (Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association), vol. n^{o} 76, October 1995, number 4.