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**Author**

Ackley, Kristina

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# Renewing Haudenosaunee Ties: Laura Cornelius Kellogg and the Idea of Unity in the Oneida Land Claim

**KRISTINA ACKLEY**

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## RENEWING HAUDENOSAUNEE TIES IN 1925

On 10 October 1925 a ceremony was planned for the scenic fields behind the former tribal school in Oneida, Wisconsin. The event was expected to accomplish a number of goals: it would assert political authority by a group of Oneidas, establish traditional leadership of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy locally, and affirm the Wisconsin Oneida's ties to the Confederacy to tribal and nontribal members.<sup>1</sup> The local newspaper described the ceremony in terms that stressed both the quaint and exotic qualities of this seemingly anachronistic event. "Chanting the sacred installation ritual originated by Hiawatha and Chief Deganawida more than six hundred years ago, Chief George Van Avery, law giver of the Onondagas Indian nation, will raise to Chiefhood at Oneida tomorrow eighteen Oneida descendants of ancient chiefs at what promises to be one of the greatest and most picturesque Indian ceremonials held in Wisconsin since the days when Indian law was supreme. . . . Elaborate preparations, seeking to make the scene as realistic as possible, have been made."<sup>2</sup> The newspaper account is one of several about the Oneida in Wisconsin that appeared in the early twentieth century—stories that conveyed a continual sense of surprise at the ways the tribe had managed to remain different from the surrounding non-Native community even while the overall tone confidently reassured its readers that the Oneida were assimilating into American society.

Newspapers were particularly interested in Native ceremonies, for they captured the public's fascination with what was regarded as the foreign

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Kristina Ackley (Oneida/Bad River Chippewa) teaches Native American studies at Evergreen State College. She received her PhD in American studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo and her MA in American Indian studies from the University of Arizona. She is working on a book that examines nationalism and sovereignty practices in three Oneida communities.

customs of a people situated firmly in the past. A follow-up story on the event paints a glorified tradition that has been vanquished (regrettably for some) by the inexorable forces of American progress and expansion. The Oneidas were viewed as a curiosity for their attempts to raise traditional leaders because the persistence of chiefly titles contests the attempts to assimilate the Oneidas and place these ceremonies firmly in the past. The spiritual and political authority that could be instilled in the community as a result of the ceremony was not mentioned by the newspaper, and most likely did not enter the non-Native public's minds. The following story instead focuses on what the writer viewed as the futile attempt to resurrect past traditions:

After more than half a century of dormance, the sacred fire of the Oneida Indians which symbolizes the tribal life and spirit was rekindled at Oneida village on last Saturday afternoon and evening. Just how long this rekindled flame will continue to burn is doubtful, as the Oneidas have been taken into the tents of the white men and are gradually losing their tribal identity and are assuming the ways and spirit of the invaders of the continent. The traditions and ways of their fathers may still be dear to some of the elder and the idealists of the Oneida tribe, and they may attempt to preserve them, which is well and good, but the great majority of the people of that race have become caught up in the great tide of the white man's ways and seem content to be borne along.

However, there is a nice sentiment [in] the idea [of] "rekindling the sacred fire" and preserving the traditions of the tribe, and it is hoped for history's sake, that the spirit can be perpetuated among all those who are proud of their history.<sup>3</sup>

If one looks beyond the "vanishing Indian" imagery and paternalistic tone, the newspaper articles can be read another way. The act of raising the chiefs can be viewed as a counternarrative to colonialism, a way to complicate the stark dichotomy of tribal persistence versus extinction. The newspaper viewed the Oneida as nearly assimilated and did not anticipate the possibility that tribal traditions could coexist with modernity. The ceremony contested this assumption.

The ceremony can also be seen as a way to talk about Oneidas *in* Wisconsin rather than Oneidas *of* Wisconsin, as it illustrates the ancestral ties with the Iroquois Confederacy in spite of Oneida removal to Wisconsin. It documents, however unintentionally, a continued struggle over how an Oneida community positioned itself relative to a larger Oneida Nation. It illustrates one stage of resistance to the outside world dictating the terms by which the Oneidas could identify themselves. This article examines the long-term effect the ceremony's organizers had on the resurgence of the Longhouse in Wisconsin Oneida life and highlights the idea of Haudenosaunee kinship even in the midst of extreme disharmony.

The raising of chiefs at the Oneida Reservation in Wisconsin was a critical step toward reclaiming the traditional political system of the Longhouse. It

was an event that marked the Wisconsin Oneida Chiefs' Council's partial reemergence and placed the chiefs in a position to assume more authority in land-tenure issues. The ceremony diminished some of the distance between Wisconsin and the Haudenosaunee homeland in New York, literally and figuratively. Members from the Wisconsin community would meet with Onondaga and other Six Nations people who resided in New York for meetings and ceremonial events. Kinship ties were recognized and strengthened during these times, as the previously bounded definition of Haudenosaunee identity was expanded, if briefly, to include the Wisconsin Oneida. It countered a belief held by some Oneida and other Haudenosaunee that those tribal members who had left the aboriginal territory were thereby excluded from participation in Haudenosaunee politics and spiritual life. Ceremonies to raise traditional chiefs signified an explicit acceptance of the Wisconsin Oneida.

Though the Oneidas brought to their new homes many of their belief systems of community well-being and kinship relationships that had existed when they removed to Wisconsin in the early nineteenth century, their hereditary chiefs and political system were in flux. Once in Wisconsin they did not openly practice the Longhouse cyclical ceremonies.<sup>4</sup> The 1925 ceremony to raise chiefs was therefore something of a novelty to tribal and nontribal members. The event was well publicized, and preparations were made in anticipation of a large number of people. Seating would be available for Natives and non-Natives, and following the ceremony a dinner with corn soup, Iroquois social dancing, and a performance by the Menominee Indian band were planned.<sup>5</sup>

The actual ceremony was more subdued than the carnivalesque event the newspaper had advertised, and the number of participants was closer to hundreds rather than the thousands the organizers had predicted. The ceremony did not go as smoothly as planned. The weather was not favorable. Some Turtle clan members were delayed. Due to a mix-up that they blamed on the postal service, several newly raised Wisconsin Oneida chiefs were without the proper attire expected of them, and instead dressed in what one disappointed observer called "unpicturesque garb."<sup>6</sup> Haudenosaunee people did travel to Wisconsin (properly dressed in regalia, according to the newspaper) to raise the nine chiefs—three for each of the Oneida turtle, bear, and wolf clans—and nine subchiefs. A social gathering was held afterward and was attended by Haudenosaunee people and tribal members of the nearby Menominee, Stockbridge-Munsee, Brothertown, and Winnebago reservations. The number in attendance at the social was larger than those at the ceremony.

Overall, the crowd of Oneidas and Haudenosaunee people was relatively small, given that the attempt to validate traditional Longhouse political offices was not supported by all Wisconsin Oneida community members. After a period of repression of Longhouse beliefs and practices carried out by federal agents and pro-American citizenship groups of Oneidas in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the Wisconsin Oneida government was largely presented as Christian and progressive, and therefore not likely to reassert traditional political offices.<sup>7</sup> After the ceremony the chiefs were not accorded any official

power by the Wisconsin Oneida tribal government or by the federal government, though they held roles in Haudenosaunee politics in the next several years, and their ancestors would play important roles in the subsequent land-claims litigation. Nonetheless, it was important. During the 1925 ceremony, the Wisconsin community was entrusted with wampum. Organizers worked closely with leaders at Onondaga, the Confederacy's traditional seat, in nominating individual Wisconsin Oneidas to these roles. In 1933, after the deaths of several of these chiefs, representatives from Onondaga again came to Wisconsin to raise chiefs.<sup>8</sup>

As its description in the newspaper seems to attest, it also was seen by many as a spectacle intended for an outside audience, rather than the sacred spiritual ceremony that it presumably should have been. After all, if it really was an important event to the Oneidas, why publicize it in the non-Native newspaper? Why invite the non-Native public, when they typically weren't allowed in the Longhouse for such events? Longhouse ceremonies are closed events, bounded from outsiders, after all. Who was this ceremony for?

#### UNDERSTANDING UNITY AS A PROCESS IN ONEIDA DISCOURSE

In 1925 and for many years afterward some Oneidas argued that the event was nothing more than a way to bestow political legitimacy on Laura "Minnie" Cornelius Kellogg, one of its main organizers. She was an important leader in Oneida and national Native American politics, and a gifted orator and author with an ability to articulate a broader sense of Oneida identity in an inspired and persuasive manner.<sup>9</sup> Kellogg was not universally respected or trusted by her contemporaries; she was seen as a polarizing influence, and feelings about her ran strongly in either the affirmative or the negative.

Kellogg was arrested several times on various charges such as impersonating an Indian agent and fraud; however, crimes were never proven, and charges were always dropped.<sup>10</sup> These arrests did provide ammunition to her supporters and detractors, as those who supported her saw her as unjustly persecuted because of her convictions, particularly her criticism of Indian Service officials and non-Natives in general. Others saw the charges as validating their belief that she was defrauding her people as a charlatan, one who was big on promises that she ultimately could not deliver. Ultimately, her unsuccessful attempts to settle a Six Nations land claim and purchase a former school on her home reservation in Oneida, Wisconsin, for the purposes of opening a cannery and other businesses for the tribe gave her a tarnished reputation.<sup>11</sup>

Because Kellogg leaves a controversial legacy, it is hard to separate the 1925 ceremony from the dissidence and political infighting that accompanied her efforts. However, her emphasis on Native leadership and her ideas for the solutions to the problems of Indian people have proven to be remarkably prescient. She had a great deal to say about policy, the conditions of Indian people, and ideas about reform. Her efforts on the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's behalf are of particular interest for the way one can link them to a sustained line of thinking that Kellogg received from elders. This argument

outlived her and illustrates that ideas of community and the Oneida Nation are based on frameworks of political rights, enduring ideas about unity, and a fluid sense of place. Kellogg may prove to be more of a visionary than most thought; certainly she was more vocal and received more attention than others during and after her lifetime.<sup>12</sup>

It is impossible to divorce Kellogg from her tribal context, for she saw herself as a Wisconsin Oneida member of the Six Nations Confederacy. Her actions can be viewed against the backdrop of the contemporary Oneida land claim to understand how Wisconsin Oneidas went and continue to go about reconstructing a Six Nations, or Haudenosaunee, identity in public and private discourse. The 1925 ceremony is important in this regard. The event's organizers stressed the idea of a grand Six Nations Confederacy, inextricably linked to the land claim in New York State. It stressed the unification of all Oneidas and highlighted the primary role that the Wisconsin Oneida Chiefs' Council was to have over land issues.<sup>13</sup> An elected political council may have best addressed political day-to-day issues, organizers intimated, but questions regarding land were only to be addressed by traditional Longhouse leaders. Kellogg's actions contribute to a theory of unity in Oneida consciousness and a broader understanding of Oneida nationalism. It is an idea that unity among three Oneida communities leads to the possibility of a strong Oneida Nation. Unity and a belief in nationhood stress that the Wisconsin Oneida are not just political successors to the land claim in New York but also are cultural and spiritual heirs.

A closer examination of the Oneida language gives insights into the process of unity, as opposed to an end state of being in which all parties are in harmony. The Oneida land claim may not be the most obvious place to look for unity, given that the three Oneida communities' official positions are extremely antagonistic toward one another today and in light of the depth of anti-Indianism that the land claim has revealed. But it seems worthwhile to explore further and try very hard not to dismiss the concept of Oneida unity, given the ongoing discourse about unity among the Oneida. To understand more fully how unity can be seen among differing groups of people, the term must be redefined based on Oneida ways of knowing to comprehend how ongoing and continual dissension is reconciled within a unified Oneida Nation. Without a belief in unity, there is no place for the Wisconsin Oneida in a larger Oneida Nation in the homeland.

*Skana*, or the *Onayote?a-ká* (Oneida) word for "peace," does not simply mean the absence of conflict. It means fine and calm as well and describes more of a process than a continual and limited state of being. The Oneida believe that *skana* is something that was sought when the Peacemaker came among the people in the mid-fifteenth century. In a state of extreme conflict and warring among nations, the Peacemaker brought *ka?nikuli-yó*, or "the Good Mind," to the Haudenosaunee. In accordance with the Peacemaker's teachings, *skana* means to come to a good mind. It means to come to terms with dissenters and create a good way for all. Consensus decision making, rather than majority rule, is what traditional Haudenosaunee leaders say they hope to attain. Consensus does not mean unanimity, and unity does not

mean that everyone agrees. It includes recognition that joining together as a community brings strength. Haudenosaunee nations that persist and thrive in spite of the onslaught of colonization are nations that can successfully incorporate dissension. Unity is thus a process that recognizes a continuing thread of thought that has outlasted colonial efforts to assimilate, erase, and decimate Native identity.<sup>14</sup>

Haudenosaunee people have referred to the *kaʔnikuli-yó* as a discipline, rather than a state of mind.<sup>15</sup> It is an ideal toward which the polity strives. “Eyes that can see clearly, ears that can hear well, a mouth that can speak without the throat clogging with tears or anger, and a heart and body that function without pain, these permit the Good Mind, and the clear mind, to make the right choices for the future. A good mind, working well, will always choose peace. It will always seek peace. It will find a way [to] join with other minds to create peace.”<sup>16</sup>

The *kaʔnikuli-yó* provides a framework in which to discuss dissension and unity in the context of cultural resilience and nation building. For the Oneida, *skana* is closely related to unity and the rebuilding of the Oneida Nation through reclamation of its homeland. Kellogg lamented the loss of unity and wrote, “we have no consensus of opinion, no national judgment, no collective action.”<sup>17</sup> She argued for the strength in the collective and went on to describe how one tribal leader had told her that his tribe as well as all Native people needed “peace instead of fear in our minds.”<sup>18</sup> In her writings, Kellogg also tied the idea of community power explicitly to economic development, a belief that can be seen in contemporary Oneida, Wisconsin, as current tribal leaders have sought to achieve the *kaʔnikuli-yó* in similar ways. As one example of this reclamation of an *Onayoteʔa-ká* belief system, the Wisconsin Oneida leadership in 2007 publicly works for “a nation of strong families built on *tsiʔniyukwalihoʔta* [our kinds of ways] and a strong economy.”<sup>19</sup> This adherence to a belief in unity (but not necessarily harmony) is more understandable when one considers that the Oneida continued to maintain an outward political ideology as opposed to an insular one throughout American attempts to assimilate them and terminate the federal trust responsibility to the Oneida. This speaks to the community’s ability to reconcile dissent within it.

The concepts of peace and the Good Mind include the beliefs in the interrelatedness of all things and the strength in unity.<sup>20</sup> Individual Oneida tribal members speak of these concepts in daily exchanges with one another, particularly as they imagine the healing of differences among the three Oneida communities and the possibility for one Oneida Nation. These narratives of nationhood are historically and culturally situated around recognition of kinship among the three communities. The persistence of this idea of unity and peace throughout periods of militant and extreme conflict is something that must be taken into account if a more complete understanding of the land claim is to be achieved.

## THE WISCONSIN ONEIDA'S ROLE IN THE LAND CLAIM

The Wisconsin Oneidas have long maintained that they are heirs of a land base that dates prior to the American Revolution, when the Oneida Nation was one of the most powerful nations in the Northeast. Oneida aboriginal land was approximately six million acres and extended from the Pennsylvania border to the St. Lawrence River, from the shores of Lake Ontario to the western foothills of the Adirondack Mountains.<sup>21</sup> Although most Haudenosaunee sided with the British, the Oneidas actively supported the colonists in the Revolution. Contemporary Oneida leaders are careful to note the assistance that their ancestors gave George Washington at Valley Forge when they speak with federal leaders. It is such a central part of Wisconsin Oneida identity in particular that until the 1990s the official tribal letterhead incorporated this information on its logo. For its part, the New York community, in a generous display of support, offered a substantial monetary contribution to a planned Revolutionary War museum at Valley Forge.<sup>22</sup> This assistance to the colonists prevented the Iroquois Confederacy from asserting a united resistance to the colonists and therefore meant that Oneida support was crucial to the American cause, contributing to a rationale that the Oneidas were “friends” of the United States, and that they should be rewarded for their loyalty.<sup>23</sup>

After the Revolutionary War the United States recognized the Oneida's importance, and in the 1784 Treaty of Fort Stanwix the American government promised that the Oneidas would be secure “in the possession of the lands on which they are settled.”<sup>24</sup> The United States twice reaffirmed this promise, in the 1789 Treaty of Fort Harmar and in the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua.<sup>25</sup> These three treaties are what the Oneida base much of their aboriginal land rights on. Additionally, each Oneida community also signed separate treaties, with a variety of Oneida groups signing on the nation's behalf (arguably without the authority to do so); but it is accepted that representatives from a unified Oneida Nation signed the first three treaties referred to above and thus derive a majority of their land rights from them.<sup>26</sup>

Some question whether there ever was a truly unified Oneida Nation, given that divisions had already beset the tribe at the time of their first interactions with Euro-Americans. This is often part of a larger critique of how consensus is viewed by those who study the Confederacy. Many scholars viewed the Confederacy's inability to stand united in the Revolutionary War as unusual and extreme. Mary Druke challenged this idea by arguing that noncompliance within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in the period that led up to the Revolutionary War was normative as opposed to a sign of the Confederacy's imminent collapse, but other scholars have continued to see this period as the end of the Confederacy.<sup>27</sup> For the most part, however, contemporary Oneida have acknowledged the unity that prevailed in the historic Oneida Nation in spite of differences, in much the same way that the Confederacy was able to provide a united force through the Peacemaker's teachings.<sup>28</sup> Today there are three Oneida communities (in New York, Canada, and Wisconsin) that participate in negotiations with the federal government and the state of New York to settle the aboriginal land claim.<sup>29</sup>



This Oneida land-rights discourse makes particular use of the *idea* of the Oneida Nation. The Oneida rely on transhistoric discourses of unity and the adapted lived experience to construct a space in which to define home and nation. Each Oneida community contributes significant strengths to a unified Oneida Nation, much as each of the Six Nations brings its individual power and authority to the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. For the Oneida, a political context of unity stresses the authority that each community has, which has been used to broker settlements and ensure a voice in the community's political process.

Unity across geographical distance has been difficult to accomplish, to say the least. Both the Wisconsin and Thames governments have tried to establish a physical presence in the claim area, coupled with individual tribal members who move to the area (members from the Thames community have found work as language teachers in Oneida, New York, for example). This connection that the Oneidas have to places that are of great geographic and emotional distance from where they reside speaks to the ways in which they participate in fluid and circumscribed exchanges around the idea of "homeland."

The 1925 ceremony also underscored the Oneida people's mobility, which complicates a static view of Native Americans as place-bound. Without diminishing the ties to an aboriginal homeland (such meetings strengthen feelings of connection to it), travel between Oneida communities continues a well-established pattern of movement. Meetings that require people to travel from their homes in the traditional territory (what is now New York and Canada) to Wisconsin, and vice versa, continue to be an integral part of traditional Longhouse life for the Oneida in Wisconsin.<sup>30</sup> Direct participation in these events often leads to a profound and significant experience that deepens ties to other Oneidas and Haudenosaunee people. As Audra Simpson points out, travel has only been recently envisioned as a site for identity formation and resistance to colonialism.<sup>31</sup> Among the Oneida and Haudenosaunee people, travel plays an important role in understanding the concept of unity.

It was while I participated in some of these travels and resided in the Oneida aboriginal territory in the late 1990s that I, a Wisconsin Oneida member, began to wonder about what people meant when they talked about unity. Wisconsin Oneidas often talked about their ties to the homeland in New York and believed it was well within the realm of possibility that they could return. Land-claim negotiations with New York State seemed to speak to the possibility of a limited role that the Wisconsin Oneidas could play in New York State. Whether they ought to often relies on whether someone has a more restricted definition of Oneida identity rather than an expansive one. In any case, I was surprised at how easily I was accepted as kin by Oneidas from New York and Canada because the New York Oneida community's formal discourse is hostile toward the return of Wisconsin members. This analysis is partially situated out of that recognition of the seemingly contradictory discourse around unity and the Wisconsin Oneidas' link to the homeland. Kellogg's life is highlighted not because she spoke for all Oneidas; during her lifetime she was the subject of much controversy and frequently found herself in the minority of opinion. It may be that her ideas appeal more to

later generations; regardless, she is essential when examining the discourse of Oneida unity in the land claim.

Federal courts in the late twentieth century have consistently ruled that the Wisconsin Oneida are included as political successors to the Oneida Nation and therefore have a role in the land-claim negotiations. This does not in and of itself legitimate a Wisconsin Oneida role in the homeland, however.<sup>32</sup> A discussion of how the Wisconsin Oneida fit into a reconstituted Oneida Nation includes the idea of unity among Oneida communities and the Six Nations Confederacy. Unity connotes a tie with the Haudenosaunee people and links the Wisconsin Oneida to the aboriginal homeland.

Treaties, tribal divisions, and a concerted effort on the part of New York State to gain title to Oneida lands led to the loss of their aboriginal territory. By 1902, the once vast Oneida homeland had been reduced to a thirty-two-acre parcel. An Oneida family by the name of Honyoust had purportedly mortgaged this remaining land to Patrick Boylan prior to 1902. His widow, Julia, tried to foreclose on it in 1903, even though Oneida people continued to live there. The Oneidas and other Six Nations people protested the planned foreclosure. After Julia Boylan gained a state-court order that forcibly ejected the remaining Oneidas, the United States brought suit on the Oneidas' behalf to reclaim the land. In 1920 federal courts eventually ruled in *U.S. v. Boylan* that the land was Oneida land, guaranteed by federal treaty, and could not be sold or mortgaged without federal approval. Given the absence of federal government approval for the individual Oneidas' conveyances, the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld the US District Court of the Northern District of New York's "decree restoring the ejected Indians to possession."<sup>33</sup> The *Boylan* case and its subsequent affirmation of the reservation (if only thirty-two acres of it) and accompanying recognition of those who resided there as members of a federally recognized Oneida tribe inspired a great deal of action on behalf of the claim. It fostered dreams of a unified Oneida Nation from some activists who resided outside the Oneida aboriginal territory.

#### Laura "Minnie" Cornelius Kellogg: Creating a Place for the Wisconsin Oneida in the Haudenosaunee Confederacy

Laura "Minnie" Cornelius Kellogg was often at odds with the Wisconsin Oneida's official government and with many of her contemporaries who were active in national politics. Her "questionable ethics" and "bizarre involvements" led to a contested place in Haudenosaunee memories and perhaps a devaluation of her contributions to the Oneida land claim.<sup>34</sup> Kellogg had a high national profile and was well known outside and inside her community. She was born on the Oneida Reservation outside Green Bay, Wisconsin, on 10 September 1880, and though raised on the reservation, she was educated in predominantly non-Native schools and was active in national Native rights organizations and local issues. She married a non-Native lawyer, Orrin J. Kellogg, who became involved in many of her projects. Kellogg had a passion for the Oneida land claim and the injustice that it represented. She came

to see the land claim as both barrier and gateway to the restoration of the Oneida Nation. For much of her adult life she worked for a land claim that she wouldn't ultimately see resolved and constructed a definition of a unified Oneida Nation around land from which she was alienated. However, the foundation that she laid and the framework she left made a substantial impact on the contemporary litigation, which resulted in a favorable federal court ruling in 1985.<sup>35</sup>

She was an anomaly among most of her contemporaries. At the inaugural meeting of the Society of American Indians, the first Native-run, intertribal Indian rights political organization, she proclaimed, "I am not the new Indian, I am the *old Indian* adjusted to *new conditions*."<sup>36</sup> She saw strength in the unity of Indian people and often relied on the words of her elders, in direct opposition to a general feeling among many educated Native Americans that assimilation and a reliance on the individual represented the best path for success. In 1913 during a speech at the Society of American Indians' annual meeting, she argued explicitly for the essential value of a core "Indian" identity that was in no way inferior to the education offered by white America: "There are old Indians who have never seen the inside of a classroom whom I consider far more educated than the young Indian with his knowledge of Latin and algebra. There is something behind the superb dignity and composure of the old bringing up; there is something in the discipline of the Red Man which has given him a place in the literature and art of this country, there to remain separate and distinct in his proud active bearing against all time, against all change."<sup>37</sup>

This emphasis on the value of the knowledge of elders and "the old bringing up" was a central component of Kellogg's arguments about the unity of all Native people, particularly the Iroquois. She placed this knowledge of past traditions and values firmly into modernity in order to frame her rights as an Oneida. Many of her speeches and writings display a sense of dissatisfaction with the Native people's situation, and she clearly offered solutions that respected tribalism and community knowledge. Fairly brimming with ideas about community empowerment that ran counter to the dominant push for assimilation, she was a political outsider in her community and may have seen the land claim as a way to have a stronger voice in a newly reconstituted Oneida Nation.

Kellogg may also have seen her active role in politics as a way to continue the work of previous generations of Oneida women, who were clan mothers and the protectors of the nation's culture and identity.<sup>38</sup> In a community with strong Oneida women leaders and a culture that places a great deal of value on family knowledge and in which leadership is nurtured and recognized through certain family lines, she came from a respected lineage. Her mother was Celicia Bread Cornelius, a clan mother who was well regarded by the community.<sup>39</sup> Celicia was the youngest daughter of Chief Daniel Bread, one of the leaders under which the Oneidas came to Wisconsin. Celicia's grandfather was Skenandoah, an Oneida leader during the American Revolutionary War who at his death in 1816 had accumulated great wealth and land in New York State from his role as a pinetree, or civil, chief. Respected more by

outsiders than by the majority of Oneidas at the time of his death because he was ultimately seen as too accommodating to the Americans, he was nonetheless another powerful leader in Kellogg's family.<sup>40</sup> Daniel Bread's and Celicia Cornelius's deaths were remarked on by local Wisconsin newspapers; Cornelius was "the last royal mother of the Oneidas," and Bread was the "very old chieftain and the fire of tribal life."<sup>41</sup> Joseph Powless, an Oneida contemporary of Bread, also characterized him as "the greatest and most important man of all Oneidas as well as among the white people."<sup>42</sup> Bread and Cornelius's deaths were seen by many to mark the end of an era, the end of a concrete tie to the homeland in New York, and left a sense of finality for the Oneidas' presence in Wisconsin. In this sense, it may seem contradictory that Kellogg, their direct descendant, represents a movement to recapture this Oneida homeland and work toward Oneida unification. On further examination, however, one can see how her efforts continued the family tradition of working toward nation and community, even down to the political enemies she created and encountered in her life.

Today, Kellogg is remembered more for the controversy she created than for her accomplishments in Haudenosaunee politics.<sup>43</sup> A great deal of the land-claim litigation grew out of her work, and she, along with several others, can be credited with fostering what she called an "Indian renaissance." In an interview with a local newspaper Kellogg stressed that Native people could do better for themselves and argued, "Not being satisfied that anyone has done for them what they did for themselves under their own civilization, they have awakened from a lethargy."<sup>44</sup> She differed from her contemporaries in that she sought to rely on tribal self-sufficiency in contrast to the individualism that activists like Carlos Montezuma advocated. Instead of dividing lands in severalty to individual Indians and granting citizenship to tribal members, Kellogg believed in strengthening the tribe through economic self-development, and in many ways anticipated several proposals of the 1930s "Indian New Deal."<sup>45</sup>

In 1920 she published *Our Democracy and the American Indian: A Comprehensive Presentation of the Indian Situation as It Is Today*, a wide-ranging treatise on the problems that faced Indian Country and her ideas for solutions. In the book she articulated her ideas about unity and the power of the local community. In times of stress, Kellogg argued, it was accepted tradition among Haudenosaunee people that a unified front was stronger than a divided one. The Peacemaker had brought this teaching to them. This idea of unity in the face of a common enemy was important, given the federal government's power and control over the lives of Native people. Kellogg criticized the wardship status of Indians while she underscored the differences in power between the two when she wrote, "The force of the Bureau to ameliorate the sentence of its pets, or to heighten the suffering of its enemies can hardly be estimated."<sup>46</sup> Her book was a call to Indian people to recognize ties to one another in order to combat American paternalism and colonialism.

The book's central concept is based on economic empowerment through an Indian industrial village plan, or what she called "Lolomi."<sup>47</sup> Her ideas about relying on tribal knowledge and the community as the unit best equipped to meet the people's needs were not solely based on

Oneida beliefs; she used as one example the Mormon work ethic, though she was careful to note in a Senate hearing that she was not an “advocate” of their religious beliefs, just their industrial ones.<sup>48</sup> Her assertion that tribes could still meet their members’ needs ran counter to pro-assimilation forces that saw the tribe’s persistence as the main reason for the problems of Indian people. Get rid of the backward thinking of tribal life, many reasoned, and Native Americans would assimilate into American society and culture as full members.

Her detractors or those who pushed assimilation for the Oneida did not dissuade Kellogg. She continued to talk about the value of community and tribal traditions, particularly in *Our Democracy and the American Indians*. In it, Kellogg discussed her awakening to a broader sense of Indian identity, specifically, that she was not alone in her critiques of American society and that there was a base of support from which she could draw to advance her ideas further. She called this support the “fraternity,” and it is clear that she felt there was strength in this group, for they were only strengthened by what she called “exile and a ‘reign of terror.’”<sup>49</sup>

#### KELLOGG’S CONTESTED LEGACY: MEMBERSHIP IN THE SIX NATIONS CLUB AND RECLAIMING A HOMELAND

Kellogg had long been aware of outstanding Oneida land claims and told a reporter, “In my childhood, I remember having heard the old folks frequently refer to the great inheritance, the big claim they had left in New York state. . . . But like many another poor relation that is heir with many others to a large estate, we had not the means at our disposal to fight for our heritage.”<sup>50</sup> The 1920 ruling *U.S. v. Boylan* became one more tool by which Kellogg hoped to fight for Oneida land rights. In *Boylan*, the court found that, despite the removal of the majority of Oneidas from the homeland, the New York Oneida still remained a federally recognized tribe, and therefore New York State courts had no jurisdiction in disposing of the tribe’s property without the consent of the United States.<sup>51</sup> This confirmed a view among many members of the three Oneida communities that litigation was the best means for the return of land. As envisioned by Kellogg and other Haudenosaunee people, a legal strategy that relied on the federal government’s trust responsibility was charted that subsequent generations would follow.<sup>52</sup>

In 1920 Kellogg presented her ideas to the Six Nations Confederacy Council at Onondaga and gained the support of Tadadaho (George Thomas), the head of the Confederacy. In this meeting she called for financial support for advancing the claim in federal courts. Kellogg, along with other Oneida land-claims movement members, conceived of a highly controversial way of funding the litigation: they collected money directly from members in every Haudenosaunee community, not just in New York but also those in Canada, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin.<sup>53</sup> In this way, she seemed to follow a business model of looking for investors to fund the litigation of the claim—these “investors” would then share in any reward. Those who protested and refused to pay did so mainly because they did not think the litigation would succeed,

and they believed (correctly) that they would share in any claim regardless of any money they had contributed. Though initially trusted by many people, the fundraising ultimately cast Kellogg in an unfavorable light.

The money collected ostensibly was to hire lawyers who would gain a sizeable restored territory and an economic base for the Haudenosaunee. Kellogg appealed to members not only from Oneida communities but also from all of the Six Nations. She was sure that with a large land base, the Haudenosaunee could again assert its sovereignty in ways unequaled in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A central part of this plan would reposition the Wisconsin Oneida as full Haudenosaunee members. She underscored this when she set up her headquarters for the land claim at Onondaga territory in New York, traditionally the seat for the Six Nations Confederacy.<sup>54</sup> She did not distinguish between an Oneida and a Six Nations land claim.

Funds were obtained from Haudenosaunee people by a clever appeal to their dreams of a large financial award and with an emphasis on a renewed sense of pride in their continued existence as culturally distinct tribal members. Savvy Haudenosaunee political leaders and American courts and congressmen affirmed for many Haudenosaunee their belief in a continued sovereignty and political will that had endured in spite of colonialism. With this continued existence came a responsibility. Kellogg emphasized this when she spoke specifically to other Native people in *Our Democracy and the American Indian* and reminded them that simply existing was not enough: "If I did not believe there were enough left of my red clan to make it worthwhile to say the last word, I should not speak. If I did not believe enough of you remain staunch to our ancestral standards of truth, to stand the ugly facts that concern us now, I should not speak."<sup>55</sup> At a pivotal time when the continued existence of Native people was in no way assured, Kellogg and others sought to solidify the Oneida's financial support and other Haudenosaunee in order to regain the homeland. She argued for a Haudenosaunee sovereignty that was based on treaties and a nation-to-nation relationship among the Confederacy. In this way she participated in a broader movement to reclaim Haudenosaunee rights, led by individuals such as Deskaheh, whose 1924 memorandum, *The Red Man's Appeal for Justice*, argued for the Six Nations to be recognized by the League of Nations.<sup>56</sup>

Those members who were able to give money in support of a reclaimed Six Nations homeland received a receipt that showed that they were eligible to share in any claim, and those who did not give money were told that they would likely be left out of any financial settlement. Dues from each person ranged in amount, and it is probable that the funds given were substantial for many people from these modest communities. It is telling that so many pinned their hopes on the reward Kellogg and others offered, and many of their descendants still retain the receipts and enrollment cards as evidence of both the land claim's continuity and Kellogg's avarice.<sup>57</sup> One Oneida from the Wisconsin community recalls, "My mom used to talk all the time about that Minnie Kellogg! Always asking for twenty-five cents here and there—and in that time, that was a lot of money!"<sup>58</sup> That seems to be the general consensus on Kellogg—that she constantly searched for funds for her many projects.

Kellogg and her contemporaries also took notice of those who resided away from the reservation and offered them membership in a Haudenosaunee claim and identity. "The Indians are rising. There is no danger of a massacre, however. They are merely at war on the phrase, 'Lo, the poor Indian.' They aim to make it read, 'Lo, the rich Indian.'" This was how a newspaper began a report on a meeting of a group of about eighty Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Brothertown members in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Led by Kellogg and her husband, Orrin J. Kellogg, these urban Indians organized the Six Nations Club of Milwaukee in 1923 in order to fund the claim and assure that they would share in any financial settlements from the land claim. Each member that Kellogg and her husband recruited pledged to contribute \$1.25 a month to support the work on their behalf.<sup>59</sup>

Through her efforts in many Haudenosaunee communities, Kellogg did more than solicit funds for the land-claim effort. She also articulated a vision for Haudenosaunee unity and collaboration. She had an expansive definition of who was considered to be Haudenosaunee and included potential members outside New York State in her talks, such as the Wisconsin Oneida, the Stockbridge-Munsee, and Brothertown tribes in Wisconsin; the Cayuga of Oklahoma; and Six Nations members in Canada. On 10 October 1922, the *Fond du Lac Reporter* reported on such a meeting: "Addressing an audience of more than two hundred Indians, members of the Stockbridge, Brothertown and Oneida tribes, at Quinney [Wisconsin], Sunday afternoon, Mrs. Laura Cornelius Kellogg made an impassioned appeal for unity among tribes in order that they may present a united front in their demands for their rights in New York State."<sup>60</sup>

Some viewed her effort to broaden her appeal to the largest possible membership as simply a way for her to increase the money raised. Perhaps because of this, many of Kellogg's contemporaries and federal officials reacted to the fundraising with alarm and suspicion. They monitored her activities and solicited statements from Oneidas and other Six Nations tribal members and argued that the fundraising was illegal and put a significant hardship on individuals. Stories were told, and continue to be repeated today, that many families lost significant amounts of money, and that some Oneidas were left penniless after they gave money to the Six Nations clubs.<sup>61</sup> Because the litigation was not successful after *Boylan*, many felt duped at having given money. Opposing groups of Oneidas began a concerted effort to stop the fundraising and undermine the authority of Kellogg and her call for increased unity among the Haudenosaunee through a land claim.

The fundraising organizers fought back. At a 1923 meeting at Oneida, Wisconsin, traditional Longhouse members and land-claim activists passed a resolution that denounced as "traitors" those who sought to cast doubt on the land claim and the fundraising. They alleged a direct link between their political enemies and unfavorable stories that had been placed in a local newspaper, some of which reported that families lost their homes because of efforts to keep up with their payments to fund the claim, and attributed such accusations to outside forces. Oneidas who collaborated with these outsiders did so in the interest of the dominant culture and personal

self-interest, Kellogg and others argued. The resolution referred to these interests and linked their fellow Oneida critics to a concerted and centralized campaign to discredit them: "Whereas, we have met with considerable and intense propaganda financed by New York politicians to defeat the solidarity and self-determination of the Six Nations through the unscrupulous and treacherous individuals among our people, it is hereby Resolved that any and all Indians who under any subterfuge or another are in collusion with the unseen hand, be denounced as traitors who should be properly punished." When asked what they meant by "punished," Eli Skenandore, a Wisconsin Oneida Chiefs' Council spokesman, answered, "That is for the Six Nations Council to decide."<sup>62</sup>

Kellogg and her supporters thus also used their vision of unity in a manner that tried to control dissent. The Oneidas clearly did not speak with one mind in regard to the land claim and were in an ongoing struggle for legitimacy and authority. Kellogg, in her role as "executive secretary of the Six Nations" promoted another ceremony in 1933 to raise chiefs by alluding to unnamed individual Oneidas who apparently called themselves "Chief." She stressed that the group she represented was the only recognized voice of the Oneida Chiefs' Council and the representatives in the Six Nations Confederacy.<sup>63</sup> She stated that "if any group of people want to elect officers according to the white man's rules no one can stop them. . . . But they cannot be called Oneida chiefs."<sup>64</sup>

In this context, the ceremonies to raise Oneida chiefs at Wisconsin can also be viewed as a way to assert control over who could speak for the Wisconsin Oneidas. Membership in the traditional political system, rather than place or geography, would unify all Oneida people. In her efforts to revive the Chiefs' Council and Longhouse in Wisconsin, Kellogg tied Oneida traditionalism to the aboriginal homeland in ways that still manifest in contemporary Oneida politics.<sup>65</sup> By recognizing how important the land and treaty rights were in the formation of a broader Wisconsin Oneida and Haudenosaunee identity, she insured that the land's consideration would be inextricably linked to Oneida rights and responsibilities.

Land claims became an important way to assert sovereignty. After the death of traditional Chief Alfred Powless in 1932, William Skenandore said, "My mother, who is now 85, my grandfather and the grandfather of Chief [Alfred] Powless taught us to memorize the words of the treaty. . . . They were handed down to us with the recommendation that we hold enforcement as a sacred duty. Powless so regarded it. So do we who are left."<sup>66</sup> Treaty annuities were important symbols of their rights, and the Wisconsin Oneida refused a lump sum for them in 1911 and in the late twentieth century.<sup>67</sup> The belief in holding the federal government accountable for ensuring Haudenosaunee land rights was an important avenue the activists used in their attempts to regain their homeland.

Though these arguments were ultimately to bring a measure of success to all three Oneida communities, during Kellogg's lifetime the land claim was extremely divisive. Disputes over the tactics of Kellogg and her supporters eventually led to the removal of Tadadaho, the Haudenosaunee's spiritual



head, at Onondaga. He had been a vocal supporter of her.<sup>68</sup> She was viewed as nothing less than a fraud by a number of her fellow Oneidas.

### DISSENSION AND ONEIDA UNITY

It is hard to understand how someone who caused so much tension and ultimately is remembered as a symbol of Oneida tribal factionalism can have so much to say about unity. Haudenosaunee people and outside scholars have tended to stress the dissension that surrounded her for much of her life and argue that she “helped factionalize every Iroquois reservation.”<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, she constructed relationships among Haudenosaunee people that endured as culturally, politically, and spiritually distinct. In order to view her work in this way, differences in the Oneida communities must be reevaluated, particularly in light of how many contemporary Oneida simultaneously deny Kellogg a place as an important historical leader while they still adhere to many of her ideas about the land claim.

Kellogg envisioned the homeland as an open space rather than a bounded one when she mapped how the Wisconsin Oneida would participate in the Oneida Nation territory recovery. Many contemporary Oneida people who have rejected her do so because she engendered strong feelings against her, particularly because of her questionable financial tactics. In this line of thinking, difference is a negative social force and factionalism only damages Native communities. This viewpoint has been argued and affirmed particularly by earlier scholars who worked among the Haudenosaunee in the early twentieth century. These scholars, unconsciously or not, may have relied more on tribal informants who supported the view that colonialism had created dissension among the Haudenosaunee and that factionalism was synonymous with dysfunction. More recent works in Iroquois studies have challenged this view.<sup>70</sup> This distrust of tension and factionalism also has deep roots in Haudenosaunee society, as the Confederacy was formed through the Peacemaker efforts. It was the Peacemaker who brought unity to the people at a time when continued hostility and dissidence threatened their very existence.

The contrasting view is the belief that Native factionalism can serve as a dynamic and effective response to colonization, and that its presence is continual, if episodic. Kellogg’s work is meaningful when considered in this light. The Wisconsin Oneida community was born out of factionalism at its inception as Oneidas and other “New York Indians” left the homelands under the leadership of missionaries and pro-citizen Oneidas. Many Christian Oneidas formed a community at Oneida, Wisconsin, but they did not all speak with one mind and did not share the same beliefs about religion and politics. A fusion of cultural tradition and accommodation was most evident in these displaced members, as they continued to hold to an Oneida identity while they embraced aspects of American society. This was true in varying degrees for individual Oneida members, as people dealt with changes in their belief systems in different ways. In order for the community to continue, and thrive, the Wisconsin Oneida had to adapt to changing circumstances and successfully incorporate this dissent into their community.

Opposing groups of Oneidas could not simply leave when they disagreed with others, no matter how acrimonious these conflicts were, for experience had taught them about the difficulties of leaving. A century earlier, Chief Daniel Bread was a leader in the move to Wisconsin. For the rest of his life he had a (justifiable) fear of further removals, and that largely affected his efforts to build a sustainable and lasting Oneida community in Wisconsin.<sup>71</sup> Ironically, positioned out of the confrontational transformations and extreme conflict that Oneida removal caused, there is the possibility that dissension can produce a positive, decolonizing, and unifying force in these communities. Continually reconciling dissension in the Wisconsin Oneida community became an accepted way of political life, for if difference was continual, it was also repeatedly mediated within the community. The Wisconsin Oneida continued to exist as a political, social, and cultural entity throughout the most intense assimilative period of the early-to-mid-twentieth century.

Throughout her efforts, Kellogg tirelessly promoted the clan system and traditional form of government, and her supporters carefully recorded tribal members and their clan affiliations. These records had particular value later in the twentieth century, when there was an attempt in Wisconsin to revitalize the clans, and members continued Kellogg's efforts of travel and promoting the land claim and the link between Wisconsin and New York. They used Kellogg's work to trace the clans of tribal members who did not know them, and a long-term effect was its contribution to the clan system's partial resurrection that emphasized a Haudenosaunee identity, genealogical ties and kinship, and a membership in a "regenerated" Oneida Nation.<sup>72</sup> Though not adhered to by a majority of contemporary Wisconsin Oneida, the clan system is clearly in use by some. One visible, though perhaps superficial, way that Oneidas identify their clans outside of the Longhouse at Oneida, Wisconsin, is the automobile license plates that indicate the driver's clan. They are visible all over the reservation. Issued by the Oneida government in Wisconsin, the license plates are a marker of Oneida sovereignty and cultural pride. This renewed emphasis on the clan system is an intriguing social development that can be linked to a variety of things, not the least of which is to a renewed sense of affiliation with other Haudenosaunee people.

These ties to one another have deep historical roots. Likewise, unity is a concept that is transhistoric and locally situated. It is a theory that Oneida people employ in order to understand the land claim and strengthen their sense of place. Further study must be done that privileges the words Oneidas say to one another about the land claim and about unity. In many cases, the land claim provides an oppositional discourse that allows them to contest and resolve ideas about place, nationhood, and tradition. It provides a necessary avenue through which the three Oneida communities engage with one another. In many cases, their disagreements about the land claim serve as the sole form of interaction of the Oneida communities' three governments in the late twentieth century.

The ideas of the land claim and the Oneida Nation are therefore plastic and rigid. The homeland exists with fixed boundaries and is seen as a static geographic entity, although the three Oneida communities each have a

sense of mobility that has caused them to leave and form deep ties to other geographic places (Wisconsin, Canada, and Onondaga territory). The relationships among the three communities are durable and enduring yet are equally fragile due to tensions that emerge most particularly in the period before Oneida removal and in the present. Contentious issues throughout the land-claim litigation and negotiations diminish the Oneida Nation's stability. The *absence* of a unified Oneida Nation in the twenty-first century with a strongly articulated position has made the claim's settlement difficult. Countering this, at various times the *promise* of a unified Oneida Nation has been used to rally support for the Oneida land claim within the three Oneida communities.

Ultimately, the land claim can be viewed as one form of currency of factionalism. Factionalism, or significant disagreements, are thus seen as a continual social force, and the discourse of unity is one process (of many) by which the community resolves disagreements. And rather than being a pathological sign of Native or indigenous identity, disagreements that are successfully incorporated into the community without the threat of tribal dissolution are signs of a healthy community. Viewing dissent in this way precludes the unrealistic belief that Native people must all think with one mind and be in a state of agreement and harmony before they are considered a nation. To the contrary, each Oneida community seeks to link itself to a broader definition of who the Oneida people are by including those outside their immediate community, while each simultaneously acts in many ways as a separate nation. Scholars who work in Native American studies should also take into consideration that factionalism and dissension among tribal peoples will not be wished away or erased as part of any decolonization project. Instead, an examination of why discord persists and how tribes successfully reconcile their differences is needed. This must occur even as new definitions of success and reconciliation are created, specific to the tribal community.

#### RENEWING HAUDENOSAUNEE TIES TODAY

After the 1925 and 1933 ceremonies in Wisconsin to raise chiefs, Longhouse beliefs went underground again for half a century. It was not until 1983 that cyclical ceremonies, such as the Midwinter and Green Corn ceremonies were openly held again at the reconstituted Longhouse at Oneida, Wisconsin. Some tribal members who attended in 1983 had identified their clans (a necessary component of their membership in a Haudenosaunee identity and participation in the Longhouse) through research on Laura Cornelius Kellogg. Faded news articles that detailed the ceremonies and the names of chiefs from the early twentieth century were compared to genealogical records and family stories. These newspaper clippings were photocopied and handed out so that people could use them in research related to the revitalization of the traditional Longhouse community and in legal strategies for the land claim. When Oneidas had identified their clan, they knew how they fit into the Longhouse community in Oneida, Wisconsin, and were well on their way to participate as Haudenosaunee Longhouse members.

After the Longhouse was renewed in Wisconsin, people again looked at the ties the Wisconsin Oneida had with the Confederacy and built on existing relationships to forge deeper bonds. This self-conscious link to New York was done through the land claim and Longhouse organization. These efforts reached a new level of connection to the Confederacy and a reconstruction of a Haudenosaunee identity in September 2005, when Oneidas from Wisconsin traveled to Tonawanda, New York, for the *kalihwiyō* (“use of good words about ourselves, our Nation, and our future”). Much as newspapers had chronicled the ceremonies in the 1920s and 1930s in a manner that expressed surprise at an affirmation of a Wisconsin Oneida identity that was linked to the Confederacy, so too did the local newspaper in 2005.<sup>73</sup>

This time, there was significant cooperation between Longhouse members and members of the Wisconsin Oneidas’ elected form of government. Many Longhouse members are employed by the tribe and therefore support, or at least accept the legitimacy of, the Wisconsin Oneidas’ elected government. Some individuals are employed in positions directly related to their efforts in Longhouse and cultural revitalization, such as those employed by the Cultural Heritage Department and those with titles such as “Cultural Wellness Facilitator” and “Cultural Advisor to the Business Committee.” The event was a milestone in the renaissance of Haudenosaunee ties that had its roots in the work of Laura Cornelius Kellogg. It was a symbolic “return” to the homeland and Haudenosaunee way of life as vibrant and enduring Wisconsin Oneidas.

The trip was supported by a large number of Oneidas, both Longhouse and Christian. In the community a sense of an ongoing struggle exists in regard to how to merge and reconcile those beliefs. Tribal members who were interviewed for the newspaper in August 2005 spoke of how the Oneida were trying to mediate between a traditional Longhouse government and an elected business committee; there seemed to be consensus that much still needed to be done. Fifteen-year-old Oneida Jasmine House said, “I guess the difference between Longhouse and contemporary beliefs does divide the community—but not really. We all get along, but if we worked together more as one we could focus on things, like traditions we need to keep alive.”<sup>74</sup>

These voices from the community are concerned with the discussion of unity as a belief and practice. Links to the homeland and the ways in which people experience the deeply felt connection to one another is palpable, visible in the tears in their eyes and the catch in their voice as they discuss their experiences in reclaiming a Haudenosaunee tie through a reconstituted Oneida Nation.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps Kellogg would be proud to see that her work in linking to other Haudenosaunee people continues. Certainly, she would feel a sense of validation in the ways Oneida Longhouse community members regularly renew ties with those outside of Wisconsin. Fundamentally, her work can be read as an attempt to link her people more closely together, even if in discord rather than harmony. Her words are indicative of how ideas of place are surveyed and bounded in Oneida imaginations and how these imaginings construct ideas about a unified Oneida Nation.

Discourses of unity must be recovered and examined if tribal people are truly to embark on a decolonization project. Some Wisconsin Oneidas

already reclaimed Kellogg's ideas in 1984, in *Shenandoah*, a Wisconsin Oneida newsletter. "Minnie Kellogg's fight for our people was to save our school and land and to allow that we enter the League of Nations, as an independent Nation. This effort is continuing as we enter the present United Nations. We are entering as *Onayote?a-ká*, Ho-de-n-sau-ne, member of the Confederacy."<sup>76</sup> The newsletter proudly spoke of the way in which the Wisconsin Oneida were linked to the Confederacy and therefore could make a united stand with them to protest the injustices done to indigenous people.

In this way, the work toward unity is ongoing. Perhaps it is the means by which one works to bring about *ka?nikuli-yó* for the Oneida that is shared and enduring. The (re)construction of a Haudenosaunee identity must be historically and culturally situated so that Kellogg becomes one of many tribal members positioned within the land-claim discourse. Further work needs to be done on her contemporaries in other Oneida communities, particularly Wilson Cornelius, a New York Oneida member who lived at the Thames Oneida community and in Onondaga territory in the early twentieth century and whose family started the successful 1985 Supreme Court litigation.<sup>77</sup> Their ideas about sovereignty and unity could be compared to others. For Laura Cornelius Kellogg, exercising tribal sovereignty meant to look to the future while mindful of the past as Oneidas and to recognize the ties that bind all Native people. She helped renew a Haudenosaunee connection for the Wisconsin Oneida by building on a sustained line of thinking about unity that arcs into the present. The work continues.

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### NOTES

1. *Haudenosaunee* is a term that has become more accepted in the late twentieth century and describes people from the Onondaga, Seneca, Mohawk, Cayuga, Tuscarora, and Oneida nations. Other terms used are *Iroquois Confederacy*, *Six Nations*, or *Five Nations*. I use them interchangeably throughout this article, but *Haudenosaunee* refers to a direct link to the Chiefs' Council and traditional Longhouse political and spiritual identity.

2. "Onondagas to Help Install Oneida Chiefs: Sacred Ritual Originated by Hiawatha to Be Used on Saturday," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 9 October 1925, 4. The wording "raise to Chiefhood" in the news article, refers to the Haudenosaunee

practice of “raising” or installing individuals with titles of chiefs. These titles carry authority in the Longhouse form of Oneida government.

3. “Clan Chiefs of Oneidas Are Chosen: Installed at Ceremonies Last Saturday,” *De Pere Journal-Democrat*, 15 October 1925.

4. Jack Campisi, “The Wisconsin Oneidas between Disasters,” in *The Oneida Indian Journey: From New York to Wisconsin, 1784–1860*, ed. L. M. Hauptman and L. Gordon McLester III (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 76–79. The term “removed to” rather than “removed by” is intentional. The Oneidas of Wisconsin and the Thames communities did not undergo a forced removal under armed guard, like the well-known Cherokee Trail of Tears. But the line between force and coercion is fine. Certainly there were Oneidas who willingly left the homeland in search of a better life. To what degree they thought they had a choice is hard to know today. The extent of non-Native pressure for Oneida lands in New York State was intense. By the early twentieth century only a handful of Oneidas lived openly in Oneida territory and consisted of those who hadn’t removed to Wisconsin, Canada, or the Onondaga territory near Syracuse, New York. US hegemony, missionary influences, non-Native speculator interests, and violent white racial power repression, along with Oneida individual self-interest, all contributed to Oneida removal.

5. “Onondagas to Help Install Oneida Chiefs,” 4.

6. “Clan Chiefs of Oneidas Are Chosen.”

7. Jack Campisi, “Ethnic Identity and Boundary Maintenance in Three Oneida Communities” (PhD diss., State University of New York at Albany, 1974).

8. “Oneida Indian Tribe to Name New Chiefs,” *Chicago Tribune Press Service*, 21 January 1933, 10.

9. See Laura Cornelius Kellogg, *Our Democracy and the American Indian* (Kansas City, MO: Burton Publishing, 1920).

10. “What Has Become of Investigators,” *Tulsa Daily World*, 5 October 1913.

11. See Patricia Stovey, “Opportunities at Home: Laura Cornelius Kellogg and Village Industrialization,” in *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment, 1860–1920*, ed. L. M. Hauptman and L. G. McLester (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 143–75.

12. Some contemporary Wisconsin Oneidas, although they acknowledge and respect the contributions Kellogg made, resent the attention she is given by scholars. In a conversation with me, one individual referred to her as “another Lost Dauphin,” in reference to missionary Eleazar Williams’s extravagant claim to be Louis XVII, or the Lost Dauphin of France. Williams was the main architect of the plan to bring New York Indians to Wisconsin in 1822. Though reputable historians immediately refuted his claim in 1849, he became a minor celebrity. This comparison of Kellogg to Williams was meant to illustrate how people (scholars) want to believe in fantastic claims and the exceptional individual. Ironically, the person who told me this has played a large part in strengthening ties between the Wisconsin Oneida and Haudenosaunee and shared that ideology with Kellogg.

13. Following this line of thought, only the Haudenosaunee Confederacy’s traditional Longhouse leaders and not individual nations could alienate land. This was the underlying argument in *Deere v. St. Lawrence River Power Co. et al.*, 32 F.2d 550 (2d Cir. 1929) and Confederacy arguments in the mid-1980s, “Brief of Amicus Six Nations Haudenosaunee Confederacy,” in *Oneida County v. Oneida Indian Nation et al.*, 470 U.S.

226, 105 S. Ct. 1245, 84 L.Ed.2d 169 (1985). This argument has been strongly contested by the elected Wisconsin Oneida tribal government and the New York Oneida.

14. I am indebted to Bob Brown of Oneida, WI, for his translations and thoughts, 23 March 2007.

15. Frieda J. Jacques, "Discipline of the Good Mind," unpublished paper in author's possession.

16. Paul Williams, "Treaty Making: The Legal Record," in *Treaty of Canandaigua 1794: 200 Years of Treaty Relations between the Iroquois Confederacy and the United States*, ed. G. P. Jemison and A. M. Schein (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 2000), 35.

17. Kellogg, *Our Democracy and the American Indian*, 28.

18. *Ibid.*, 66.

19. Bill Gollnick, "The Oneida Nation Key Message," speech given by the Chief of Staff of the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin, Oneida, WI, 21 March 2007.

20. Chief Irving Powless Jr., "Treaty Making," in *Treaty of Canandaigua 1794*, ed. Jemison and Schein, 15.

21. See Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1972); *Oneida County v. Oneida Indian Nation*, 230–31.

22. It should be noted that the federal government ultimately rejected the proposed \$10 million gift from the Oneida Indian Nation of New York in June 2004. As Oneida Indian Nation of New York officials and tribal members prepared to attend a ceremony to acknowledge the gift, they were informed by the government that the gift had to be "postponed indefinitely." The New York Oneida were told there were three reasons for the cancellation: (1) the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee had put a hold on all projects more than \$5 million; (2) government lawyers had not reviewed a memorandum of understanding in regard to the New York Oneida's donation; and, perhaps most importantly, (3) that because the Oneida Indian Nation of New York is involved in land-claim litigation the government felt that the gift might be seen as a conflict of interest. This insulted the New York Oneida. Nation Representative Halbritter said, "If you don't want the money, fine, don't take it. But, don't deny us the opportunity to honor the memory of both countries' patriots, whose blood hallowed this place. Let's not let politics get in the way of honoring these brave men and women." Oneida Nation News release, 22 June 2004, <http://www.oneidanews.net> (accessed 4 April 2005).

23. Graymont, *Iroquois in the American Revolution*.

24. 7 Stat. 15 (22 October 1784).

25. 7 Stat. 33 (9 January 1789); 7 Stat. 44 (11 November 1794).

26. For a nearly full list of treaties that the Oneidas made and treaties signed by the Wisconsin Oneida community, see Vine Deloria et al., *Documents of American Indian Diplomacy: Treaties, Agreements, and Conventions, 1775–1979* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).

27. Mary A. Druke, "Structure and Meanings of Leadership among the Mohawk and Oneida during the Mid-Eighteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1982), 22.

28. Amelia Cornelius, "Tribal Discord and the Road to Green Bay," in *Oneida Indian Journey*, 127–29. See generally Campisi, "Ethnic Identity and Boundary Maintenance"; Graymont, *Iroquois in the American Revolution*; Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English*

*Colonies* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984); Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

29. The Oneida Indian Nation of New York is located in the claim area in central upstate New York. The community, which has a successful casino and other business ventures, has less than two thousand members. They are led by Nation Representative Raymond Halbritter, who has written about the values of economic empowerment as the fundamental basis for effectively exercising tribal sovereignty. Because they are located with the homeland, they are the most active and (perhaps) most salient party to the claim. The Thames First Nation Oneida are located on a reserve near London, Ontario, Canada. There are almost five thousand members, and this community has an active Chiefs' Council and probably has more members who speak the Oneida language than the other two communities. Their link to the claim has always been based on kinship and culture; they exercise a form of sovereignty based largely on cultural knowledge and practices. Finally, the Oneida Indians of Wisconsin are the largest group, with more than fifteen thousand tribal members. This community has by and large taken a political approach to sovereignty and work within a government-to-government relationship with the federal, state, and local governments. It has an elected business council and exercises sovereignty solidly within a US federal Indian law context.

30. "Oneida Honored for Cultural Revitalization," *Appleton Post-Crescent*, 22 September 2005, 2; "Oneida Homeland Tour Videos, 1995–96," produced by Oneida Land Claim Commission, 1996 (videocassette).

31. Audra Simpson, "To the Reserve and Back Again: Kahnawake Mohawk Narratives of Self, Home, and Nation" (PhD diss., McGill University, 2003), 12.

32. For an argument against tribal governments, such as the Wisconsin Oneida's, asserting jurisdiction in New York State, see Robert Odawi Porter and Carrie E. Garrow, "Legal and Policy Analysis Associated with Migrating Indigenous Peoples: Assessing the Impact on the Haudenosaunee within New York State," *Working Paper Series No. 05-1* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University College of Law, 25 January 2005).

33. *U.S. Boylan*, 256 F. 468, 487 (N.D.N.Y. 19190, aff'd, 265 F. 165) (2d Cir. 1920).

34. Laurence M. Hauptman, "Designing Woman: Minnie Kellogg, Iroquois Leader," in *Indian Lives: Essays on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Native American Leaders*, ed. L. G. Moses and R. Wilson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), 161.

35. *Oneida County v. Oneida Indian Nation*; Laurence Hauptman, *The Iroquois Struggle for Survival: World War II to Red Power* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 33–34.

36. *Report of the Executive Council of the Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians, 1912* (Washington, DC), 92.

37. Laura Cornelius Kellogg, "Some Facts and Figures on Indian Education," *Quarterly Journal* 1 (1913): 34–36.

38. For a look at Seneca "mothers of the nation," see Joy Bilharz, *The Allegany Senecas and the Kinzua Dam: Forced Relocation through Two Generations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 147–48. I thank Laurence M. Hauptman for highlighting this in his forthcoming work on Seneca activist Alice Lee Jemison.



39. Different sources do not agree on the spelling of her first name. The 1885 June census spells her name "Celicia," as do a number of different sources, but Thelma Cornelius McLester spells her name "Celisha" in "Oneida Women Leaders," in *The Oneida Indian Experience: Two Perspectives*, ed. J. Campisi and L. M. Hauptman (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 109.
40. Laurence M. Hauptman and L. Gordon McLester, *Chief Daniel Bread and the Oneida Nation of Indians of Wisconsin* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 19–20.
41. "Last Mother of Oneidas Passes On," *Milwaukee News*, 14 November 1922, 13; "Clan Chiefs of Oneidas Are Chosen," 10.
42. Joseph Powless Diary, Green Bay Area Research Center, University of Wisconsin–Green Bay.
43. Gerald L. Hill, interview by author, Oneida, WI, 19 March 1999; C. F. W. Wheelock, interview by author, Oneida, WI, 26 November 1999.
44. "Oneidas Plan Big Ceremony on Saturday," *De Pere Journal-Democrat*, 8 October 1925, 5.
45. Kellogg, *Our Democracy and the American Indian*; Hauptman, "Designing Woman," 160.
46. Hauptman, "Designing Woman," 54.
47. *Ibid.*, 58. Kellogg took the name "Lolomi" from what she said was Hopi for "perfect goodness be upon you."
48. US Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, *Indian Appropriation Hearings on H.R. 1917*, 63rd Cong., 1st sess., 1913, 517.
49. Kellogg, *Our Democracy and the American Indian*, 30–31. For a further discussion on the concept of unity in Iroquois history, see also her discussion of the Six Nations Confederacy as a model for the Constitution of the United States, 20–21.
50. "Council Fires Blaze Again; Oneidas Astir," *Milwaukee Journal*, 22 April 1923, 2–4.
51. *U.S. v. Boylan*.
52. See in particular the arguments in *Deere et al. v. State of New York et al.*, 22 F. 851 (1927).
53. Laurence M. Hauptman, *The Iroquois and the New Deal* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1981), 13; Philip O. Geier, "A Peculiar Status: A History of Oneida Indian Treaties and Claims" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1980), 272; Hauptman, *Iroquois Struggle for Survival*, 187.
54. Ramona Herdsman, "A New Six Nations: Laura Cornelius Kellogg Sees the Old Iroquois Confederacy Re-established on a Modern Business Basis," *Syracuse Herald*, 6 November 1927, 11. See Hauptman, *Iroquois Struggle for Survival*, 184; Campisi, "Ethnic Identity and Boundary Maintenance," 442–43.
55. Kellogg, *Our Democracy and the American Indian*, 26.
56. Deskaheh, *The Red Man's Appeal for Justice: The Position of the Six Nations That They Constitute an Independent State* (Brantford, ON: D. Wilson Moore, 1924), 12–13.
57. Campisi, "Ethnic Identity and Boundary Maintenance," 311–12; Hauptman, *Iroquois and the New Deal*, 74–77, 114–15.
58. Alice Torres, interview with author, Oneida, WI, 14 August 1999.
59. "Indians Rising for Legal War," *Milwaukee Journal*, 27 October 1923, 8–9.
60. "Indian Claims to Empire State Outlined," *Fond du Lac Reporter*, 10 October 1922.

61. Laura Cornelius Kellogg to Cato Sells, 21 June 1919, #806-19-69348 (Oneida), BIA, Record Group 75, National Archives.
62. "Denounced as Traitors to Oneidas," *De Pere Journal-Democrat*, 16 August 1923, 6.
63. "Oneida Indian Tribes to Name New Chiefs," 10.
64. "Oneidas Plan to Name New Chiefs by Ancient Practice Soon," *Green Bay Press Gazette*, 18 January 1933, 12.
65. "Indian Leader Calls Occasion a Renaissance," *Milwaukee Journal*, 4 October 1925, 5–7. Jack Campisi has also noted that the movement was important because it signaled a rise in the leadership and influence of Haudenosaunee women in the Wisconsin Oneida community. See Campisi, "Ethnic Identity and Boundary Maintenance," 152–53.
66. "Indians Find Faster Runner to Carry News," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 March 1932.
67. "Report of Negotiations with Oneida Indians for Commutation of their Perpetual Annuities," as provided for by Act of March 3, 1911, House of Representatives, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., H. Doc. 251.
68. "Claims Come and Go, Clan Mother Keeps Values," *Syracuse Post Standard*, 15 July 2005, <http://www.syracuse.com/> (accessed 16 July 2005).
69. Hauptman, *Iroquois and the New Deal*, 13–14.
70. For a general overview of some of the violence that has occurred in Haudenosaunee communities in the late twentieth century, see Rick Hornung, *One Nation under the Gun: Inside the Mohawk Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991). For a different consideration of factionalism in tribal communities, see Gerald F. Reid, *Kahnawà:ke: Factionalism, Traditionalism, and Nationalism in a Mohawk Community* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004). Reid rejects the view of factionalism as symptoms of social disorganization and as disruptive of political stability and social unity, and instead argues that factionalism is a legitimate political process that is common to all societies. In this view, factionalism stresses human agency and is dynamic and adaptive. Druke also complicates the idea of unanimity in Oneida politics and argues that consensus does not mean that minority viewpoints simply dissipate. Rather, they often withdraw until a better time to reassert themselves and thus ensure that unity and dissension are always present. See Druke, "Structure and Meanings of Leadership."
71. Hauptman and McLester, *Chief Daniel Bread*, 11.
72. See how Taiaiake Alfred uses the term in *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2005).
73. "Gaining Ground: Influence of Revitalized Culture Grows for Fast-advancing Oneida Tribe," *Appleton Post-Crescent*, 29 August 2005, <http://www.postcrescent.com> (accessed 30 August 2005); "Oneida Honored for Cultural Revitalization," 2.
74. Quoted in "Gaining Ground: Influence of Revitalized Culture Grows for Fast-advancing Oneida Tribe."
75. "Oneida Homeland Tour Videos, 1995–96."
76. *Shenandoah*, August 1984, Oneida Records Management, Oneida, WI.
77. *Oneida County v. Oneida Indian Nation*. See George C. Shattuck, *The Oneida Land Claims: A Legal History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991); Kristina Ackley, "We Are Oneida Yet: Discourse in the Oneida Land Claim" (PhD diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 2005), esp. ch. 2.